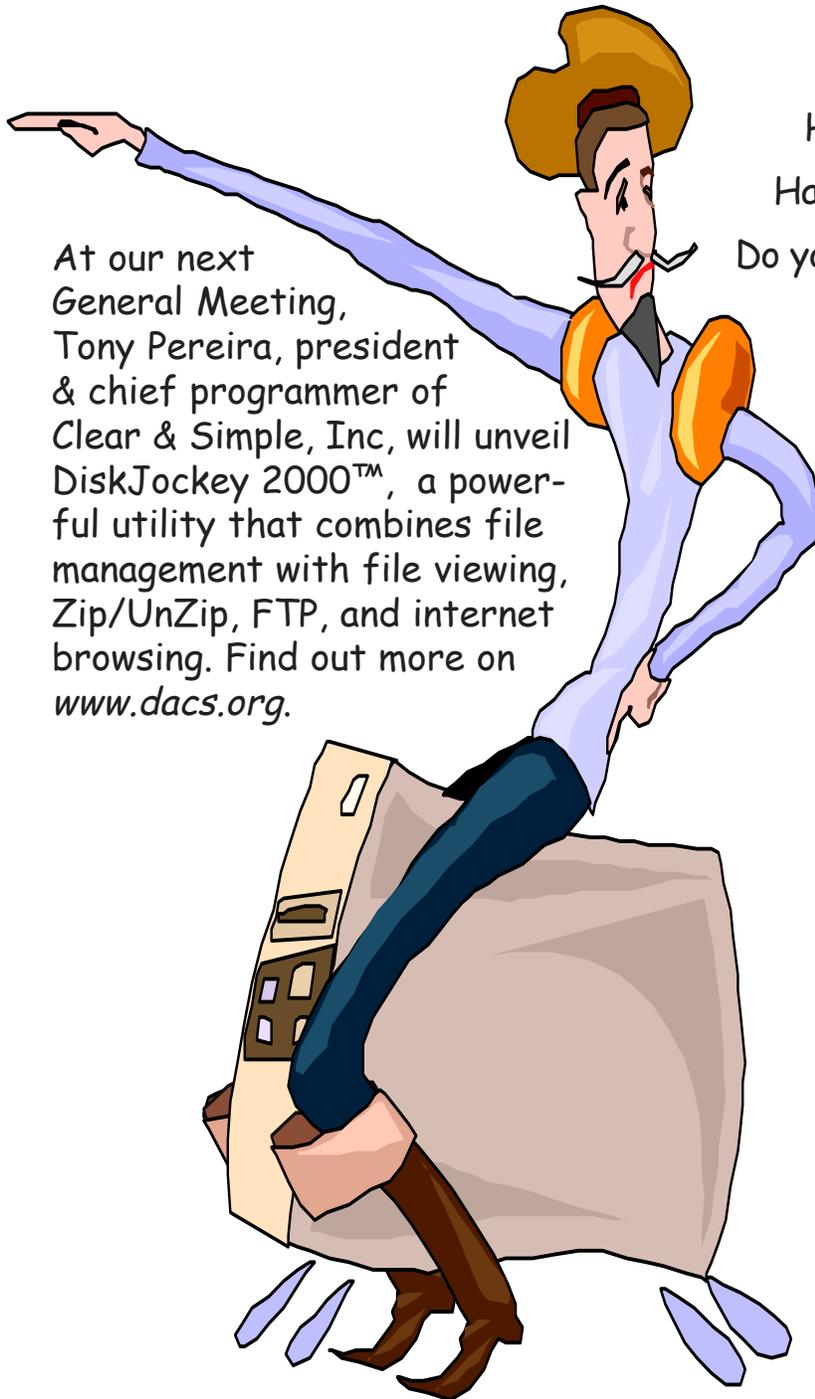


Getting Control of Your PC



At our next General Meeting, Tony Pereira, president & chief programmer of Clear & Simple, Inc, will unveil DiskJockey 2000™, a powerful utility that combines file management with file viewing, Zip/UnZip, FTP, and internet browsing. Find out more on www.dacs.org.

Is your floppy looking sloppy?
Has your draggin' been droppin'
Has your hard drive lost its jive?
Do you ride miles to find your files,
or run laps to launch your aps?
Is hassle-free computing an

Impossible Dream?

Note:
Meeting has
been moved
to June 10



President's File



PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS VERSION 1.1

LEFT ONE of my goals for DACS out of last month's column. That goal is to start a Genealogy SIG. My Dad did years of research on our family tree. Most of his work is on paper but he did enter the names into a database on his Macintosh. I transferred his database to Family Tree Maker as part of my efforts to migrate him to Windows on a PC. Our June speaker was to have been Steve Nickle, Marketing Manager at My Family, Inc., the Provo, UT operator of the Ancestry.Com and Roots.Com web sites. Steve canceled his DACS presentation two weeks ago when his company purchased Genealogy.Com—their largest competitor. I first called Steve late last year when I discovered the Ancestry.Com web site. My experience may not be typical, but I searched for my grandfathers and found both listed in the Ancestry World tree database along with my grandmothers. When I called my mother and read her the names, she said "well, that would be my mother's Uncle Fred". The irony is that the person who posted the names was really interested in a far-off branch of my Mother's family tree and my grandfather was at the end of his research. With Mom's confirmation of the names, I added about 15 names to Dad's database. I really hope we can work out another date for Steve Nickle this fall or early next ski season.

New Microsoft MSN product not to be pooh-poohed

If you're like me, you're always looking for ways to be more efficient. Multi-

tasking is a way of life. So when I heard about the iLoo, I had to well, head to the reading room where I could check out the articles in peace. The iLoo is reported to be an Internet-enabled port-a-potty. Yes, fully functional portable outhouse with a wireless keyboard and plasma screen that allows the user to take care of business while taking care of business on the web. No, I'm not making this up. Look for yourself at "Microsoft's iLoo is Flush with Greatness" (www.extremetech.com/article2/0,3973,1053130,00.asp) along with the discussion that follows the news item. The discussion will bring back memories of all those jokes your kids bring home from grade school.

Where Microsoft goes, did Apple really invent?

While this item was written as a spoof of Apple technology, it was probably the inspiration for the iLoo. Check out the iToilet, in a selection of pastel colors at www.electric-chicken.co.uk. All this humor will be only a click away once Jeff gets this on the DACS.ORG web site.

Wireless

How many of you are using Wi-Fi either at home or at work? Wi-Fi stands for Wireless Fidelity. I always figured it was a play on words from Hi-Fi. The ability to plunk your laptop down anywhere in the house and use the Internet is really cool! Right now the biggest impediment to this technology is the industry itself, which cannot settle on a standard - 802.11b was the original flavor with theoretical speeds up to 11Mbps on a 2.4 GHz frequency band. Then came 802.11a (yes, they went backwards in the alphabet) with up to 54Mbps on a frequency of 5 GHz, so it was faster but incompatible with the first flavor. Now we're starting to see 802.11g with faster speeds (over 50Mbps) on the "old" 2.4 GHz frequency so it is supposed to be backward compatible with the original "b" stuff.

So why don't you have to pay someone for the right to use these devices on the airwaves? Well, several years ago in a fit of rational thinking, the FCC set aside a couple of small frequency bands for unlicensed use. This means that these little slices of spectrum are free for anyone to use for whatever purpose. Now they didn't just give away anything they considered valuable - after all the 2.4Ghz band already had kitchen microwave ovens and other

Ramblings, continued on page 4

Membership Information

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



Don Neary
 APCUG Liaison
 203-746-5538

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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

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Alpha Four	Dick Gingras	(203) 426-0484	(e)
AOL	Marc Cohen	(203) 775-1102	(d e)
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881	(e)
AutoCAD	Peter Hylenski	(203) 797-1042	(e)
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QuickBooks	Bill Sears	(203) 743-3367	(e)
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Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	(203) 798-9996	(d)
HTML/Java	James Costello	(203) 426-0097	(e)
Windows	Nick Strother	(203) 743-5667	(e)

Directors' Notes

A meeting of the Board of Directors was held at the Resource Center on Monday, May 12, 2003. Present were Messrs. Bovaird, Buoy, Cohen, Gallichotte, Keane, Ostergren, Scheef and Setaro. President Jim Scheef presided and Secretary Larry Buoy kept the record Minutes of the previous meeting held on April 7, 2003 were approved.

Treasurer Bovaird reported combined bank and postal account balances plus postage on hand totaling \$18,186.89 in liquid assets, less a liability of \$7,315.00 in pre-paid dues, leaving a net of \$10,871.89. He also reported a current membership of 453.

Upon initiation of discussion on future presentations for General Meetings, Jeff Setaro announced that he had a commitment from Tony Pereira of Clear & Simple, Inc. for a presentation at the June meeting on DiskJockey 2000, a file organization program. This would replace the canceled program by MyFamily.com. For July, Wade Anderson, Director of Information Technology for the City of Danbury, is expected to make a presentation and Bill Keane was cajoled into preparing a program on desktop applications available for the Linux OS, possibly in August. It was also suggested that a presentation on where employment opportunities exist for the computer technologist and Jeff Setaro agreed to try to organize same for September, and that a similar program to that of last year, where members demonstrated a favorite shareware or freeware application.

In response to a short discussion on the more timely placement of posters for General Meetings, Allan Ostergren stated that he would attempt to choose the clip art and copy for the cover of the upcoming newsletter (the basis of the poster) earlier and distribute same to the directors. Related thereto, the subject of making the content of the newsletter available earlier for inclusion on the Web Site was discussed.

Marc Cohen responded to a query regarding the status of the free business card ads in the newsletter, stating that there were currently six ads, filling the space limit. Also broached was the question of expanding the advantage of DACS' relationship with the Danbury Chamber of Commerce and it was agreed to include a link from the DACS Web Site to that of the Chamber.

Next discussed was the fact that the sections of the disclaimer on the Web Site and the Copyright Notice contained in the newsletter pertaining to permissions for

Directors Notes continued on page 4

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP,
MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
(required by 39 U.S.C. sec. 3685)

DACS.DOC, ISSN 1084_6573 is published monthly at 4 Gregory Street, Danbury, CT 6810_7271.

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Known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities are: None.

The purpose, function, and non-profit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.

Ramblings, continued from page 2

stuff and the cordless phone industry immediately started to tell us that if more megahertz was better, then a few gigahertz must be awesome! However, the key is that no one had to pay billions to "buy" this spectrum in FCC auctions. (The debt incurred to pay for spectrum is the major problem crippling the cellphone industry.) So now you can buy a couple of relatively inexpensive devices and set up your own wireless network. I set mine up a couple years ago when this stuff still cost real money but it was a no-brainer even then compared to the cost to wire my house with network outlets.

Now, as 802.11b and 802.11g gain critical mass, wireless "hotspots" are popping up all over. Some, like those at Starbucks, cost money to use but many are free. Check out the article "Internet Access for the Cost of a Cup of Coffee" in the May 8, 2003, Circuits section of the New York Times. Even McDonalds is experimenting with wireless networking.

And if you thought all you could do was surf the web, well... How about making free Internet phone calls using free Internet access on a free wireless hotspot? Makes you wonder how long you'll need that \$40 per month cell phone, eh?

Three years ago John Patrick said this would be a revolutionary technology. He was right on!

JIM SCHEEF
DACSPREZ@DACS.ORG

Directors Notes continued from page 3

reprinting of articles, etc., required permissions prior to reprinting; it was agreed that a list of those officers through whom such permission might be obtained should be appended thereto. It was also agreed that receipt by DACS of a copy of any publication containing a reprint of an article appearing in the newsletter or, in the case of a Web Site, access to such Web Site, be mandatory. Likewise, ADCs should provide a copy of its newsletter to the source of any article appearing therein Jeff Setaro will pursue this.

Briefly discussed was the possibility of implementing a bulletin board at the RC to allow networking among the members and the public re: SIG discussions, etc., with no definitive action being taken.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that any future loan of DACS-owned equipment be forbidden without specific approval of this action by the Board of Directors and must include custody of such equipment by an officer or designated member of DACS familiar with the operation of thereof.

President Scheef informed the meeting of the request by the Danbury Housing Authority for the donation of the "reception desk" furniture now occupying the entrance room of the RC for its own area across the hall from the RC. Without hesitation, it was agreed to so donate that furniture.

— LARRY BUOY



© Milam 2003

*Dear Larry, Instead of a picture, I am
attaching a copy of my genome.*

New Members

3/17/03 to 5/22/03

- 1) Emagene Sandoval
- 2) Dr. Richard Lee
- 3) Edward Kelleher

THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER

If the membership date on your
mailing label reads

EXP 3/2003

or earlier

You need to renew your
DACS membership

NOW

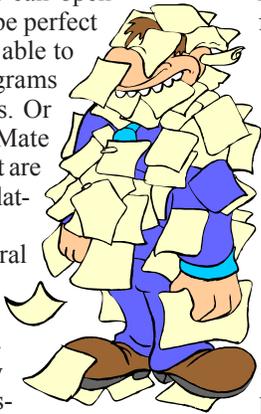
Meeting Preview

Get Control of your PC with Disk Jockey 2000

By M. Gaberel

WOULDNT IT be very convenient to have one program on your computer that can open any file? In my case it would be perfect if I had one piece of software able to open the different CAD programs that I receive on a daily basis. Or what about those old Multi Mate word processed documents that are basically irretrievable with the latest word processor?

At the June 10th, 2003 general meeting – please note the date - Tony Pereira, President & Chief Programmer of Clear & Simple, Inc, creator of DJ, may have the answers to those questions. DiskJockey 2000, or DJ for short, is a file multitool that combines file management with file viewing, Zip/UnZip, FTP, and internet browsing. Tony Pereira



is the designer and coder of DJ, and knows the program inside and out.

Pereira says that DJ has a built-in file viewer recognizing more than 230 file formats. Its instant view of all popular word processor, spreadsheet, database, graphics, web documents, presentation, and compressed formats makes it the best file viewing software on the market. Just select a file from the file list and its contents are instantly displayed.

Clear and Simple's mission statement is to "simplify computing for the end-user computer market" which is very pertinent to many DACS members, I assume.

Peirera adds that "Multi-Threading is key to DJ's responsive operations, as all major functions are performed in separate

threads – Copy, Move, Zip, Unzip, and each FTP upload or download."

The features that I find the most desirable in the software are the abilities to copy directly to the clipboard from the view panel, and to print a file without having the original software installed on the computer. DJ can open 230 applications.

Another application of Disk Jockey 2000 is the convenience of the Zip/Unzip utility, which supports all major compression formats, with the added advantage of viewing a file inside a zipped file without unzipping it first.

To learn more about this handy software and the June DACS presentation, please check dacs' web page at www.dacs.org

The meeting will start, as usual, at 7:00pm at Danbury Hospital Auditorium. with a questions and answers session, followed by some club announcements. The main presentation is at 8:00. Please note the date is June 10th due to a conflict with the Hospital which needed its auditorium for the first Tuesday in June.

MARLENE is a DACS VP and Board member.

Meeting Review

Acronym City

By M. Gaberel

AT THE MAY 6TH general meeting, DACS President Jim Scheef gave members the whole scoop on what's going on behind the scenes on the Internet. Jim's presentation was so absorbing that it was difficult to take notes, so what follows is a brief summary of his remarks.

Jim's ultimate goal was to make us understand the security risks when we are innocently or naively surfing the web or checking e-mail and connected through DSL or cable modems. He prepared us to set up Internet security on our computers, especially for users on a network.

At the very beginning Jim issued some rules. If he used an acronym and didn't define it, we were to shout out "Acronym break!". Questions were encouraged, but "really good" questions would be deferred to the end. On his slides were a drawing of a computer, a cloud and another connected computer and what he was going to elaborate on is the content of that cloud. We started with some history of the Internet, where it came from, who invented it (J.C.R.

Licklider, according to Jim's research), but many others collaborated. Jim talked about the beginning of the Arpanet in 1969. The Internet switched to TCP/IP (invented by Vinton Cerf) on January 1st, 1983 from the original Network Control Program (NCP).

Unlike the phone system, where there is a direct circuit of wires between the two phones, the Internet uses packet switching, where data is broken into small bundles of data which are then routed from one computer to the other. Packets can take different routes when being sent and received.

Jim defined the "plumbing" of the Internet as a "network of network." He explained some Terminology that we often hear in relation to networks and the Internet, such as repeaters, bridges, routers and switches—all devices hidden somewhere in that bubble on that slide. He also mentioned the MAC (Media Access Control) address, a definition that I was anxious to find out about. A few weeks earlier I received a couple of e-mails from Charter Cable, my ISP supplier, requesting the MAC address of my cable modem. I had ignored the first

request, and upon the second I asked acquaintances because I wondered if it was a legitimate request or if someone had "borrowed" an e-mailing list from Charter. Jim suggested that I contact Charter to find out why they needed the address. A 15-minute phone call to Charter customer service did not bring much, except being on hold for 14 minutes. The customer representative told me that if my connection was ok, not to bother to answer the e-mail. But I was assured that it was legitimate. If my connection was not good I was advised to reply to the e-mail. So much for that, and the request was duly ignored. I wonder why Charter would not keep a log or list of the modem that they supply.

Jim defined the MAC address under the subject of switches which has two definitions, the older being a device similar to a bridge that works at the data link (MAC address) layer but begins to forward the packet immediately, and newer switches that include some router-like functions to decide which port should receive the packet.

On the whole, Jim's presentation was well organized and informative, and helped to bring to light much of the techie jargon that clouds the Internet. However, much much more remains to be explained, and I suspect this subject will be a good repeater for DACS meetings in months to come.

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: June 2003

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

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (bpreston@mags.net).

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

Next meeting: June 17

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: June 11

dotNET. Programs for Web site/server.

Contact: Chuck Fizer (cfizer@snet.net). Meets on 1st Wednesday, 4-6 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center. Members' suggestions are welcome.

Next Meeting: June 4

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: June 25

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: June 19

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

Contact: Bill Keane (bkeane.nai@rcn.com) 203-438-8032

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

Next Meeting: June 18

MICROCONTROLLER. Investigates microcontroller applications from theory to hands-on implementation and member projects.

Contact: John Gallichotte, 203 426-0394, (tlclotus@ieee.org).

Meets on 4th Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: June 24

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: June 12

VISUAL BASIC. Develops Windows apps with Visual Basic.

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

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

Next Meeting: June 4

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

Contact: Shirley Fredlund, 203 770-6203 (voiceforjoanie@juno.com).

Next Meeting: Look for announcements.

WALL STREET. Examines Windows stock market software.

Contact: Phil Dilloway, 203 367-1202 (dilloway@ntplx.net).

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

Next Meeting: June 30

SIG News & Other Events

dotNET. The next meeting of the dotNET SIG will be on June 4th.

Server & Networking. The big topic of the May meeting was how to run a small, but real Internet-accessible web site on a server at home. First, using a cable or DSL Internet connection is less than ideal because of the slower uplink speeds provided by this type of home Internet connection. Second, running a "server" on a home cable or DSL connection may violate the terms of service. As Louis Rukeyser always says, "No guarantees from the management."

Making this work involves some networking slight of hand provided by a dynamic DSN service. Such a service makes it possible to have a domain name that points to a dynamic IP address. A dynamic IP address is assigned automatically by your ISP and can change each time you connect to the Internet. Normally, a domain name points to a static IP address. All this was demonstrated between my fumbling for passwords and my stumbling thru some newly redesigned web sites.

The next meeting will be Thursday, June 12th, at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center. Our topic will be the email and bulletin board project. The goal is to set up and configure a Linux server to provide email and web-based forums for DACS members. This project will be spearheaded by the Advanced OS SIG but we'll help all we can. We'll talk about requirements and available open source software. See you then and be sure to bring your questions for Random Access.

VB. The next VB SIG meeting will be on Wednesday, June 4th.



**This space under construction.
More fill needed**

June 2003

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
1	2	3	4 4-6 PM dotNET Chuck Fizer 203 798-9996 7:00 PM VISUAL BASIC Chuck Fizer	5	6	7																																																																																																		
8	9  7:00 PM BOARD OF DIRECTORS	10  7:00 P.M. GENERAL MTG	11  7:30 PM ADVANCED OS Don Pearson 914 669-9622	12  7:00 PM SERVER SIG Jim Scheef 860 355-0034	13	14 Flag Day																																																																																																		
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Introduction to the 3D World

By Mike Kaltschnee

I HAVE ZERO (maybe even less) artistic talent. I'm not being hard on myself—I have skills in other areas and I've seen great artists at work—so I know my limits. I can't draw, paint, or even create "modern art" by throwing paint at a canvas. I know because I've tried.

Thankfully, I have found one artistic tool that makes me feel like I can actually create something that looks good and gives me a chance to get creative. I was a partner in DeMorgan Industries, the creators of www.WebSpice.com/

, which is now owned by Index Stock Imagery in New York (my current employer). At DeMorgan we created more than 2 million original and royalty-free Web images. About 30,000 of them were created using a 3D modeling tool called trueSpace (www.Caligari.com). trueSpace is a really amazing product—take a look around their site at some of the examples, and you'll see what I mean.

Even though I was the marketing and sales guy, I had the opportunity to play with trueSpace and create some interesting 3D objects. I was lucky enough to have partners that were truly gifted at 3D design work. You can see examples of our work at the WebSpice.com site. I had some help creating the objects, but I really enjoyed the work. 3D modeling is like sculpting on the computer. Instead of spending most of your time cutting away at stone you assemble the scene or item you are trying to create by putting objects together. It's like sculpting in reverse.

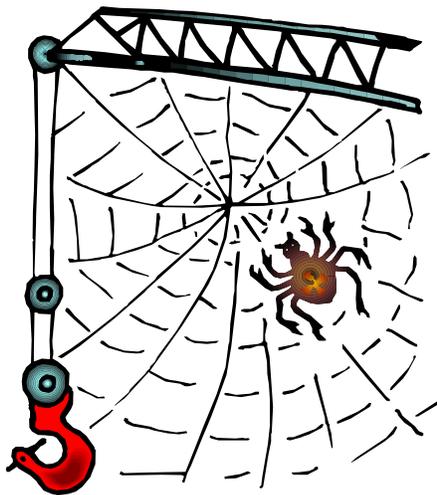
You have seen the amazing power of 3D modeling programs in movies, most strikingly (in my opinion) in Jurassic Park. All of the dinosaurs were created using 3D software, and then added to the real-world image. The power of 3D led to the suspension of disbelief, and you felt like running dinosaurs at the theater surrounded you.

When I thought of writing a series of articles on 3D modeling, I looked for a new program that ran on both Mac &

Windows. I prefer the Mac, but like to write about products that run on both platforms. I was surprised to see that Carrara Studio from Eovia ran on Windows and OS X. The nice folks at Eovia (www.Eovia.com) sent over a review copy and I did the review and testing under OS X.

Eovia is the most interesting software company you probably haven't heard of. They have an impressive line of products for creating 3D images, including Poser (awesome tool for modeling humans and animals in 3D), Carrara 3D Basics (a \$99 introductory 3D program), Carrara Studio 2 (\$399), and Amapi Designer (high-end 3D design at \$499).

Working in 3D takes a while to get used to. You can see by the screen capture you can view your work in several angles at once. The screen shows the



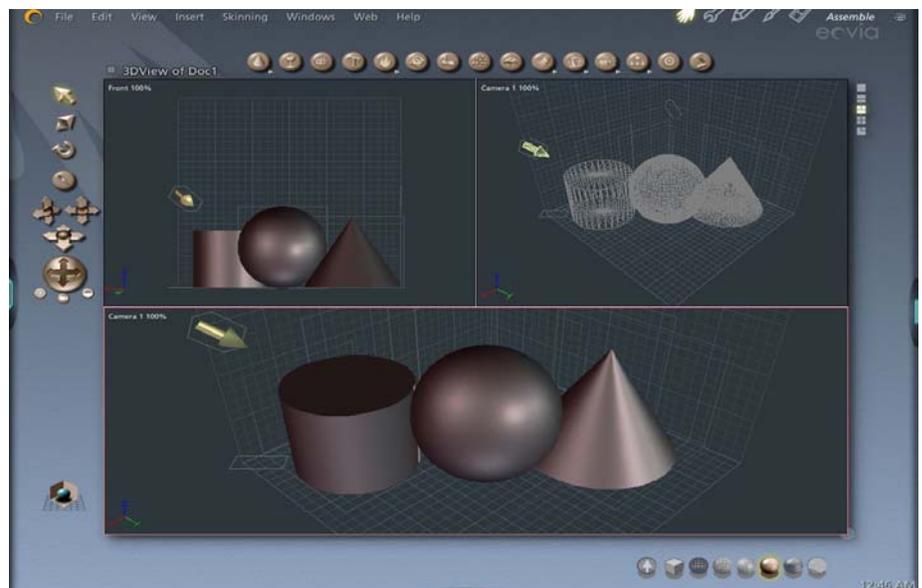
Carrara 3D interface, which is strange on the first viewing, but after going through the demo it actually makes a lot of sense. The only problem I have with the interface is that it is different than most Mac OS X programs (and violates many of Apple's suggested guidelines for designing software). The program is fast, even on the test machine, a 500 megahertz PowerMac.

If you look at the screen capture, you'll see 3 windows with images. Most 3D work is done in the wireframe mode, as seen in the upper right image. This is much faster than a solid object, but doesn't give you the detail of the final image. Once you assemble your image, you have to run it through a process called "rendering." This takes the image you have created in wireframe mode and applies color, texture, and most important, lighting to the image. Rendering can take a long time to process due to all of the reflections and lighting effects. Carrara wins big points by including a batch render feature that can let you process a group of images at night, while you are sleeping.

After reading a bit of the manual and going through some of the demos, I'm more and more impressed with Carrara. It's fast on older hardware, and the interface is a bit cryptic but well thought out for efficient access to most features. After a few hours of using Carrara I was able to find features easily and without referring to the manual.

Stay tuned next month for part 2 of this article, where I show you step by step how to create 3D images in Carrara Studio.

MIKE is a DACS member who wishes he had one artistic bone in his body.



Tips & Tricks

Ask Not What You Can Do For Your Computer But What Your Computer Can Do For You

by Elise M. Edgell

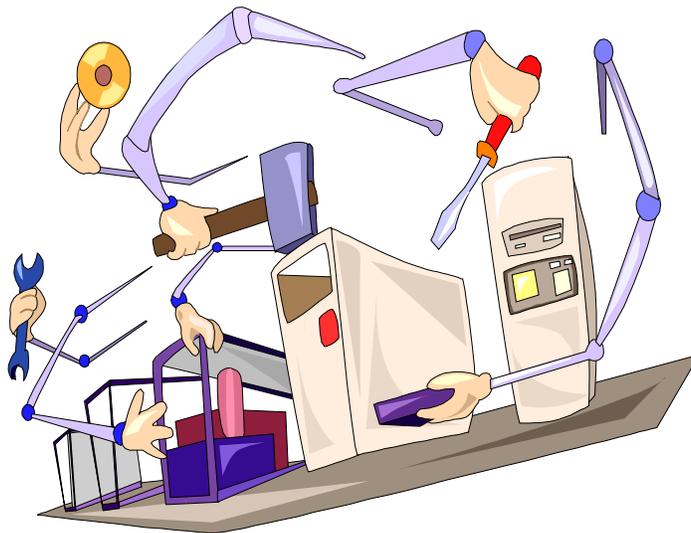
FOR MANY YEARS I have been looking for hardware and software that I could buy for my computer to make it faster, smarter, have more colors, give it more memory, and be able to run more printers, scanners, modems, and various other gadgets. It always seemed that I never had the funds to purchase what I really needed to be able to edit photographs, print high quality photos, have a computer fast enough to run the software to do all the marvelous things available.

Now it seems that computers have evolved to the point where the necessary CPU speed, sound, video, RAM memory, monitor, broadband connection to the Internet, and printers are powerful enough and inexpensive enough to enable people to do all the wonderful things that were previously out of reach. The use of the Internet and digital photography are two very popular uses of the home computer.

But what else can we let the computer do for us? It is obvious in our club that we have an aging membership. It is time to let the computer start assisting us in the things we do. There are some features built into Windows that can make life easier. It is possible to enlarge the size of the type on the monitor. The speed that the mouse moves can be changed to compensate for a hand that is not as steady as it once was. The color scheme in Windows is changeable. There are many choices as to what appeals to you so as to what makes it easier for you to read the text on the screen. Also, many programs let you change the color scheme to make it easier for you to read the screen.

Have you ever thought about having the computer read to you? There

are programs that are able to read any text file. This means that any text that you can copy into Windows Clipboard can be read to you. It can read your e-mail, help files, documents,



books, web pages, etc. One such program is iSpeak by Fonix. It also has a place where you can enter your town text and the program will say each letter as you type it and each word as it is completed. Then the text can easily be copied and pasted into your favorite word processing program or e-mail program. The thing that I found very interesting is that when I did some searching on the Web for information about the program there was a whole list of things that it can do for you, none of which indicated that it would be very helpful for anyone with impaired vision.

There is a program called Zoom Text by AiSquared that is aimed at the vision impaired market and has an add-on which will read the text out loud, but it is a much more expensive program.

Do you have a problem with carpal tunnel syndrome or are the joints just not working as well as they once did? Are you not a touch typist and have trouble seeing the keyboard?

Programs such as Via Voice by IBM and Dragon Naturally Speaking allow you to write text by dictation and even control the functions of the computer with voice commands. In the past these programs weren't very efficient because they take a very powerful computer to work properly. I think the current computers are approaching the necessary compute power.

Many programs can also be used on a PDA such as a Palm or a Pocket PC. Such devices can be very useful because they are easy to take with you when you leave your computer. A PDA can remember megabytes of names, addresses and phone numbers that you are having trouble remembering (Senior moments?). They can be easily programmed to remind you of appointments (time to take pills?), lists of things to do, directions on where to go, etc. About the only requirement is that a person has the ability to read.

E-mail is getting very popular with Seniors but how many people are using the Internet to order groceries? Shopping can be a major problem if you can no longer drive. Public transportation leaves a lot to be desired. Being able to place an order from your computer and have it delivered is more than a convenience for many people. Also, many pharmacies allow you to order refills of prescriptions on their Web sites. There are many other sites that will mail your prescriptions to you. Using a search program such as Google is also a good way to get information about any medication that you are taking (and about anything else that interests you). You can do all of your shopping using the Internet. Not being able to walk around a shopping mall is no longer a bar to the Shop Till You Drop syndrome.

There are other devices that can be used in the home in conjunction with a computer or in a stand-alone capability that can make life much easier. When it is difficult to get around, it is handy to have a remote control device to turn lights on and off, control a fan, room air conditioner, or any other small appliance. Having a remote video camera in position to show who is at the door is also very handy. There are also devices that can be worn on a cord around the neck so in case of an emergency help can be summoned at the press of a button. Telephones for hear-

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Random Access

May 2003

Jeff Setaro, Moderator, reported by Jim Scheef

MEMBERS WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE GENERAL MEETING may submit questions to “askdacs@dacs.org” 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. The questioner heard of an anti-spam program called “K-9” and wondered if others had any opinion.

A. This is an open source project. The program uses AI (artificial intelligence) techniques to learn which email messages are spam. It may also maintain a “white list” (senders known to the recipient). It is claimed to be as much as 98% effective. Another suggestion was Spam Cop, from the *spamcop.com* web site.

Q. A friend installed MSN (presumably version 8) and can no longer find Internet Explorer (IE). It appears that the MSN install sets up its own browser that is less capable than IE.

A. Open a command window and type <iexplore> to run the “real” IE. The icon may be hidden, but the program is still there. Another suggestion was to use Mozilla (an open source browser).

Q. I tried to uninstall AdAware and found that it left a DLL behind. How can I remove msgsrv32.dll? Do I need to remove registry settings?

A. The consensus from many people was that the DLL in question is a Microsoft DLL that is part of Windows and should not be removed. [Reporter’s note: Microsoft has a searchable database on the MSDN web site at (sorry but this is the simplest URL I could find...) <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=/servicedesks/fileversion/dllinfo.asp&SD=msdn>. This database will give the origin of every DLL used in every Microsoft product. To find the version of a DLL, right click on the DLL file and pick Properties from the

context menu. Version is on the version tab. A search for this file finds that it is a “Windows 32-bit VxD Message Server” and is a part of Windows 95/98/ME.]

Q. I had a problem with my scanner and called the person listed for hardware in the DACS HelpLine (in dacs.doc). John Gallichotte found a free download to solve my problem.

A. John explained the scanner software produced a BMP (Windows bitmap) file and the questioner needed a JPEG file (a standard graphic image format). John found a program that would do the conversion.

Q. The scandisk program has stopped working on my computer. Does anyone know why?

A. Jeff suggested searching got the exact error message in the Microsoft Knowledge Base ([http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;\[ln\];kbhowto](http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=fh;[ln];kbhowto)). There are instructions on how to search for an error message on this page. Another person suggested turning off the screen saver while running scandisk.

Q. I have an external Firewire hard drive from LaCie that I use with my Macintosh to archive important files. After a while, the disk becomes scrambled and unreadable. I used a product called Tech Tools to recover the drive and this seemed to be successful. LaCie support says that the problem is in Apple’s hardware implementation of Firewire and that I should purchase an Adaptec adapter card. I have the newest Apple driver. What can I do to make this drive work?

A. This question generated a lot of

discussion. Suggestions from various people included: back up all files immediately to another drive; try the drive on another computer; make sure you have the latest Apple Firewire driver; and send the drive back to LaCie for a replacement. It seems that LaCie is claiming that this particular model of Macintosh has a problem in the Firewire chip and thus the problem cannot be fixed by a new software driver. If this is true [Reporter note: Didn’t Apple invent Firewire?], then some hardware must be changed - either buy new Firewire adapter card, get LaCie to replace the drive or replace the Macintosh. One person suggested using the Apple forum on the Motley Fool web site as a source for support.

Q. This is a comment on the PC Tax Cut, income tax preparation program. After using Tax Cut to prepare my tax return, I found errors in the reporting of real estate tax.

A. There were no other reports of this problem.

Q. What is the best way to copy files to a new hard drive?

A. As might be expected, this generated a lot of discussion. Several programs were suggested such as DriveCopy from PowerQuest, and a free utility from Western Digital. Further discussion found that the questioner is purchasing a new computer with Windows XP. One person suggested connecting the old drive in the new computer as a slave and copying all data files to the new drive. The questioner wants a way to move programs as well as data to the new computer. The reporter suggested trying the “Files and Settings Transfer Wizard” that comes with XP. I (personally) have never used it, but at worst you lose a few hours giving it a try. At best you move all your programs, data and configuration settings to the new computer in a few hours and life is wonderful.

Q. I installed an internal Zip drive and now my monitor colors are off. The settings in Windows have no

effect. I tried the monitor on another computer and it was OK.

- A. This is a hardware problem. After some discussion the source of the problem seemed to focus on the monitor cable and specifically a pin in the cable connector. Another person mentioned that power supply problems in the monitor can also produce this type of problem.

Q. I (as in this reporter) set up a computer for a friend. When we were done, the monitor shows horizontal banding wherever there are dark objects on the screen. Another monitor shows the same effect and the computer's original owner says it "worked OK in Florida". Should I replace the video card?

- A. Several people suggested removing the video card and reseating it, another person suggested cleaning the card-edge contacts.

JEFF SETARO is DACS VP and Webmaster; JIM SCHEEF is DACS president. Neither need any further introduction.

Faster, smarter, continued from page 9

ing impaired are available for free in California (with the proper documentation).

The many helpful uses of a computer are not restricted to the elderly. People of all ages may have a disability. And, you don't have to have a disability to let your computer make life easier and more fun.

I would really like to hear from anyone who is using or knows of interesting programs or devices that can be used to improve the quality of life for so many of us. Please e-mail me with any suggestions or ideas at EliseME@aol.com.

Elise M. Edgell writes for the North Orange County Computer Club, CA.

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