

**NEXT MEETING,
TUESDAY,
MARCH 2:**

HOLD ON TO YOUR DATA WITH BACKUP



INSIDE:

BACKUP STRATEGIES
SOCIAL NETWORKING
MAGNIFY YOUR SCREEN
PLUS, MORE CLUB NEWS,
COMMENTARY AND Q&A

President's File



This is it—the last article from me for the President's Column. It is time for me to step aside and let others assume the leadership of the group. It is to be hoped that my contributions have been more positive than negative. It was an all-around good learning experience. Thank you all for placing faith in me over the past few years.

There is, believe it or not, much effort that goes into DACS by a small handful of volunteers. Without those people, you would not be reading this newsletter. There would not be an updated Website. There wouldn't be the monthly meetings or the SIGs. It would be awesome if more people would volunteer, but that doesn't seem to happen.

This is DACS' twentieth anniversary year, and nobody even volunteered to help coordinate some sort of event. That is unfortunate, in my opinion.

What's in store for me at the end of this term? Well, I will finish my term on the Board. Perhaps get back to leading a SIG. Many things are up in the air right now, so I don't really know. Somehow life got a bit hectic in the past year and has not let up much. Perhaps that will change by the second quarter of 2010.

At the moment there are other priorities that I must tend to, so I must keep this brief. But, as always, I hope to see you at the next meeting!

—Rob Limbaugh
dacsprez@dacs.org

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Directors' Notes

A regular meeting of your Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Friday, February 19, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.

Present were Charles Bovaird, Richard Corzo, Drew Kwashnak, Annette van Ommeren, Jeff Setaro, Jim Scheef, Joseph Tobin and Bruce Preston. Drew Kwashnak led the meeting in the President's absence and Secretary Mary Tobin kept the record.

Minutes of the last meeting held January 13, 2010, were presented and approved.

Treasurer Charles Bovaird reported current cash assets of \$5252.81, consisting of total bank and postal accounts in the amount of \$5232.88 plus postage on hand of \$19.93.

Subtracting a liability of prepaid dues in the amount of \$227.50 left a net equity of \$5,025.31. He also reported that the current membership is at 187, 75 of whom receive newsletter.

General Meetings

- March – Backups - confirmed
- April – Apple – Dave Marra – Richard to invite him (tentatively – based on availability)
- May – WordPress – Jeff (tentatively – flexible as far as date)
- June – YouTube Presentation – Scott Preston confirmed
- Reviews – March (Richard)
- Previews – March (Jim)

Suggestions for future meetings:

- State Police and computer crimes;
- Remote access: Dim-Dim, Skype, how to do a web cast;
- Google talk - parental controls (i.e.: Windows 7 it is built in), Mac has parental controls but concern is that the topic is not large enough for a full meeting;
- Alternatives for Microsoft Office replacement: some are Web based such as Google Docs, Open Office, Zoho, and others;
- Microsoft 2010, at the time that it is released;
- Computing on a shoestring;
- Financial Software: QuickBooks - maybe a local account to be used as an example;
- Internet Security;
- Setup a Website: picking a Web host;
- Blog creation (pros and cons) – how to install WordPress, blogging alternatives.

Membership Information

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Bruce Preston	Jim Scheef
Joseph Tobin	Annette van Ommeren

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). Advertisers, contact Charles Bovaird at (203) 792-7881 (aam@mags.net)

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



Member of
Association of Personal Computer User Groups
APCUG
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Apple User Group

Officers

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NEWSLETTER: Patrick Libert: dacseditor@dacs.org, (860) 567-9586

PROGRAM: Position open (VPprograms@dacs.org)

WEB MASTERS: Richard Corzo (rcorzo@dacs.org), (203)797-1518
 Annette van Ommeren (annagraphics@earthlink.net), (914)232-0149

MARKETING AND PR: Position open (pr@dacs.org)

APCUG LIAISON: Patrick Libert (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) 431-4050	(d)
C/UNIX/ObjC	Kenneth Lerman	(203) 426-4430	(d)
C#, VB	Chuck Fizer	(203) 431-4050	(d)
Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
Interface-Instrumentation	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000	(d e)
Adobe Web & DTP	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) 431-4050	(d)
Malware	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748	(d)
VB.Net, Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	(203) 431-4050	(d)

Operations

- Newsletter: Decision on when to abolish the print. Feeling is that it is a good marketing tool – tabled.

- If Newsletter is discontinued, the issue of how to handle membership for members that have paid for the year – tabled.

- Discussion of transition of membership to same payment cycle – tabled.

- Discussion of Scholarship –Need to decide application process and criteria. Jim to check with New Milford High School Guidance department for their requirements for scholarship.

- Discussion of professional hosting services. Feeling is that current system is working. – tabled.

- To be addressed by this administration – update password database and contacts.

Old Business

- Need to find replacements and backup for: Program chair/VP, PR, President (REL final term), Treasurer, Secretary – need to establish minimum requirements

Bruce motioned to Adjourn, all seconded. - Mary Tobin



DACS Needs To Fill Some Spaces

We need some members to step forward and assist with the following DACS activities and functions.

President, Secretary and Treasurer

Proof readers to help in editing *dacs.doc*

Programs Director and Events Coordinator

Election of officers by the board will take place in March, 2010. Please take the initiative, and join our team. Send an email to dacsboard@dacs.org to offer your assistance.

Meeting Preview

Backups

By Jim Scheef

IT'S THE WORD YOU hope to never hear or have to say. Backups seem like such a pain and waste of time. Until your Quicken file won't load, that is. Or, you open an important spreadsheet with years of data and find that half of the data is missing. What happened? Who knows, but your data is gone. All of a sudden the tune changes to "O-M-G! I'm sure I made a backup just the other day, now where is it?"

Even worse is when your hard drive starts to make a ticking sound or some other noise. When these noises stop, generally it means all your data is gone. It used to be that all the family pictures were stored in a box in the closet. In times of disaster, that box was

what people took with them when they evacuated. If you had to evacuate your home, where would your pictures be?

My rule to determine when to make a backup is the tolerance for pain. Anything you need to recreate or redo should a file be lost causes pain. The more you must recreate, the more painful the event. Of course some things, like pictures, cannot be recreated which is the ultimate pain. When you can restore the files

from a backup and get on with life all with little or no pain, then the backup was worth the effort to make or set up.

So this month three of our DACS experts will devote an entire meeting to the topic you never want to utter. This very



Meeting Review

Social Network: The Dos and Don'ts

by Joseph Tobin

ON FEBRUARY 2, 2010, Dan O'Connor gave us a tour of some of the most popular social networks. He started the presentation by showing some of the purposes for social networks, such as: job hunting, marketing, sharing hobbies, and collaboration on projects. Social Networking has changed the world of marketing and if used, could help potential customers find your service.

Dan used *Alexa*, a site for comparing user traffic to websites, to show how *Facebook* had significantly increased in popularity, while *MySpace* had plummeted. One of the reasons for this huge change is that Facebook has much better privacy than MySpace. He also used *Alexa* to show that *LinkedIn* is still a good choice for services. LinkedIn is a more professional social networking service than Facebook, and is an excellent tool for business related activities.

There are many networks with different focuses. Facebook is a friend site, for chatting and sharing pictures. LinkedIn is a more

professional service, used for job hunting and making business connections. *Flickr* is a site for sharing photos, and is a good resource for finding creative-commons artwork. *YouTube* is a sharing site. Dan showed how someone had found his music and used it on a YouTube video to advertise a book. *YahooAnswers* is a site where people can ask various questions about things in their lives, their jobs, or just things that interest them.

Before setting up your profile, you need to keep in mind the goal you want to accomplish with it. You might join to: chat with friends, make business connections, or promote a service. If you are advertising a service it is important to use a meaningful username, a fitting profile picture, and give information which supports your goal. This looks a lot more professional and helps the user understand your service.

Something important to note when you join one of these services: friends, family,



broad - and critical - topic really deserves an entire meeting. Starting with "What is a backup?" a panel of DACS experts will walk us thru backups from A to Z using different tools on three platforms. DACS President Rob Limbaugh will cover the basic definitions and backups on Windows. Then Macintosh SIG Leader Richard Corzo and DACS Board Member Drew Kwashnak will cover backups on Macintosh and Linux. This will be a great show.

Danbury Area Computer Society (DACS) is a registered nonprofit 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.

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

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

and coworkers will look you up! For a personal profile, it might be a good idea to use a pen name. For example, Dan uses DanO for his accounts. It is also recommended to use the maximum privacy allowed by the service.

It is bad practice to add people with whom you have not communicated or spammed through a private message. This will make you look unprofessional and make people think less of your business. When marketing, you should reach out to people and stay on-topic. Treat social networking as a real-life social situation. It might also be a good idea to advertise your service in your signature. Do not make a discussion topic completely about yourself or to advertise your product. People will most likely not participate in the discussion. Don't post hourly or unimportant things. It doesn't look good to potential customers.

Use social networks to drive people to your site, not away from it. It isn't a good idea having people leave your site to go to one of your profiles. You should be visible for people to add you, if they really liked your thoughts on a subject and are interested in your opinion.

Social networking is a useful marketing tool, and if used properly, can increase traffic to your site and help potential clients find you.

From the Editor

Editorial Bits

by Patrick Libert

Program Preview

THE MOST IMPORTANT comment I can make about the DACS March presentation is: "You can't live without it."



That's right. If you do not back up your PC or your Mac or whatever system you are using, you are risking disaster. Is it not better to have peace of mind?

In earlier times, I would back up all my essential files on

floppy disks and zip disks, a task that took much time and a lot of media. Now, with all the available options, I back up every day to an adjacent FireWire hard drive and to "the cloud" on MozyHome. Both actions take place automatically on my Mac without interruption to my workflow.

The March presentation at the DACS General Meeting will demonstrate to and assure everyone that backing up is a painless process.

Don't miss it.

New and Notable

Pandora (<http://www.pandora.com/mgp>)

Last month, I wrote about my use of the Lala music web site to listen to and download music. Lala is very good for those uses but it does not have the capability to stream music except for that which one has downloaded to one's account.

In January 2009, John Patrick's blog (http://www.patrickweb.com/weblog/archives/2009_01_14.php) brought my attention to the Music Genome project, Pandora. I didn't do much with it other than explore the site until later last year when I wanted to find another source of streaming music to enjoy at home.

For the past two months, I have been using Pandora almost every day with great enjoyment. It is, in my opinion, a superb application.

Imagine being able to define which artists and/or genres of music you want to hear and the application expands on

those parameters to give you a wide selection of music you love. That is what Pandora does effortlessly once you become a subscriber.

You can subscribe to the free version which will show some advertising and limit you to listening to forty hours per month. For an acceptable fee of \$36 per year, the advertisements are removed, there are not monthly time limits on listening and the audio quality increases to 192kbps.

I love music of all kinds and Pandora is my music library "in the cloud."

Program Review

I was unable to attend the last General Meeting but I followed the presentation in detail on the following [Zoho](#) link.

This should allay almost everyone's fears about Social Networking, in my opinion.

I have embraced Twitter and Facebook since early 2009 with no regrets and no problems. Well managed, these sites become an asset to our daily routines and make communicating with friends and family an absolute pleasure.

Are you up to your nose with computer questions?. DACS Special Interest Groups may have the answers. If not, let us know, and we'll try to create a new SIG that helps



New Members

6/2/09 to 2/22/10

Dirk Feather	Matt Storms
Craig Leibensperger	Douglas Wise
Vernon Hadden III	James MacIntyre
Matthew Oppermann	Gil Brouillette

Joseph Annono

This is Your Last Newsletter

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

**EXP 2/3/2010
or earlier**

You need to renew your
DACs membership

NOW



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"Normally, I would run you in, but since you have a Totota, You're free to go."

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: March 2010

Access. Designs and implements solutions using Microsoft Access database management software.

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (*bpreston@mags.net*). Meets on 2nd Tuesday, 7p.m., by virtual connection.

Next meeting: Mar 9 (check Website for technical details)

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: In hiatus

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: Returns in Spring

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: Mar 17

Mac. Focuses on all aspects of the Mac and iPhone operating systems..

Contact: Richard Corzo *macsig@dacs.org*.

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

Next Meeting: Mar 4

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

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

Meets irregularly, at the 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: Mar 11

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, 203 431-4050 *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: In hiatus

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: Mar 16

SIG News & Events

ASP.Net&C#VB.Net. The dotNET SIG is in hiatus, while Chuck is in the process of moving his household. It is undetermined as to whether the next SIG meeting will be held at the DACS Resource Center, a virtual SIG meeting using the same mechanism as the Access SIG, or temporarily cancelled or rescheduled.

Mac. In the February meeting, our initial task was to take a look at iWork '09, Apple's office suite for the Mac. Later in the meeting one of our members shared his experience with a video capture device and its accompanying software.

Pages is the word processor/page layout program in the iWork suite. One member, a recent switcher from Windows, remarked on the clean interface as compared with Microsoft Word.

I was curious about how the beta site *iWork.com* worked, so I took a sample document and shared it using the Share via iWork menu item. It sent an e-mail to someone with whom I chose to share the document. He was able to view the document on iWork.com and make comments related to the document, which I could then see at the site. So iWork.com seems like a good collaboration tool that goes beyond simple file sharing as afforded by an iDisk public folder.

Next I tried Numbers, the spreadsheet program. At work I had recently had to combine two columns into one using Microsoft Excel's CONCAT function. Numbers had an equivalent function called CONCATENATE.

In Keynote, Apple's presentation program, I tried out the handsome Moroccan theme. It's refreshing to have something that doesn't look like all the PowerPoint presentations out there.

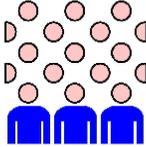
As we were looking at iWork one member asked about printing Avery mailing labels on a Mac. I searched on the Internet and found *Avery's DesignPro for Mac*.

Then we were ready to switch to our member's demonstration of the Blackmagic Design Video Recorder (<http://www.blackmagic-design.com/products/videorecorder/>). With this device you can connect an analog video device such as a VCR to your Mac's USB port. We saw a video of the Tamburitians (<http://www.duq.edu/tamburitians/>) Eastern European song and dance troupe and were impressed with the quality of the video captured from a VHS tape. You can even download and try out the Blackmagic software to make sure it will work on your Mac.

SIG Notes, Cont. on page 11

March 2010

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																			
	1	 <p>6:30 P.M. GENERAL MTG</p>	3	 <p>Macintosh 7:00 PM Richard Corzo macsig@dacs.org</p>	5	6																																																																																																			
7	8	 <p>MS ACCESS 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Bruce Preston bpreston@mags.ne</p>	 <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>	 <p>7:00 PM Server Jim Scheef 860 355-0034</p>	12	13																																																																																																			
14	15	 <p>Web Design Annette van Ommeren 914 232-0149</p>	 <p>7:30 PM Linux Drew Kwashnak 203 910-6477</p>	18	19	 <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																																			
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Assistive Technology

Review - Ai Squared's ZoomText Express

by Bruce Preston

ABOUT 4 YEARS AGO, I woke up one morning to discover that I had what the neurologist diagnosed as spontaneous bilateral optic neuropathy, commonly known as 'stroke of the optic nerve'. It left me with a small area in the



center of my right eye's field of view that is 20/40 but dim. Everything else is 20/400 or worse and dim. I've been able to continue my computer consulting business and a primary utility that has made it possible is Ai Squared's product ZoomText Magnifier/Reader.

FTC disclosure: Recently Ai Squared provided evaluation copies of ZoomText Express for review by representatives of user groups belonging to APCUG, and DACS asked me to review it.

The target market for ZoomText Express is anyone who makes extensive use of a computer and has problems with image clarity, eye strain, contrast, glare, etc. Their brochure references a 2003 study which reports that 55% of the working population makes use of a computer at some time or other during their work day. I suspect that the percentage has increased since then.

Here are the main capabilities of ZoomText Express:

1) A screen magnifier that works in several user-selectable modes:

Full Screen Magnification mode: This has magnification powers of 1.25x, 1.5x, 1.75x, and 2x. In this mode, the area surrounding the pointer (or cursor when editing) is magnified at the selected rate. Thus, for example, if you select 2x, and the mouse pointer is at the upper left of the screen, you see the

upper-left quadrant of the screen expanded to fill the physical display. The ZoomText family has very smooth scrolling so that as you move the pointer around, the screen scrolls to keep the pointer/cursor within the field of view. They have a font improvement technology such that you do not get 'jaggies' on the edges of characters. The scrolling is very smooth.

Magnifying Glass mode: With this mode, a virtual rectangular magnifying class (choice of large area or small area) floats over the screen and only magnifies the area of interest. The same powers as listed are available.

2) Color Controls:

An all-white background can be responsible for glare on the screen, making it difficult to read text. This feature lets you select reverse video (white text on black) which some find easier to read. Alternatively, you may select a 'tint' option whereby white is replaced by a soft yellow - roughly similar to the color of a manila folder, thus reducing the glare.

3) Mouse Pointer and Cursor Enhancements:

Pointer Enhancements:

Sometimes it is difficult to keep track of the mouse pointer - the standard mouse pointer is predominately white with a thin black outline. On a screen with a white background, such as within the text area of a word processor, or Window Explorer, or Internet Explorer, or dialog boxes such as FILE/OPEN it is easy to lose track of the mouse pointer's location. ZoomText Express permits selection of a larger mouse pointer, and a choice of high-visibility fill colors.

Cursor Enhancement:

The insertion bar cursor (the flashing I-beam indicator that shows where your next typed character will be placed) is even harder to find. To assist with this, ZoomText Express provides a pair of wedges filled with choice of high-visibility color. These are positioned above and below the insertion point.

Controlling it:

ZoomText Express has a useful and intuitive control panel. The main controls are three large icons. The first is a pair of round

buttons having either a "+" or "-" for zoom in or zoom out respectively. Zoom In increases magnification stepping through the powers - 1, 1.25, 1.5, 1.75 and 2. Zoom out reduces the magnification through the same steps. Between these two buttons is a larger button with the international power on/off icon. This temporarily turns off the ZoomText enhancements, but leaves the utility running so it may easily be restored. The usual Windows conventions for resizing the control panel, minimizing it, or terminating the program (the X) are in the upper right corner. ZoomText offers to save your configuration settings so once you find a combination you like you may establish it as the default. The interface also has tabs for the less frequently used functions of modifying the pointer, cursor, view (full screen or magnifying class) or color (normal, reverse video, tinted). Lastly, a large Zoom button is used to get at a FILE and preferences capability such that you can save your settings. This is a plus if the machine is shared by people with different preferences or requirements. In addition they have assigned various Alt-key combinations to permit changes of settings such as zoom level by way of the keyboard.

Summing up: For this evaluation I installed ZoomText Express on my wife's notebook computer. It has a high-resolution, 16:9 ratio display which means that the icons and task bar buttons, etc., are rather small for my needs. The machine runs Vista Home with all the graphic interface gizmos that implies. This is the machine we take with us when we travel. (Gotta check the e-mail at least 5 times a day, right?) Previously I just asked my wife or son to log in and do things for me, with ZoomText Express I now can work comfortably and with less frustration. I think that Ai Squared has a winner for the target market of those who need a bit of vision assistance. At \$49 (download) or \$59 (CD media) it is affordable. You may download a trial version from their web site. When I became legally blind, a representative of a Connecticut State agency told me that 95% of people designated legally blind have some vision capability. ZoomText Express may not be sufficient for the legally blind. For them the Ai Squared's flagship products ZoomText Magnifier or ZoomText Magnifier/Reader bring more capabilities to the computer, but at a higher price. For details on any of Ai Squared's products visit their web site: www.aisquared.com or call them at (802) 362-3612

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Circuit Writer Version 7.6

by Jim Scheef

A new language for
the web – HTML5

I HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE getting web pages to look right, now, and they want to bring out a new version of HTML? They're kidding, right? Wrong!



But the finalization of the new spec is planned for 2022, so why worry? Well this will cause a new round of browser wars as each browser incorporates pieces of the new spec that get cast in stone earlier

than the rest. Naturally not every implementation will be perfect and the bugs that get traction become the “real” specification. That’s what happened in the first browser wars. It will be years before we get past the bugs in early versions of Internet Explorer that became baked into the web. It will be hard to avoid that happening again without major cooperation between the browser makers, which may actually happen. Remember that this will be a three-way race now that Google has released Chrome. Chrome’s market share may be small (infinitesimal?) right now, but for better or worse, it will grow as Google makes it the base for new products and services.

One of the interesting aims of HTML5 is to reduce the need for proprietary browser plug-ins like Adobe Flash, Microsoft Silverlight and Sun JavaFx. While rolling video and animation into the basic HTML is a worthy goal, I’m sure all three software houses will just roll over and play dead on this one. One HTML5 technology that sounds really interesting is “local storage” that will allow web-based applications to continue working without an Internet connection, so goodbye Google Gears. So the new spec will have no chance, right? Well, all the browser makers, including Opera, are involved in designing the spec and are implementing the parts that they believe are “close enough.” There is an eWeek synopsis at tinyurl.com/y92jsc2. I would be happy if all the next HTML adds is decent security and thus some privacy. (You cannot have privacy without security), If you were betting on a quiet decade for software, you lose!

Yet Another
Microsoft Office

If you’re like me, you’re still struggling to learn that infernal ribbon bar in Microsoft Office 2007. So I’m sure you’ll want to jump on the chance to try Office 2010! Yes, the next version is in beta. It looks like microsoft.com/office/2010 will get you there. Good luck and don’t install it on your primary machine! Let me know if you like it.

Hacking your Toyota?

The news media frenzy about the Toyota “sudden acceleration” problem just never seemed like they had it right – not Toyota and certainly not the major news media. I could never understand how a floor mat could cause a car to “suddenly accelerate”. Since I don’t own a Toyota I haven’t paid that much attention but this story has started to make sense when I started to hear about “drive-by-wire” throttles.

Once upon a time there was a carburetor on every automobile engine. A mechanical linkage of rods and levers connected the accelerator pedal to the butterfly valve in the throat of the carburetor. Pressing the accelerator pedal opened the throttle valve allowing more air into the carburetor which mixed in fuel and fed that mixture to the cylinders to make the car go. If that linkage became stuck, the throttle could be held open with disastrous results, but first the driver had to step on the gas to open the throttle to a point where it could stick.

Few Toyota stories matched the stuck throttle scenario and the “sudden acceleration” scenario most certainly did not – but a “drive-by-wire” throttle system does. Such a system opens up all kinds of new possibilities that are not related to a mechanical linkage because there is no mechanical linkage. Drive-by-wire is a system where the accelerator is connected to an electronic sensor rather than to the engine. A wire (literally) is all that connects the gas pedal to the engine. Of course there is a computer in there along the way. The fact that the driver presses on the gas is just one of many inputs to a system that computes how the throttle butterfly should be positioned to allow the desired amount of air to enter the en-

gine fuel injection. Now the possibility exists for the computer to tell the throttle to open in a way that does not directly correspond to how the driver presses the gas pedal. Wikipedia has the best explanation of such a system (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drive_by_wire) that I could find in a short search.

Now if drive-by-wire throttles make you queasy, add in the “brake-by-wire” systems that are in every hybrid car. Hybrids need to use braking energy to recharge the batteries. They do this by using the electric motor as a generator to do as much braking as possible. Naturally this means delaying the application of the regular brakes on each wheel, so a wire connects the brake pedal to the brakes rather than the traditional rod pushing on a hydraulic cylinder. To oversimplify, the more the car can delay using the regular brakes, the better the gas mileage. So now that several computers – hopefully working in unison – control how your car goes and stops, software is needed to tell those computers what to do. And we all know how well software works, don’t we? Today the Toyota story in the news is how they will “give braking a higher priority” in new models. Golly gee wiz. When I put my foot on the brake pedal, by God, that is my TOP priority!

Droid Does Sometimes

I have run out of time, but I must add a short story about using Droid navigation. Returning from Boston a couple of weeks back, I wanted to stop at a Borders Books store. So I used the browser in the Droid to do a Google search and found a Borders that seemed to be on the way home. So I pointed to the address and told the Droid to navigate and off I went. A short time later, I drove into a neighborhood a short distance from the highway and the Droid announced that my destination was on my right. Only there was there no Borders, there was not even a shopping center – nothing! Just somebody’s driveway. I’m not sure where the failure occurred – in the navigation, the address shown on the website, or Google Maps. I was too stunned to try to figure it out at the time and just drove back to the highway. Has anyone had a similar experience with Google navigation or some other navigation product? Let me know.

Last month I promised more on IPv6. I haven’t forgotten, but I have run out of time.

Ask DACS

February 2010

Moderated and reported 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.

Q – I'm starting a website and would like to know what is an FTP client, and is there a free FTP client?

A – An FTP client is a program that supports the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) used by someone to transfer files to or from a remote host. In the case of a website, the remote host would be the server that hosts the website. An FTP client is what sends commands from your computer to the host to have the host transfer a file to or from your computer.

On the free part, there were several suggestions. One member pointed out that both Internet Explorer and Firefox have built-in FTP clients. If you go to the website in question and change the protocol on the address bar from "http" to "ftp", then the browser will display a list of files provided the host computer supports FTP at that address. Double-clicking a filename should start the file transfer; or right-click and select "Save as..." from the context menu. Sometimes the FTP address is slightly different from the regular web address. This works just fine for downloads – transferring a file from the host to your computer. Some sites will ask that you log in. If the site allows anonymous login (very common on sites intended for public access), the standard is to use "anonymous" as the login and your email address as the password. It is to be hoped that your website will require a unique login and password.

A suggestion for a dedicated FTP client was the program CuteFTP (cuteftp.com). The "free" version of this program appears to be trial-ware and has in the past been accompanied by junk-ware as part of the download. I do not know if this is still true, but I do not intend to find out on my machine.

The currently "top rated" FTP client is the open source program, FileZilla (filezilla-project.org), which is the program I use. There was a murmur of ascent when I mentioned

this program. Available for Windows, Linux and the Macintosh, FileZilla has the classic user interface of side-by-side windows that show files and folders on your computer in one window and files and folders on the remote host in the other. Selecting a file in one window gives options to transfer the file to the other. There are options to allow multiple threads to maximize bandwidth use to speed transfers of large numbers of files from a queue of selected transfers. The current version is quite mature and is highly recommended.

Discussion – A member offered a follow up to an item from last month about the Windows 7 frequently used program list on the Start Menu. [This question was garbled on the recording and was not included in the written summary.] When Win7 is first installed, the frequently used program list has "suggestions" from Microsoft, as was the practice with XP and Vista. Apparently these suggestions are "sticky" and do not go away as they did in the past. Some programs never seem to make the "frequent" list. Suggestions why this might be range from not being in the Windows Registry to they are not programs at all, but are DLLs that run under RunDLL.exe. An example of this is the Wireless Network Setup Wizard in WinXP. Open the shortcut and you'll see the target is "%SystemRoot%\system32\rundll32.exe shell32.dll,Control_RunDLL NetSetup.cpl,@0,WNSW".

Q – When I use an external hard drive connected by USB, I cannot get Windows to give the "Safe to remove" message when I use the Safely Remove Hardware icon in the task tray (bottom right of the screen). Instead I get a message that the drive is busy and cannot be removed. Why is this? This behavior almost never happens with a USB "thumb" drive but seems

to be more likely with hard drives with rotating media.

A – Several possibilities were offered. A common situation is that Windows Explorer has a folder open on the drive. Closing Windows Explorer sometimes will clear the "error" and allow the drive to be removed. Another suggestion was to look at any other programs open at the time to make sure they do not have a file open on the drive. Not mentioned at the meeting but I suspect that this problem may be due to one of two possible software bugs. If a backup program was used with the drive, it is possible that a background component of that program has "control" of the drive, even after the backup program's user interface is closed. Such a component may still be open, either by design or due to a bug. Windows will not release the drive so long as there is one file handle open to the drive. A file handle is a memory pointer to a file that a program requests from Windows. When the program is finished with a handle, the program is supposed to explicitly release (close) the handle. If a program loses track of a handle and forgets to release it, this behavior would result. The only recourse is to log off Windows; a reboot should not be necessary unless the background program is running as a service. [Sorry if this is little technical.]

Q – I have a website with a domain name registered with Network Solutions and I plan to move to a WordPress blog. What is a good email solution that I can use with the new blog?

A – It took a while to get the true question behind the question. At first the discussion centered on good free or low cost email solutions. Several were mentioned but were garbled on the recording. My personal favorite at the moment (this could change in a heartbeat) is AOL (aol.com) or AIM (aim.com) email. Both are from AOL and are free and totally standards based. This means that you can use any email client you want, like Thunderbird, a free open source email client. If you use the IMAP4 protocol rather than POP3, your messages can be stored on both the AOL servers as well as your own computer. This makes them available thru the AOL/AIM web interface from any computer that can reach the web or one or more of your own computers – a totally free win-win solution. But, this was not the

questioner's real problem.

Q – I am moving from my website hosted by Network Solutions because of cost and other factors. Can I keep the domain name and use it somewhere other than Network Solutions?

A – The short answer is “Yes!” Network Solutions has a reputation of making it difficult to move a domain name to another registrar, but such a transfer is, indeed, possible. The exact procedure to transfer the domain depends on who the new registrar will be. The transfer process starts at the new registrar which could be a hosting service. The discussion then turned to different ways to host a WordPress blog. One solution is a free blog site on WordPress (*wordpress.com*). These take the form of *yourblog.wordpress.com* and do not include any email. The free accounts are supported by advertising, so that can be distracting.

Next is a premium or paid account on *wordpress.com*. This allows you to use your own domain name, includes email support, more server space, etc., depending on what you want to pay for. No ads and an unlimited number of members in a private blog are also premium features.

Another solution is a website on a web hosting service. Most hosting services make it super easy to set up a blog using WordPress or other blogging software. Such accounts range in cost from about \$5/month on up depending on space, bandwidth and other factors. The service I use offers something called Simple Scripts that make installing something like WordPress a point and click operation. Such sites require a domain name and are eager to transfer your existing name to their service. There are so many of these services that comparison-shopping becomes bewildering. I consulted friends and other DACS members for recommendations.

Last, keep in mind that WordPress is not the only blog. A quick search for “free blog site” found many other dedicated blogging sites.

Q – How can I transfer my emails from an SBC/Yahoo email account to Outlook?

A – Since this is a paid Yahoo account (as part of an SBC DSL service) you can download messages using POP3. The

procedure is to set up your Yahoo email POP (post office protocol) in Outlook and download all the email in your Yahoo inbox. Messages in other folders on your Yahoo account must be moved to the inbox and then transferred to Outlook.

Q – Can I use Google Open Office (sic) to replace Microsoft Office?

A – The questioner was confused about the various “Office replacements”

currently available. Below is a quick summary:

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!

Program or Service	Description	Cost	Fancy or Plain
Open Office	Basic replacement for MS Office. Ver. 3.2 just released. File compatibility improves with each new version. Replaces Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. No direct replacement for Outlook or Access. Installs on your computer. Requires Java runtime.	Free (Paid version called StarOffice with minor added features available from Sun (now Oracle).	Fancy – good formatting tools. Versions for Windows, Linux, Mac and Solaris.
Google Docs	Mostly online word processing, spreadsheets, presentations and forms (online surveys). Offline use requires installing Google Gears.	Free	Plain. Only very simple formatting available (but that might be enough).
Zoho Office	Online replacement for Office. Includes replacements for all Office programs (including email) and much more.	Free and paid	Fancy but file compatibility limited for some high-end Office features.
Ability Office	European replacement for Office	Paid in Euros	Fancy (judging from website claims)
SmartSuite	Full Office replacement from Lotus/IBM.	\$322 on IBM.com	Fancy – was my favorite years ago. Earlier version still available for OS/2.
Thinkfree Office	Basic Office replacement with both online and installed versions. Free account has 1GB of storage.	Free and paid versions	Fancy. See Feb. 2006 general meeting (dacs.org/archive/0603/review.htm)
KOffice	Basic Office replacement for Linux only.	Free	Fancy (file compatibility unknown)
AppleWorks	Basic Office replacement	Paid	Fancy (consult your local Mac fan) Versions for Mac and Windows
NeoOffice	Basic Office replacement for Mac OS X only plus online sharing.	Free	Fancy (hey, it's on a Mac)

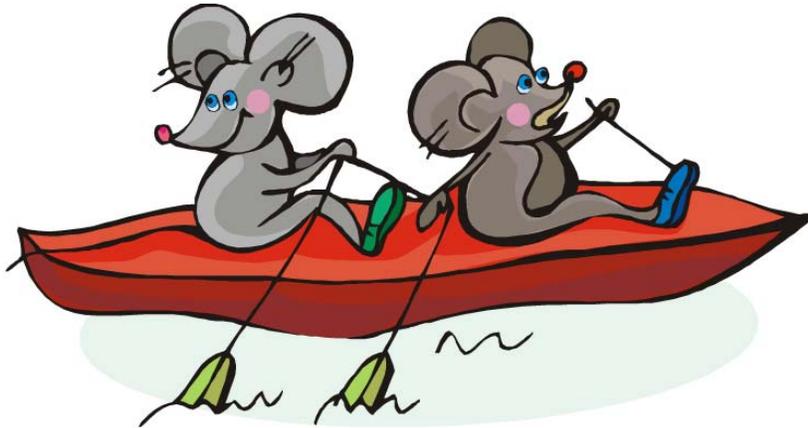
SIG NOTES, Cont. from page 5

For a final item, I talked about the bookmarks synchronization service Xmarks (<http://www.xmarks.com/>), which started out as a Firefox extension called Foxmarks, but then grew to support other browsers. You can use it to sync bookmarks across different computers as well as different browsers on the same computer.

Server and Networking. Drupal remains our focus and will for the next few months.

In February, we reviewed the steps I followed to get Drupal installed on a local machine and working on a local machine (as opposed to a hosting service). This included editing the phpMyAdmin config file to allow it to work with a password on the root MySQL user ID. With phpMyAdmin working, I was able to create a MySQL database and apply appropriate permissions and then run the Drupal installation script.

As we reviewed the installation, we found a networking issue caused by how this server is configured within my network. The problem results from the fact that the server is addressed one way inside my firewall and by another name from the outside. Apparently Drupal takes umbrage at such a situation. Steps to get around this issue eventually broke the Drupal installation. Next month we'll review a new version 6.15 installation.



When you come to the next DACS meeting
Why not bring a friend?



**Voice
for
Joanie**

Help give the
gift of speech
Call Shirley Fredlund
at 203 770-6203
and become a
Voice for Joanie
volunteer

Future Events:

March 2

Backup Possibilities
and Routines

April 6

Apple
(Tentative)

May 4

WordPress
Jeff Setaro
(Tentative)

June 1

Youtube
Scott Preston