



April 2002

Volume 13, Issue 4

TV or Not TV Depends on Your Definition

By M. Gaberel

WHAT IS A TV? A box that displays images and sound, right? Not exactly, and Rich Chernock, a DACS member and a leading edge developer of digital media technology for IBM, will explain the subtle differences at the next DACS general meeting on April 2. The topic of this presentation will be on digital television, especially on high definition TV.

Chernock emphasizes that "We're in the midst of a technology shift for television, moving from an analog world to a fully digital one."

The tube is not what it used to be. "Television sets (and their associated set-top boxes), while used for different purposes, are beginning to resemble specialized computer systems: microprocessors, network connections, storage and graphics systems. The main difference is in the intended use; computers are still really 'lean forward,' heavy-interactivity devices and TVs are 'lean back,' group-entertainment devices," adds Chernock.

Digital television is a far cry from back in the early 1960s, when about 15 kids crammed into a friend's living room, the only house on the block to have a TV, to watch Wednesday afternoon shows of Rin Tin Tin on a black and white set.

Rich Chernock specifies that "In the old days, all television was analog—each RF channel carried time-varying signals that, when received, resulted in moving pictures and sound on the TV screen. Now, the RF channels carry digital information—numbers, which when



decoded properly, also result in moving pictures and sound. Main differences include the new choices for broadcasters: more programs per RF channel—or higher quality and the opportunity to carry other forms of information, such as interactive programming. All forms of TV are changing—satellite has been digital since the introduction of the small dishes (DIRECTV and Echostar); most cable companies are shifting to digital (and trying to get the analog boxes back from their customers) and broadcast television is going digital with the introduction and broadcast of high-definition television (HDTV)."

Presentation topics will include:

- What is digital TV?
- How well is it doing (including how can you receive it)?
- How does it work (the technology behind it)?
- New opportunities and references.

Rich Chernock has been working on the standards for terrestrial broadcast HDTV through the Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC), where he holds a number of leadership positions and is responsible for several issued standards, mostly in the area of data broadcast and interactivity.

The DACS meeting will take place on April 2, 2002 at Danbury Hospital Auditorium. The meeting starts at 7 pm, with the formal presentation at 8 pm. For more information, directions and other DACS activities, check www.dacs.org.

Setaro on Safe Hex

By M. Gaberel

On March 5th, DACS resident expert Jeff Setaro gave a presentation on computer viruses. Virus protection may not be glamorous, but if not taken seriously, your computer and your life can be compromised. However, Jeff pointed out that just having anti-virus software installed does not mean a user can be reckless and do anything.

Jeff briefly explained the differences between computer viruses, Trojan horses and worms. A computer can get

infected by running a contaminated program, a .com or .exe file, or booting from a diskette that is infected, or opening a document from some Microsoft software. However, to be aware of potential dangers means that half the battle is already won. Jeff emphasized the practice of "safe hex," such as to not open email attachments or download files before they are duly scanned by the anti-virus software; to not open a document with macros enabled and to not boot from a floppy unless it is one that was personally created.

Virus *Continued on page 9*

President's File



About a year ago, I announced in this column that I would not be a candidate for president after my current term expired. Each April, the board selects its officers for the coming year, so this is my last message to you as president.

I have served DACS as its top officer for four years, but for about a decade I have had the pleasure and honor to have played a major role in its direction, both as a member of the board and as editor of *dacs.doc*. I will continue in these roles for the near future; indeed, the decreased workload will give me more time to focus on improving the newsletter and perhaps contributing more to its content.

A maxim that I firmly uphold is that one should never be allowed to become indispensable. Although I would not want to ascribe that quality to myself, the longer one serves in the same position the more difficult it is to conceive of anyone else being there. That's especially relevant in a volunteer organization where one is often given continuing tenure by default. The rationale seems to be that if things ain't broke, why fix 'em?

But when a breakdown occurs, it may be too late for a fix. An organization needs to be dynamic to survive; it must change and grow with the times. A necessary condition for that dynamism is new leadership and new ideas. Without those ideas and the will to carry them out, the organization will lose direction, become gradually irrelevant, and die.

The desktop revolution, which spawned the user group and in two decades has put a PC in nearly 61 percent

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of American households appears to be coming to an watershed. That is the conclusion of a recent consumer survey by Odyssey, a market research firm, as reported in the New York Times. Odyssey maintains that only eight percent of households which have not yet purchased a PC have any intention of doing so, while nine percent of current users expect to upgrade in the near future. As a popular pastime, the TV remains supreme, occupying 99 percent of American households. It appears that Moore's Law, which decrees that the number of transistors per integrated circuit would double every 18 months, has run headlong into the 24-hour day.

That's bad news for PC makers and the application developers whose bread and butter comes from ever faster motherboards and endless upgrades; it's also bad news for user groups which thrived on helping members navigate the quirks and complexities that came with the not always intuitive interface. Is it the end of the line for the personal computer? Is the couch potato the highest form of human evolution? Of course not! Home computing will continue to evolve and processors will get smaller, faster and even more pervasive. The TV itself is evolving as an interactive tool and a premium form of entertainment (see the preview of the next General Meeting). But to survive and remain relevant, user groups, too, will have to evolve with the new technology.

Jim Scheef has offered to put his name up for nomination. Although new to the Board, Jim has been an active member of DACS from the very beginning, helped design our Web site, and has organized and run several of our special interest groups. He has a phenomenal grasp of computer technology, an efficient managerial style, and a clear vision of the direction we need to take. I cannot imagine a better candidate to launch DACS into the future, but if one comes along, they'll get a chance to run as well at the April 8th board meeting.

To assist in the transition to a new administration, Jim has composed a personal intro and policy testament, which appears on page 8. I will sincerely welcome Jim as president, and look forward to a continuation of DACS' continued leadership in the user group community.

—ALLAN OSTERGREN
DACS

Membership Information

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HelpLine

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

d = day **e** = evening

Program	Name	Phone #	
Alpha Four	Dick Gingras	(203)426-0484	(e)
AOL	Marc Cohen	(203)775-1102	(de)
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203)792-7881	(e)
AutoCAD	Peter Hylenski	(203)797-1042	(e)
C/UNIX/ObjC	Kenneth Lerman	(203)426-4430	(de)
Clipper	Dick Gingras	(203)426-0484	(e)
COBOL	Charles Godfrey	(203)775-3543	(e)
Dbase/DOS	Alan Boba	(203)264-1753	(e)
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Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203)798-2000	(de)
Focus	Jim Scheef	(860)355-0034	(e)
Hardware	John Gallichotte	(203)426-0394	(de)
Interface-Instrumentation	Andrew Woodruff	(203)798-2000	(de)
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Microsoft Access	Dick Gingras	(203)426-0484	(e)
Multimedia	Ed Fitzgerald	(203)222-9253	(de)
Newdeal	Marc Cohen	(203)775-1102	(de)
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Paradox	Alan Boba	(203)264-1753	(e)
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Q&A ver 3/4	Anthony Telesha	(203)748-4478	(de)
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HTML/Java	James Costello	(203) 426-0097	(e)
Windows	Nick Strother	(203)743-5667	(e)

Directors' Notes

A meeting of the DACS Board of Directors was held at the RC on Monday, March 11, 2002. Present were Messrs Bovaird, Buoy, Cohen, Greger, Neary, Ostergren, Pearson, Preston, and Setaro and Mrs. Gaberel. President Ostergren presided and Secretary Buoy kept the record of the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on February 11 were approved. Treasurer Charlie Bovaird reported total cash and bank accounts of \$21,957.25, less pre-paid dues of \$8,673.00, a net of \$13,284.25. Charlie also reported current membership of 471.

President Ostergren announced that this year's Intergalactic Conference would be held (tentatively) on April 20 at an as yet undecided location. Directors Ostergren, Neary and Setaro expressed interest in attending.

During discussion of the effects of the advertising initiative, Charlie Bovaird reported that, of the twelve visitors who registered at last Tuesday's General Meeting, six acknowledged that they were prompted to attend through the advertisement. In addition, five of the visitors, without reference to the reason for attendance, became new members.

An extensive discussion ensued, regarding presentations for the General Meetings. The focus was on presentations by members, as opposed to those by the dwindling number of vendors available. Several known specialities within the membership were explored for possible presentations, including digital photography, the transcribing of archival audio and video formats to CD or DVD and small business oriented subjects.

President Ostergren queried the nominating committee regarding nominees for the office of President. Jim Scheef then announced that he intended to run for the office. He continued with a statement of some of the priorities he would pursue as president, including possible revision of the cover format of the *dacs.doc* newsletter and also the availability of the advertising rate card on our Web site. It was then suggested that Regular Meetings of this Board be convened at 7:00 pm, rather than at 7:30 pm, and, after discussion, it was unanimously agreed to do so.

—LARRY BUOY

Macinations

Microsoft Makes an Office Suite That Runs Under Unix

By Mike Kaltschnee

When Jeff first handed me the review copy of Office:mac v.X, I was surprised by three things: The packaging was very strange; the product fit on one CD(!); and it was really a version of Microsoft Office for Unix (OS X is based on Unix).

I started playing with Apple's latest operating system, OS X, about a year and a half ago. I was working with an early beta, and it was slow and you really couldn't do much with it. However, with the recently released OS X version 10.1, I can now do many of the things I need to make it my primary operating system, such as e-mail, Web browsing, telnet, ftp, and other such things. But there was something missing from OS X.

Like most people, I spend most of my computer time using Web, email, word-processing and spreadsheets. Until I got a copy of Office:mac I wasn't really able to use OS X full-time. Sure, OS X included an e-mail client that was pretty decent, and a beta of Eudora was also available. But it still wasn't usable as my only machine. I've outgrown Eudora because of poor support for HTML email, and I've become very used to the Outlook I use at work.

Microsoft has created a special email and calendaring program for OS X called Entourage. I wish they had called it Outlook, but I understand that it's a different product that needs a new name. I love it. I was up and running quickly—it's similar enough to the Windows version, but has all of the OS X look and feel. The only thing missing is a Palm software link so I can sync my Palm with the address book. I've heard that one is in the works; then I can fully switch to OS X. I love having a calendar built into my email program, and I've even started using the notepad feature.



Word is Word. I was up and running in minutes when I was writing this article. It's a true OS X version of Word, with all of the goodies that come with OS X. A new addition is something that I believe was "borrowed" from GoLive - a floating palette for formatting. I didn't like it at first glance, maybe because change is hard, but it's a fast way of getting to the formatting tools you need most. I have a confession—I really like Word with the cool candy-colored look of OS X.

Excel is Excel, too. I use Excel almost every day, and was quickly opening spreadsheets from Office 2001 and Windows Office without trouble. They have made sure that you can open almost any spreadsheet from Mac or Windows versions without any work—

even if it's an email attachment. I'm able to work with documents without worrying that I'm on a Mac and can't open something that has been sent to me.

I haven't spent much time with PowerPoint v.X yet, but I will. I use PowerPoint for teaching and presentations, so I'll have the chance soon. I did play a bit, and one thing I wanted to try was the transparency affects.

OS X has a new graphics system (Quartz) that gives you the ability to do all sorts of cool things, like transparencies and anti-aliased lines and shapes giving your projects a professional look. I had a lot of fun playing with the transparency settings for images and other features of the new PowerPoint.

Office:mac also includes an MSN Messenger client, but I use AOL Instant Messenger, so I didn't try it out. All of my friends and co-workers are on AOL's chat program, so I really don't have a choice. However, give Microsoft another year or so and I bet I'll be running the MSN tool. Microsoft rarely loses a fight.

All of the applications in Office:mac are very stable. I've been using them for a few days now, and have opened some really tough documents and have tried to crash it, but it seems to be very stable. I'm surprised Microsoft made the transition to OS X with this complex product relatively quickly—and as a result they have made OS X a serious alternative to Windows.

Before you call me a sell-out to Apple, think about what you need to use your computer for. Microsoft makes a great Web browser, word processor, spreadsheet and presentation program. I need these tools to do my job and manage my personal life. Microsoft didn't make WordPerfect miss the transition to Windows by over a year—they did it to themselves. With one company making the major software we use, we actually have a standard that makes life easier. Sure, they are in trouble for the path they went down to get to this point, but the end result has made life easier for all of us.

I don't know why Microsoft decided to create the Mac business unit, but it really saved Apple. The iMac was a great computer to give to a new user (and it was cool to look at) but without Office for the Mac, Apple stock would be really cheap.

I read somewhere that Microsoft makes more money for each new Mac than Apple does. It doesn't surprise me—Office:mac costs about \$450 for a new version, and \$199 for the upgrade. It's worth the price—your Mac is pretty much useless without Office:mac.

Mike is a DACS member who loves Microsoft for making Office for the Macintosh and keeping Apple alive - a very strange thing. Mike dares you to write something—anything—for DACS. If you need help or writing advice you can reach him online: mikek@demorgan.com.

Do you have special computer skills or a business that uses digital technology in interesting ways?

Demonstrate your unique talents and expertise at a General Meeting.

**Become a
DACS presenter**

Polite Error Messages

Messages you never want to see

Your file was so big.
It might be very useful.
But now it is gone.

The Web site you seek
Cannot be located, but
Countless more exist.

Chaos reigns within.
Reflect, repent, and reboot.
Order shall return.

Program aborting:
Close all that you have worked on.
You ask far too much.

Windows NT crashed.
I am the Blue Screen of Death.
No-one hears your screams.

Yesterday Windows worked.
Today it is not working.
Microsoft is like that.

First snow, then silence.
A thousand-dollar monitor dies
So beautifully.

With searching comes loss
And the presence of absence:
"My Novel" not found.

The Tao that is seen
Is not the true Tao-until
You install fresh toner.

Stay the patient course.
Of little worth is your ire.
The network is down.

This crash reduces
Your expensive computer
To a simple stone.

Three things are certain:
Death, taxes and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.

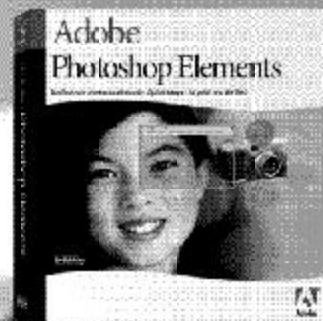
You step in the stream,
But the water has moved on.
Your file is not here.

Out of memory.
We wish to hold the whole sky,
But we never will.

Having been erased,
The document you're seeking
Must now be retyped.

Serious error.
All shortcuts have disappeared.
Screen. Mind. Both are blank...

Dear employee, we love the work you've
done here.
You are a tremendous help to our
company.
We can't imagine how we could go on
without you.
But we're gonna try...



Adobe[®] Photoshop[®] Elements

Easily create
professional-quality digital
images for print and the Web

Adobe Photoshop Elements software offers unique features designed specifically for amateur photographers, hobbyists, and business users who want an easy to use yet powerful digital imaging solution. Share of the art image editing tools free you to explore your creativity while mastering the elements of digital imaging. Work with photos taken with digital or traditional cameras and prepare your images for print, e-mail, or posting on the Web.

Adobe[®] Photoshop[®] Elements Special Offer for \$69.
See details at <http://www.adobe.com/offer/85200>



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Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: April 2002

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., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next meeting: April 9

ADVANCED OPERATING SYSTEMS. Explores and develops OS/2, Linux, and NT operating systems. For meeting notes and notices, follow link to Don's site on dacs.org.

Contact: Don Pearson, 914 669-9622 (pearson@attglobal.net). Meets on Wednesday of the week following the General Meeting, 7:30 p.m., at Don Pearson's office, North Salem, NY.

Next meeting: April 10

GRAPHICS. Create/print high-quality graphics and images.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 (graffic@ntplx.net). Meets on last Wednesday, 7p.m., at Best Photo Imaging, Brookfield.

Next Meeting: April 24

INTERNET PROGRAMMING. Programs for Web site/server.

Contact: Chuck Fizer (cfizer@compuserve.com). Meets on 1st Wednesday, 3-5 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center. Members' suggestions are welcome.

Next Meeting: April 3

INVESTMENT STRATEGIES. Discusses various investment strategies to maximize profits and limit risk.

Contact: Paul Gehrett, 203 426-8436, (pgehr4402@aol.com). Meets 3rd Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Edmond Town Hall, Newtown.

Next Meeting: April 18

LINUX. Helps in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. May also be of interest to Apple owners using OS X.

Contact: Bill Keane (bkeane.nai@rcn.com) 203-438-8032. Meets 3rd Wednesday, 7:30pm at the DACS Resource Center. Next Meeting: April 17.

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: April 11 (Note name change to Server SIG)

SMALL BUSINESS. All aspects of small business management.

Contact: Matthew Greger, 203 748-2919, (matthewwg@thebusinesshelper.com).

Meets on last Wednesday, 1-3 p.m.

Next Meeting: April 24

VISUAL BASIC. Develops Windows apps with Visual Basic.

Contact: Chuck Fizer, 203 798-9996 (CFizer@compuserve.com) or Jim Scheef, 860 355-8001 (JScheef@Telemarksys.com).

Meets on 1st Wednesday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: April 3

VOICE FOR JOANIE. Provides and supports people with Lou Gehrig's disease with special PC computer equipment.

Contact: Shirley Fredlund, 860 355-2611 ext. 4517 (voiceforjoanie@juno.com).

Look for announcements

Next Meeting: Suspended until further notice.

WALL STREET. Examines Windows stock market software.

Contact: Phil Dillaway, 203 367-1202 (dillaway@ntplx.net). Meets on last Monday, 7p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: April 29

SIG News & Other Events

Linux. The LUG will help new users install and maintain the Linux operating system on their personal machines. This sig may also be of interest to Apple owners using OS X. The group meets on the third Wednesday of the month, 7:30pm at the DACS Resource Center, Ives Manor (lower level), 198 Main Street, Danbury. Contact: Bill Keane (bkeane.nai@rcn.com) 203_438_8032.

Server and Networking (the SIG formerly known as Back Office). Our March meeting was a ton of fun discussing and trying the various options to connect Microsoft Access to a SQL Server database. We connected to the Northwind sample database using both a 'Project' file and a regular Access database (.MDB file).

Using an MDB file gives you the option to either attach to the tables on SQL Server or to import the data into the Access MBD database. The former means you work with the live data on SQL Server while importing gives you an 'off_line' snapshot of the data at the time of the import. Attached tables require almost no space on your PC while imported data can use lots of space since you have actually copied the data to your PC.

The project file is a direct connection to the SQL Server database and gives access to all tables, views and stored procedures contained in that database, subject to permissions, of course. This was a new feature in Access 2000 and Access 2002 adds some nice GUI features that make this option much easier to use. Like attached tables this option uses very little space on your PC. The big advantage here is that this option bypasses the Access Jet database engine when connecting to SQL Server. This can improve performance markedly. The down side is that you cannot use Access queries. Instead you must have database permissions that allow you to make and change views and stored procedures. There is real danger here that a user could accidentally change something in the database that breaks other programs that use that same database.

All of the various methods allow you to use the Access report generator to design and run reports. For most users in most situations, this is the goal, and all reports are stored on your PC in either the project file or the MDB.

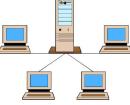
Next month we will begin our exploration of Linux as a replacement for Windows 2000 Server _ from soup to nuts _ file and print services, databases, domain control, etc. Of course Random Access questions can address anything ranging from SQL Server, Active Directory or how current events are affecting personal privacy. The April meeting will be April 11th at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center. See you then.

Small Business. Just a reminder the first SIG meeting for Small Business, was Wednesday, March 27 from 1pm to 3pm at the Resource Center in the Ives Manor. Our first topic was be developing a Marketing Strategy. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact Matthew Greger at matthewwg@thebusinesshelper.com.

the **VB and Internet Programming SIGs** were canceled for March. Programs planned for March will be moved to April.

April 2002

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																															
	1	2  7:00 PM GENERAL MEETING Hi-Definition Television	3  3-5 PM Internet Programming Chuck Fizer	4 7:00 PM VISUAL BASIC Chuck Fizer 203 798-9996	5	6																																																																																																															
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Transitions

A Message to our Members

By Jim Scheef

Editor's note: At its next meeting on April 8th, the DACS board will select a slate of officers for the next year. Jim Scheef has offered to run for the office of president. Below, Jim offers a vision of the direction DACS should take in the future, and his role in fulfilling it.



Being president of DACS was not quite on my agenda. "Maybe next year", I told the rest of the board. As a new board member, I felt I should be on the board for at least a year before taking on an office. Well, despite my protests, here I am. For the next year DACS will either grow or suffer under my leadership.

As Allan Ostergren moves into his new position as Immediate Past President, I want to commend him and the rest of the board for a job really well done. Allan remains on the board and will continue as newsletter editor. He will also continue to provide his leadership as we move to grow th club.

For those of you who don't know me, here's a little background. I joined DACS sometime in the late '80s. At my first meeting, the members were struggling to find a new name for the group. The name Danbury Osborn Group didn't quite fit anymore as more members bought PCs and let stuff pile up on the Osborn in the closet. The name they selected was Western Connecticut Microcomputer Users Group. I suggested the "microcomputer" part since that seemed all inclusive. Over the intervening years my activity level has varied from virtually nil to gung ho. Several years ago I wanted to learn Visual Basic and took a class from DACS University. That class led to the Visual Basic SIG that I still co-lead with Chuck Fizer. The Server and Networking SIG started about two years ago as the Back Office SIG to explore server-based computing and application-development.

The last few years have been difficult for computer user groups as the personal computer and the computing industry

have changed. Using a PC is no longer a mystical experience, although new users are just as challenged today as we were 20 years ago. For many people, the 'Start' button is no less daunting than the A> prompt was then.

While I certainly don't want to sound like a politician, my goals for the club all seem to include the word "more".

- More SIGs
- More and better networking opportunities
- More business-oriented functions, particularly small business.

The Special Interest Groups are the heart of DACS. If you're not attending at least one SIG, you are missing out. At one time we had more than twice as many SIGs as we have now. They covered all manner of topics from networks and multi-tasking to investing and DOS for beginners. Certainly the topics will change over time but we need to keep alive the concept of people sharing information and helping each other learn.

Networking should be a major goal for DACS - and I don't mean ethernet! This networking brings people together so they can meet, make friends, learn and find business opportunities. We can do much more here than we are do-

ing. Something in this area just might even be a social event!

Many DACS members own or operate small businesses. DACS can provide both an opportunity to learn to build their business as well as a place to market their services. The new Small Business SIG is a big step in the right direction.

How do we accomplish all this? Thru your involvement, of course! Grab me at a meeting and tell me what you would like to see and just maybe we can all make it happen.

New Members

2/18/2 thru 3/19/2

- 1) Lou Aquavia
- 2) Bill Bracken
- 3) Kim Bullis-Byrd
- 4) Jim Chambers
- 5) Dan Connors
- 6) Jake Cunningham
- 7) Chris Cusumano
- 8) David Dyson
- 9) Linda Eyerman
- 10) Ray Ferro

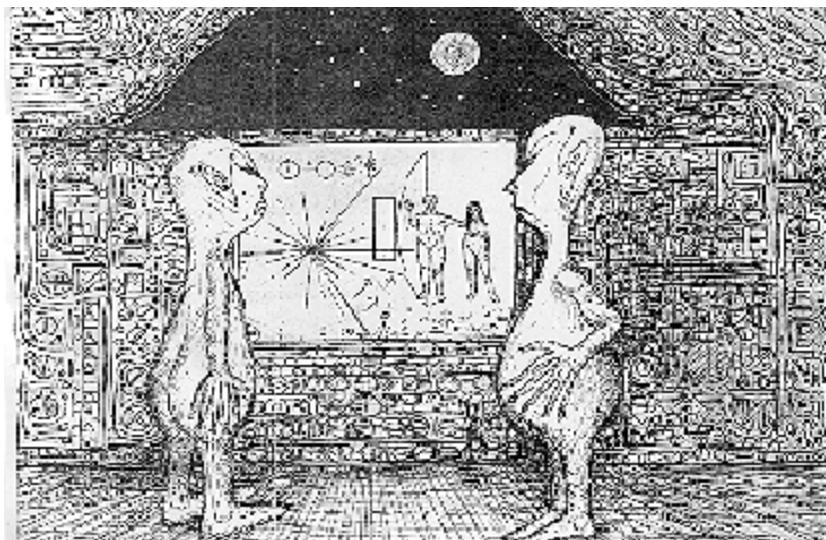
THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your mailing label reads

**EXP 2/2002
or earlier**

You need to renew your
DACS membership
NOW

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"These earthlings and their Web porn sites are so annoying."

Virus Continued from page 1

I would add another safeguard that I picked up from an earlier presentation by Jeff and that I enforce at home: forbidding the kids to bring home any games or CD that were copied. My high school son mentioned recently that three of his friends got viruses in the last month. As soon as my kids were old enough to understand I told them about abiding by the copyright laws; even more importantly, the need to be careful of possible "germs" brought by unlawful copies. If they really want a game or a CD we will buy it. Additional recommendations by Jeff are to back-up on a regular basis, especially important files and not to panic should disaster strike. A user can do more damage when emotions are high than walk away for a while and approach the situation with a clear head.

Jeff also mentioned the important subject of virus prevention in the enterprise. Some of my colleagues grumble when, for example, they are not allowed to install a favorite screen-saver. What they may not realize is that the MIS manager is holding a tight ship. Surely a virus from inside the company would bring downtime and affect productivity with all the negative repercussions on the business.

During his presentation Jeff was not afraid to critique the "brand" anti-viruses, even though some in the audience may not have agreed with him. Jeff also talked briefly about firewalls, both software and hardware, which are most important to users of "always on" computers such as cable and DSL.

A piece of advice that was most timely for me was Jeff's updated list of recommended anti-virus software developers. For the last couple of months (or even longer, I have to sheepishly admit) I have put off looking at the Norton Anti-virus that came with my computer. The software did not update properly and I was at a loss on how to find pertinent information on the web page where I could update. I, therefore, put the anti-virus on the back burner until last night, when I visited the web pages of companies that Jeff recommended.

Earlier, I had asked Jeff if I should pursue Norton or install Kaspersky that I had used on my previous computer. Jeff ruled out Norton and recommended F-Secure Anti-Virus (www.f-secure.com) and Norman Virus Control (www.norman.com). He also suggested that I look at F-Prot for Windows (www.f-prot.com) and NOD32 Anti-Virus System

(www.nod32.com) As far as Kaspersky is concerned, Jeff said that right now it is buggy so it would be better to wait until that anti-virus was fixed.

Last night I downloaded the 30-day trial version of F-Prot for Windows.

I like it and will register. It does not conflict with anything on the computer, it has a clean interface with straightforward information and is uncomplicated to use. The price is right at \$25.00/year. To get started, I only had to input my mail server and mail address. It is a lot like Kaspersky. More subjectively, I like the fact that this software is from a company in Iceland. I had no second thought of uninstalling Norton, including all the fancy features that I never used and had no intention of using.

Even though antivirus software is installed on our computers, Jeff stressed that security is not magic; vigilance has to be maintained at all times. Also antivirus software is a perishable item. Updating and renewability of the virus protection are the keys for our computers to remain virus free.

MARLÈNE GABEREL is a board member of DACS and VP for Marketing. She is a regular contributor of the monthly meeting preview.

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Cyber Law

Consultants and Contracts

By Francis G. Pennarola, Esq.

As the economy ebbs and flows, more and more people find themselves working as Consultants, rather than as hourly or salaried employees. This is particularly true in the Information Technology area. Companies will often have a short-term need, for instance, for help in setting up an ecommerce application, where it doesn't pay to hire a full time employee. There may be budgetary considerations, which allow the hiring of consultants, but not employees. Whatever the reason, the consultant is here to stay.

The relationship between a consultant and a company who wants to utilize his or her services is best spelled out in a written contract. The contract should cover such areas as the nature of the services the consultant will provide, the length of the engagement and payment terms. Remedies for breach, such as the recovery of interest and attorneys' fees in the event of non-payment, are customary. Consultants often look to limit any damages they may be forced to pay to the amount received under the contract.

In this article, we will discuss several provisions, which, in one form or another, appear in most IT consulting agreements. They are confidentiality and trade secret protection, intellectual property ownership and covenants not to compete.

Most companies employing consultants will insist that a consultant agree to keep strictly confidential all information, proprietary and otherwise, that the consultant learns as a result of the assignment. What is "Confidential Information" is typically broadly defined. The company has a legitimate business interest in keeping its business activity and plans secret from its competitors. Typically, a company will insist that the information be kept confidential unless and until the information becomes public knowledge through legitimate channels, with no wrongdoing on the part of the consultant.

Coupled with or part of a confidentiality provision is often a trade secret protection clause. A trade secret has been defined as "any formula, pattern, device or compilation of information which is used in one's business and which gives him an opportunity to obtain an advan-

tage over competitors who do not know or use it. It may be a formula for a chemical compound, a process of manufacturing, treating or preserving material, a pattern for a machine or other device, or a list of customers."

Trade secrets are entitled to protection under civil and criminal laws even in the absence of an agreement. If a consultant was working for Coca-Cola and came across the secret formula for Coke Classic, he would divulge it at his peril. A trade secret can lose its protected status if it becomes known or is otherwise not dealt with in a confidential manner. If the president of Coca-Cola shares the Coke formula with one of his golfing buddies at Augusta National, and someone else in the foursome shares it with the Atlanta Constitution newspaper, there is likely no trade secret violation if the consultant tells his friends the formula.

Confidentiality provisions are a legitimate and necessary component of consulting agreements.

Intellectual property ownership clauses are frequent in IT consulting agreements. If a consultant is hired to create software for a customer, the customer might reasonably believe that it owns the software. Absent a provision in the consulting agreement to the contrary, this is likely not the case. The intellectual property belongs to the creator, in this case, the consultant. A well drafted intellectual property clause will recognize both the customer's need to own the product and the consultant's desire to be able to utilize the knowledge acquired in developing the software on other projects.

Covenants not to compete are most often found in contracts between consultants. For example, XYZ Consulting Company may have an agreement to provide Acme Manufacturing with an Oracle Database consultant. XYZ doesn't have anyone on staff with the necessary skills, so it hires Joe Consultant. XYZ will want to have a provision in its contract with Joe that will prevent Joe from competing with XYZ by going to Acme directly. Typically, Joe will have to agree, that for one year or longer, he won't seek employment with any of XYZ's customers without its consent. XYZ may also want to limit Acme's

ability to hire away its employees or consultants. This is usually called a non-solicitation clause.

There are legitimate business reasons for these types of clauses. I have seen some that are too broad and overreaching, but good faith negotiating can resolve most disputes. If anyone has any questions, feel free to e-mail me at fgp@danburylaw.com.

FRANCIS G. PENNAROLA is a member of the law firm of Chipman, Mazzucco, Land & Pennarola, LLC in Danbury. He regularly represents clients in the IT, website development and advertising fields.

Francis G. Pennarola, Esq.

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When dining at the
DACS Resource Center,
please carry your
leftovers out with you.

Thanks!

The

management



Random Access

February 2002

Bruce Preston Moderator

Members who are unable to attend the General Meeting may submit questions to 'askdacs@aol.com' by the day prior to the meeting. We will attempt to get an answer for you. Please provide enough detail, as we will not be able to ask for additional information.

Q. (askdacs) A friend's family has a problem with connecting to any web page. The Windows 98SE machine has a Pentium 233, 128MB RAM, 4GB hard drive, and a 56K modem. We are using AOL 7.0 dial-up. Any suggestions why we don't get a good connection?

A. It sounds like a phone line problem. You might go to the US Robotics site and look into their LINE TEST service. You can find information on this page: www.usr.com/support/s-search-results.asp?search-section=%2Fsupport&search-terms=line+test&search.x=27&search.y=15.

Note—it is not a free telephone call. Some members report that AOL previously had a modem diagnostic program, but are not sure if it is included in 7.0.

Q. I have a Windows 2000 Pro machine, and want to connect an Epson 1520 parallel printer to the USB port. I have a USB to parallel converter by Belkin. The machine reports that the printer is there, but it can't or won't print. I get a message that says that 16-bit applications may not be used. Any suggestions?

A. One member reported having a similar problem that was solved by using an IBM-provided USB to parallel converter. He was no longer using it, so they worked out an arrangement.

Q. I have a lot of files and folders in Temporary Internet Files, that I can't get rid of. I get a disk error pointing to one of the files within. My backup software sees the files, but Windows Explorer doesn't see them.

A. Some files are marked hidden and/or system. If they really bother you, then you could delete the entire Temporary Internet Files folder—it will be recreated when needed.

Q. I have a screen saver that worked under Windows 98, but won't work with XP.

A. XP is based upon Windows NT, and is exceptionally picky as to what can run in the machine. XP requires that applications be truly well-behaved. Looks like the screen saver won't work on XP.

Q. I am anticipating putting multiple OS on my hard disk. If the master boot record gets damaged, how do I reconstruct it?

A. FDISK /MBR will only reconstruct the Windows MBR for whichever version of Windows you took the FDISK from. It will not do anything if you have Linux, for example. You might look into ReqQ Disk by NetZ Computing www.morgan-cybersys.com/Resq.html, or look at the ONTRACK www.ontrack.com/ site.

Q. Does anyone have experience with low cost ISPs? I am looking at Cayuse / www.cayuse.net/ which is \$12/month and has a local access number here in Danbury.

A. No one present had used Cayuse Networks yet. Another mentioned was NetZero.net <http://www.netzero.net>. Be sure to look at volume limitations, and whether they will work with Windows 2000 or Windows XP. Many times the free or lowcost services require that you use a customized browser and/or e-mail application that will put ads "in your face?"—so check on that as well.

Q. Is there a way to activate a screen saver immediately?

A. It depends upon the particular features made available in the screen saver. When you go to the screen settings property page, look at 'advanced

features' to see if there is an 'activate' hotkey.

Q. When you install an application it is recommended that you shutdown all running applications. Is there a fast way to do this? Using Ctrl-Alt-Del to bring up the Task Manager will only let you stop one task at a time.

A. Take a look at AppKiller www.padring.com/soft/System/Utilities/AppKiller.html

Q. I think that the CMOS battery in my notebook computer has failed. Can it be replaced?

A. It varies by model and manufacturer. Some machines have a hatch through which you can reach the battery. However, even these may have the battery soldered or held in place by a spot-welded strap—in which case it will have to be done by a qualified technician. Incidentally, for almost a year I thought that I had that problem with my notebook machine—it turned out that the ROM BIOS chips were somewhat loose. The symptoms were the same—the machine just wouldn't boot until the machine had been plugged in (and therefore heated up) for some time.

Q. I went to create a backup of a few files onto a ZIP disk, and the backup software warned me that it would only create one backup on the disk. The disk isn't even close to being full. What's going on?

A. If you make a 'backup' then you only get one backup on the disk. The backup created by the IOMEGA-provided software is a compressed file containing all of the files that were selected for backup. However, if you just COPY the files without compression, just using Windows Explorer to copy the files, etc., or create a .ZIP file and then copy the created .ZIP file to the ZIP disk (too many ZIP things here, they are not the same!) then you may have as many copies as you like.

BRUCE PRESTON is president of West Mountain Systems, a consultancy in Ridgefield, CT, specializing in database applications. A DACS director and moderator of the Random Access segment at the monthly general meetings, Bruce also leads the Access SIG.

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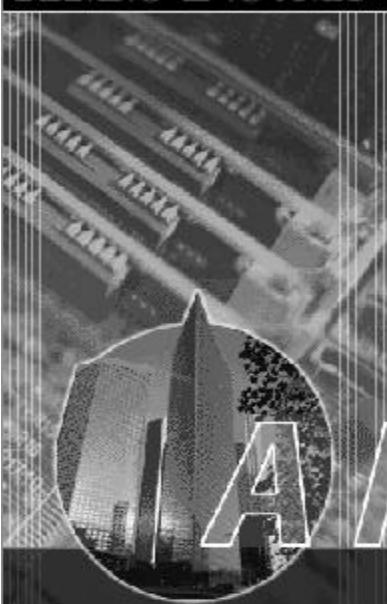
For more info, eMail Matthew Greger at:
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Future Events

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May 7 • Microsoft Corp. Digital Photography
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