

NEXT MEETING, TUESDAY, JULY 6:

IS HE WRITING YOUR NEXT SOFTWARE DOWNLOAD?

FIND OUT ABOUT SPYWARE, MALWARE

AND JUST PLAIN BADWARE



INSIDE:

MAKING A YOUTUBE VIDEO •

HACKER THREATS •

DACS SIGS - A HISTORY •

MP3 TAGS • PDF TO TEXT CONVERSION

SIG NEWS & NOTES • JULY CALENDAR •

REVIEW - NERDS 2.0.1 • CONTROLLING
SYSTEM RESTORE • FEDORA 13 "GODDARD"

PLUS, MORE CLUB NEWS, CARTOON,

COMMENTARY AND Q&A

From the Editor

Where were you
when I needed you?

By Patrick Libert

YouTube

I hope that all the attendees at the June General Meeting ask themselves the same question.

YouTube has evolved from a visual social networking tool to one that can reap enormous benefits to the business environment.



Personally, this type of application would have been very helpful throughout my international marketing career. Numerous

hours spent on Telex, telephone and fax communications would have been condensed to useful video exchanges. Imagine, instead of mailing blueprints overseas for discussion and approval, one could transmit a video of the blueprint and of the corresponding model followed by a meaningful video conference.

Would it have reduced my travel schedule? Probably not; but at the very least, my jet-lag tainted overseas meetings upon my arrival would have been simpler and more productive.

Is there a spy
in the house?

Our next General meeting should be classified as a "need to know" topic.

Yes, there is always someone or something looking over our shoulders as

we traverse the world of computing. The trick is to know by whom and how to protect ourselves from this continuous spying.

Jim Scheef will be our "M" as he details the miscreants and how we should protect ourselves and our computers.

The name is Scheef; James Scheef!

Be a part of DACS' secret service and enjoy this captivating presentation with me.

We look forward to seeing you at the next General Meeting; it's FREE!

Tuesday, July 6, 2010 beginning at 7 p.m. in the Danbury Hospital auditorium.

New and Notable

I began to install the latest Ubuntu 10.4 release in my VirtualBox machine but had to give up due to an interminable installation time.

I chose to download on my iMac the trial version of VMware's Fusion, as an alternative, and ran Ubuntu flawlessly.

Since I would like to run Windows as well on a virtual machine, I am faced with a couple of software choices: VMware Fusion or Nova Development's Parallels. In either case, I will have to invest a little more than \$50 compared to the free VirtualBox application. Since the latter had difficulties installing Ubuntu, I hate to think what it would do when faced with Vista and Windows 7!

According to a recent review and test in Macworld, Parallels is given a slight edge over Fusion.

Of course, I can spend nothing if I install Windows on my partitioned drive and use Apple's Bootcamp to run the OS.

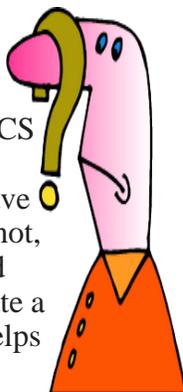
That wouldn't be as much fun as playing with a virtual machine and keeping Windows segregated, would it?

Decisions, decisions!

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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
you find them.



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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

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Directors' Notes

The Board of Directors did not hold a regular meeting for the month of June 2010.

An irregular meeting was held on Wednesday, June 9, as a dinner to honor outgoing president Rob Limbaugh and incoming president Richard Corzo.

Attending were Charles Bovaird, Richard Corzo, Drew Kwashnak, Patrick Libert, Rob Limbaugh, Jim Scheef, Annette van Ommeren, Marc Cohen, Allan Ostergren, Chris Furey and Bill Loring.

There was no cost to the association.

The Treasurer submitted his monthly financial report as follows:

DACS - Treasurers report 6/14/2010
 Bank balance \$6042.77
 stamps \$41.60
 (total assets \$6084.37
 Prepaid dues -\$362.50
 Net worth \$5721.87

Members: total 171, 65 receive the printed newsletter.

—Bruce Preston



DACS Community Forum

Ever wanted to ask a question and get an answer without waiting for the next general meeting? How about sharing news with other DACS members, or communicating with fellow participants in a SIG you attend?

The DACS Community Forum (<http://www.dacs.org/forum/>) is another benefit of being a DACS member, and it's open 24/7. Once you register there you'll be able to post questions, answers, and comments. You can even set up an RSS subscription to be notified of updates to the forums.

Try out the DACS forum today!

Meeting Preview

Hacking Today: Malware, Botnets, Organized Crime and Cyber Spies

By Chris Furey

THEY SAY YOU HAVE to take the good with the bad, and that may be true since most every benefit in the digital world comes with significant security trade-offs. In the “good old days” not long ago, we suffered through slow and unreliable dialup connections. But at least our PCs remained relatively well protected from the vast forces of evil.

But the world became considerably less civilized when we made the jump to broadband.

When you’re connected to the ’net 24/7, you’re exposed 24/7. If your connection is working, you are quite simply at risk. This is true whether you connect through DSL or cable, Wi-Fi or WiMax.

And, no firewall or antivirus program will protect you 100%.

OK. That’s bad. But how bad is it? Well, with well-conceived names like spyware, crimeware, malware and badware, the online risk situation is...hmm, how to put it . . . Bad.

Hacking is a big business. Television ads warn about identity theft. Computer break-ins, where hackers steal many thousands of credit cards are in the news along with stories about security breaches that have political implications with Chinese spies breaking into

email accounts of Chinese dissidents. Hacking has even become a weapon of war. So what is the danger of cyber war? Is the United States vulnerable to cyber attack? What might be the effects of a



cyber war, and how long might be required to recover? Good questions all, with no easy answers.

Lucky for us, our software guru, Jim Scheef, will take to the stage at the next DACS general meeting on July 6th to help us understand the scope of the problem, discuss current hacking trends and share some ways we can mitigate our risk. Jim is the principal of Telemark Systems, LLC, a computer networking company serving small businesses, and is a DACS past president.

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. (Click here for directions.) 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.

Meeting Review:

Scott Preston on YouTube

By Joseph Tobin

ON JUNE 1ST, SCOTT PRESTON gave us a fascinating presentation about YouTube, a popular video-sharing site.

Three PayPal employees originally created YouTube in 2005 and in 2006, Google purchased YouTube. Today, many people, including the movie industry, music companies, television networks, technology websites, businesses, and ordinary people, use YouTube. YouTube gained its popularity because of its easy to use interface, large community, and variety of social features.

YouTube allows you to post how-to videos, home videos, and other original content. However there are a few restrictions on what can be posted and what will be removed from the site if it doesn’t comply with the terms of service. You are not allowed to post television episodes, full or parts of movies, content created by other users, inappropriate content, or anything over 10 minutes. Violating these rules may

result in the video being pulled or in some cases, permanent membership suspension.

YouTube has many of the features of a social network, including friends and private messaging (PM). YouTube also has a feature called subscriptions. When you subscribe to another user, you are notified on the homepage of any new videos they uploaded. This is a useful feature that allows you to see new videos by the user as soon as they are uploaded, without having to go to the channel.

When you join YouTube, you are given a channel. Your channel is a page of YouTube where information you want to be seen by other users is stored. This may include personal information, videos, favorites, friends, subscribers, and subscriptions. A channel is also where you can subscribe to other users, send friend requests, PM, and block the user. You are given some customization options for your channel, such as background, layout, and color palette.

Partnership is a feature of YouTube where users can make money from their videos. To become a partner, you need to reach a certain level for the number of subscribers and video views. Partners are generally corporations and popular users. When you become a partner, you are allowed to have videos longer than 10 minutes, and are given more customization options for your channel.

To upload content, you can upload directly from a camera or web cam, or from video editing software. Scott recommends that the name of your video should describe the general idea of the video, and your description should be relatively short. It is also important to choose an appropriate category and add tags that are relative to the video. The search engine to find your video uses tags. Uploaded videos can either be public (visible to all users), unlisted (does not appear in search), or private (only specified people can see it).

YouTube has become a part of every day life, being used by every one from corporations to individual users. YouTube has grown a lot since its creation in 2005, and will continue to be a growing source of entertainment, marketing, and information.

About DACS

DACS Special Interest Groups - a Remembrance

by Richard DiFranco

I FIRST JOINED DACS in 1986 or '87. Of course it wasn't yet DACS, but The Danbury Computer Society. Meetings were held at the Brookfield Community Center. I expected to see a group of young nerds with propeller hats, and I couldn't believe the sea of gray hair in the room.

One of the attractions for me was a box of five and a quarter inch floppy discs of applications which was available to members. Before I could get into the box, someone suggested "special interest groups." I don't know if I have attended more SIG meetings than any other DACS member, but I think I'm up there when it comes to variety. I can't be sure but it appears that DACS has had more SIGs than most other user groups.

First SIGs

The first special interest groups that I can remember were a bulletin board SIG and a computer basics SIG. Finding space was a problem so both SIGs met at the same time at the Brookfield Community Center. Later the Bulletin Board SIG met at the SIG leader's store front office in Ridgefield.

At about the same time, John Gallichotte organized a SIG for C and UNIX. Dick Gingras put together a SIG for Database topics. Neil Friend and his wife organized the first Windows SIG. Space was still a problem until someone found that there were meeting rooms in Edmond Town Hall in Newtown.

Neil Friend had a computer training business in Brookfield, so the Windows SIG had a fine home. The Windows SIG ran for a long time and meetings were interesting; Mrs. Friend would demonstrate new packages that ran in Windows, which was still a very new OS.

Newer SIGs

The C/UNIX SIG and the Database SIG ran out of steam as the leaders and attendees ran out of time and material.

SIGs were now able to meet in the DACS Resource Center in Ives Manor. Jeff Setaro had a SIG on web design. There was an Internet SIG started by Rich Koser, which reviewed good and bad web sites. Members could present

sites they found interesting and useful. There was a new Windows SIG during which the leader answered questions from the members.

Rich Rosner started a new C SIG in Edmond Town Hall. This SIG led to a series of classes in C programming. After the C classes, many of us wanted to move on to C++; however, no one was available with the experience to teach a class. Neil Friend contacted Borland, a company that sold C++ compilers. They issued us a set of videotapes and workbooks on C++. We used Neil's classroom facilities and his TV and videotape machine. Each week we took turns preparing a lesson and presenting it to the group.

Bruce Preston started one of the longest running special interest groups the Access SIG. This SIG had its first meeting in the DACS Resource Center and then moved to the AMSYS building in Ridgefield. We met there for many years before coming back to the Resource Center. The SIG is still running in virtual meetings using Skype and DimDim.

As a side note, early on there was a gentleman who wanted to start a virtual reality SIG to discuss the, then new, field of virtual reality. He set up a time to meet at the Resource Center, but unfortunately he and I were the only ones to show up. He then decided that a virtual reality SIG should be virtual. That is, meetings should be over the Internet. The technology was still too new.

Short-lived SIGs

Over the years there have been good SIGs that just didn't last:

- Lotus Notes, which met at WestConn
- Robotics; John Gallichotte ran this SIG with much success for several years.
- Small Computer SIG that dealt with hand held computers and other devices
- Windows SIG
- Virtual Computing
- Math: I would like to see this one come back
- APL: run by Ed Shaw at his business office in Wilton.

- PowerBuilder: led by Steve Harkness at his office in Woodbury
- Business SIG: discussed investing

Back Office to Server to Drupal

Jim Scheef started a SIG based on a Microsoft product named Back Office. This SIG is still going. It has evolved from servers and networks to Drupal. The meetings are always good, covering servers, networks, content managers and sometimes politics.

Other Long Running SIGs

Some of the special interest groups that are still meeting are:

Linux

Digital Imaging (I have never been to a meeting)

Mac

Web and Graphic Design

VB and Dot net

The Linux SIG has gone through several changes of leaders, meeting venues and name changes. It started out as The Advanced Operating Systems SIG meeting at the SIG leader's home (Don Pearson) in New York State. For a while they met at AMSYS in Ridgefield. Now meetings are held in the resource center. Don also led the OS/2 SIG.

The Web Design SIG was a great addition to DACS. Reinstated by Annette van Ommeren in the Fall of 2003, this SIG moves DACS into the modern era of internet design.

One of the most worthwhile groups is the VB SIG still run by Chuck Fizer. This group started holding meetings in an office building on the west side of Danbury and finally settled into the resource center. The topics and direction of the SIG has changed over the years (mostly due to Microsoft's changes) but the quality of the presentations and topics has gotten better. This SIG has also gone virtual and meets using Skype and DimDim.

The Mac SIG is a revival from the Nineties. There was a group of Mac/Apple users separate from DACS who merged with DACS. They took a ribbing from PC users. Richard Corzo is going to have an interesting and active time as Apple emerges as a power in computing.

SIGS, Cont. on page 7

Software Tools

MP3 Tag - A Useful Utility

By Phil Sorrentino

AS I HAVE SAID IN THE past, “Utilities are usually small programs that are intended to do a specific task or a small range of tasks.” And I have also directed you to the SPCUG Monitor Computer Buffet, where you can learn about various free utilities (and even find a website from where you can download the utility). However, keep in mind that when you download something from the internet, you could get something you were not expecting; so be very careful. With that said, I’d like to discuss a free utility that allows you to modify the MP3 Tag information that is used by MP3 players like Windows Media Player or iTunes.

The reason you might want to use an MP3 Tag utility is because these types of media players depend on the Tag information to organize the tunes they find in your music folders. If the Tag information is not what you expect, the tune will be put in a location that might make it difficult for you to find. It doesn’t matter what the file name is, the tune will be put in a sequence depending on the Tag information, only. Is it “The Beatles”, or “Beatles”, “The Kingston Trio”, or “Kingston Trio”? When I put all my tunes together, I found both versions of artist names. Also, sometimes the tune comes from a compilation of artists. In this case it probably goes into the “Various Artists” category, instead of the “artist’s name” category.

MP3Tag is a free metadata editor that supports the MP3 audio format as well as many other formats such as AAC, FLAC, MPC, OGG, MP4, WMA, and others. It runs under Microsoft Windows XP and Vista (and probably Windows 7). MP3Tag allows the user to modify the ID3 tag data that is created along with the MP3 file when a tune is initially created, or ripped from a CD. It allows information such as the title, artist, album, track number, or other information about the audio portion of the file to be stored in the file itself. By the way, there are many MP3 Tagging utilities available, just Google MP3 Tag and you’ll see all the possibilities.

This may be too much detail, but there are two unrelated versions of ID3: ID3v1 and ID3v2. (If this is too much detail, skip this paragraph entirely.) ID3v1 was the original attempt at capturing data about the tune. ID3v2 followed shortly after and is very different from the v1 version. ID3v2

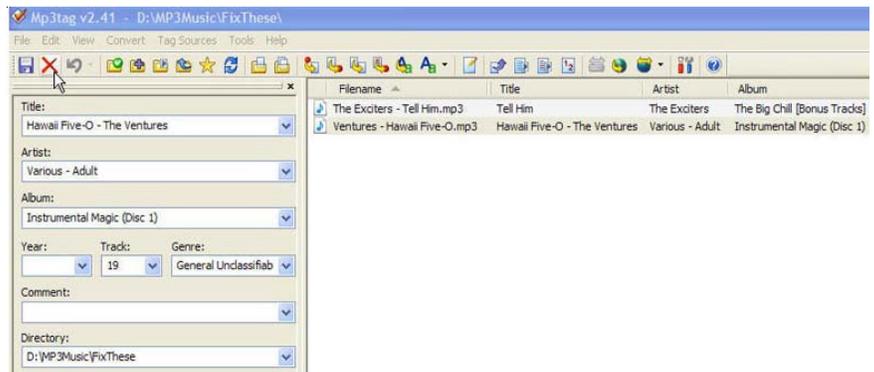
is fairly complex, but suffice it to say that it includes all of the pertinent information, and then some, relating to the specific tune. ID3v2 has been modified and improved over the past few years and is currently at ID3v2.4. For those of you who asked “What the heck is metadata?”, here is a brief

discussion that comes from Wikipedia. Metadata (or sometimes metainformation) is “data about other data”, of any sort in any media. An item of metadata may describe an individual datum, or content item, or a collection of data including multiple content items and hierarchical levels. In data processing, metadata provides information about, or documentation of, other data managed within an application or environment. This commonly defines the structure or schema of the primary data. For example, metadata would document data about data elements or attributes, (name, size, data type, etc.) and data about records or data structures (length, fields, columns, etc.) and data about data (where it is located, how it is associated, ownership, etc.). Metadata may include descriptive information about the context, quality and condition, or characteristics of the data. And there you have a description of metadata.

MP3Tag is very easy to use. First, I have created a folder called “FixThese” in my “MP3Music” folder, where I put any tunes that I think need to have their ID3 tags modified. Then I setup MP3Tag to use this folder. This way, I do my work in a specific folder so I don’t upset anything in the folders that contain all my music. Also, it is easier to work with a folder that has a handful of files rather than thousands of tune files. (The folder to be used is setup by clicking “File” and then selecting

“Change Directory”, then navigating to the directory of your choice, “D:\MP3Music\FixThese” in the case shown below.)

The MP3Tag window has two panes. The right-hand pane shows the files in the designated folder. The left-hand pane shows each of the specific ID3 data items that can be modified. (By the way, default values can be setup for each of these items, but I have left the default to “keep”, so that I preserve the values when a tune is selected. These default values can be setup in the Tools-Options-Tag Panel window.) When you select a tune in the right-hand



pane, the appropriate values show up in the ID3 tag items on the left. Once the tune selection is made, the values on the left can be changed to your desired values. In the example shown above, the tune “Ventures – Hawaii Five-O.mp3” has been selected. The Title is “Hawaii Five-O – The Ventures” which is the file name. The title of the tune should be only “Hawaii Five-O”, so I would change the title to be such. The Artist: name is “Various – Adult” which I would want to change to “Ventures”, or possibly “The Ventures” if that is how you are referring to this artist. Other information such as Album, Year, and Track may be correct as indicated and will probably be left alone. Genre is an item that is not as well defined as the other tags and therefore I have found it to be less useful. Genre has some general meaning but the meanings may vary a lot from person to person. There are some fairly specific meanings for genre such as “Rock & Roll”, “Country”, “Classical”, but many other meanings are in the grey areas such as “Popular” and “Easy Listening”. If you want to employ this tag to any degree of usefulness, you’ll have to make your own definitions and then categorize all your tunes according to these definitions. Otherwise, you’ll get whatever the recording studio used for their definitions of genres. After you are satisfied with the changes you have made, click “File” and then select “Save tag” or just click on the icon that looks like a floppy disk, to

save the tag information with the tune.

MP3Tag is a useful utility if you are accumulating a large music collection and you have some specific ideas about how you would like the tunes to be organized. MP3Tag has a lot of additional features. I have described the ones that, I feel, are

basic to organizing a music collection. Music collections have a way of growing in all directions and using an MP3 Tag utility is a way of controlling that growth.

PHIL SORRENTINO is president, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.,

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Software Tools

Convert a PDF File to a Text File

By Sr. Dorothy Robinson

HAVE YOU BEEN wishing you had a piece of software that would convert PDF files to text files that you can edit? And maybe also didn't cost an arm and a leg?

BCL Technologies has such software called easyConverter Desktop that costs about \$20. That sounds like a good buy to me. But it only works with Windows (2000, XP, Vista and Win 7). So that leaves a lot of people, namely Linux users, out in the cold.

The good news is that BCL also has a free, online utility that does the same thing. And your operating system doesn't come into it. Open your browser and go to <http://pdfonline.com/pdf2word/index.asp> and take a look.

On the left side, under a header that says "Convert PDF to Word for Free" you'll see a place to browse your computer and select a file. Note that there is no need to provide your email address, since you'll just download the file directly.

Find your file and double click it (or click once then click Open), then click the Upload and Convert button. Press it *only once*, and wait; larger files may take a

while to upload. The conversion is pretty fast, under a minute for the one or two page files I tried. There is a 2 MB limit on uploads, so really big files won't work.

This part is where, if you wanted to do a lot of files, or large ones, it would be great to have an application on your computer to do it—thus eliminating the time to upload.

The next step is downloading the text file. I'm not sure why the instructions say to Right Click on the link to download the file, because for me at least it didn't work. I Left Clicked instead and the download dialog opened.

You'll see that the file is a rich text file (.RTF or .rtf) which can easily be opened by Word, OpenOffice Writer, Abiword, or other word processors or text editors and be available for editing. When you save it you can save it as a .doc if you like.

The dialog asks, What should (your browser) do with this file? The first choice is to open the file with the default application (mine showed OpenOffice) or you can choose another from a drop-down list.

The second choice is to save the file, and if you choose Save the file, your download manager will save it to the default location—or you might get a Save as dialog and choose where to save it. One caution: opening the file directly rather than downloading it got me a Read Only file, which of course I couldn't edit. So for editing purposes, save the file before opening.

Make your choice by clicking a radio button, then click OK. You now have a text file you can edit. And the quality is very nice, too—for **mostly text** documents. I tried a PDF file that I had originally created in OpenOffice Writer which

contained a calendar in a table. The results were not pretty! And for a postal PDF which was a requisition form using tables, the results were somewhat better but still unusable since the tables overlapped, hiding some of the text.

On the other hand, I made a list of data (several rows and columns) in an OpenOffice spreadsheet, exported it to PDF, then uploaded it and converted it. When I downloaded this file, it was perfect—and perfectly editable.

For me, using Ubuntu Linux, this free, online version is a good thing. Windows users have a choice of the web version or the computer application. And pdf2word gives the best results I've seen for this kind of web application.

SISTER DOROTHY ROBINSON is newsletter editor, *The OMUG News*, Olympia Microcomputer User Group, Washington; <http://olymug.org>; srdorothy@gmail.com

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SIGs, Cont. from page 5

Good SIGs on Hiatus

- Open source (Always a good source of free software)
- Windows (Sorely needed.)
- Computer Repair and Employment (available through Charlie Bovaird)

Still the Best Deal

I still find the Special Interest Groups to be the best of my DACS experiences. They have given me an education which would have been hard to find anywhere else. The SIGs seem to fall into two groups, technical and general user, both have been excellent. There is something for everyone.

I apologize to any SIGs and leaders that I have forgotten. My thanks to all the people who have taken the time and effort to organize DACS SIGs. This is what has made DACS the world-class organization it is.

Convert PDF to Word for Free

What do you think about this free service? [Let us know.](#)

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: July 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: July 13 (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@dacs.org).

Meets 1st Wednesday, 4-6 :p.m. and 6-8 p.m. in a virtual session.

Next Meeting: July 7

Drupal. Covers all things on Drupal, the open source content management system (CMS).

Contact: Jim Scheef (jscheef@dacs.org).

Meets on the second Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center, or go to the DACS Community Forum (<http://www.dacs.org/forum/>) within the Members-only area.

Next meeting: Thursday, July 8

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: July 28

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: Jim Ritterbush, linuxsig@dacs.org

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

Next Meeting: July 21

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: August 5

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

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

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

Server. Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook. This SIG is on hiatus and is presently merged into the Drupal SIG.

Contact: Jim Scheef (jscheef@telemarksys.com), or go to the DACS Community Forum: <http://www.dacs.org/forum/>, within the Members-only area

VB.Net. Focuses on Smart Client Windows application development using Visual Studio, VB, C# and SQL Server programming tools.

Contact: Chuck Fizer, (cfizer@dacs.org) or Greg Austin, 845 494-5095 (greg.austin@ryebrookpba.org).

Next Meeting: In hiatus

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

Contact: Annette van Ommeren(avo555@earthlink.net).

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

Next Meeting: July 20

Special Interest Groups

DotNet and C#VB. Our SIGs have met virtually in April and in person at the resource center in May and June. Interestingly, we have also produced the meetings at the resource center virtually. This has been helpful for everyone and particularly for Bruce Preston. Not only do you have the projector display, you can also tune in over the Web.

All three of the meetings dealt with the MWG ASP.Net web project where we examined web page emission and subsequent user interaction with the web page's JavaScript. We have made comparisons between Windows Access forms and the web page. The comparison has been on the default Access record edit action in Access and users edit action on the web page. Access indicates to the user that a record has edits pending by displaying a PENCIL icon to indicate something in the record has changed. There is no default web page HTML or function for this editing characteristic except the one we develop and program into the page's JavaScript. This then leads to HOW to do this. Background, in Access, when the record having change(s) loses focus, Access then updates the record to the database and the PENCIL icon is removed from the data row. If the user changes their mind while applying the edits, the user can press the ESC key and the row is restored to its pre-

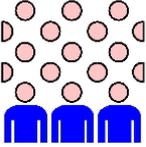
vious state. Plain and simple, Access knows when a row has focus.

With the web page, our conundrum is to determine when to effectuate a database row update or rollback pending edits. In the MWG project, we need to analyze the user's activity. With respect to edit rollback, a Cancel Edit button easily provided it. We can also implement ESC key, as this is rather straightforward. Both of these methods are implemented as JavaScript events, although both require some conditional logic to be certain that the action is only valid at the correct time. Determining if the data row update should be applied requires more and complicated logic. The first piece of the implementation involves checking if the user just selects a different row. In this case issued edits are applied to the database. But if the user simply clicks elsewhere on the form, determining that the data row lost focus becomes difficult. We can determine if a cell loses focus, but it may lose focus to another cell, and this does not imply it will force a database update. We are mainly interested in the fact that the row loses focus. Tracking the focus seems complicated by the fact that different browsers handle lost focus or (Blur as its referred to in the browser) differently. So, our initial

SIG Notes, Cont. on page 15

July 2010

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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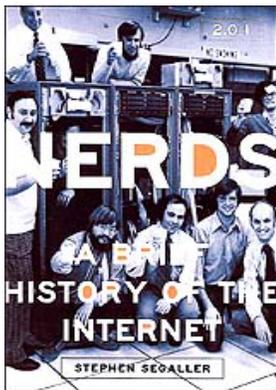
Book Review

Spinning the Worldwide Web

By Jim Scheef

Nerds 2.0.1 – A Brief History of the Internet, by Stephan Segaller (TV Books, 1998, ISBN 1-575000-106-3)

THIS IS THE COMPANION book to a PBS mini-series first broadcast in 1996. The book is readable – even exciting – in the early chapters about the events that lead to the ARPAnet project. The people who conceived and funded the project are a fascinating bunch of nerds from the time before the word was coined. While the birth of the Internet is now history, much of this book is “near term history”. The



dot-com bubble was a fascinating time for business, technology and our country as a whole, but 1998 was too soon to try to write about these events as “history.” The writing fades as the events get into the 90’s and thus too close to then-current events. The story of technology in the 90’s needs to be rewritten in about another ten years when authors can re-research the people, companies and events of the dot-com bubble. In the meantime, enjoy this book as it does an excellent job on the pre-history and early days of the Internet.

The first two chapters start the story with many people in many places and then links them all together. While the United States had a comfortable lead in computer technology by the mid-50’s, the launching of Sputnik in 1958 gave a sense of urgency to just about anything technical or scientific. To keep track of all this and to limit the growing power of the military-industrial complex, President Eisenhower created the Advanced Research Projects Agency, or ARPA. Later a ‘D’ was added for Defense. From the beginning this agency was given a large budget and almost no constraints. When NASA was created, its budget was carved out of ARPA, leaving the agency with a much smaller but still substantial budget and almost no public scrutiny, a recipe for success that would be impossible to replicate today. There is a

difference between secrecy and just doing a job with a lack of fanfare. Programs hidden in the CIA and NSA have been disasters for our civil liberties. Ike made ARPA a civilian agency for a reason. The ARPA mission was to fund projects in universities and advanced research centers. As part of these projects, each university would request funds for a computer, which in those days meant something that filled a large room and cost many millions of dollars. Each university would request a computer larger and more powerful than the previous school and an ever-larger portion of ARPA funds went for these computers. Eventually Bob Taylor, then head of ARPA realized that this could not continue and looked for a way to share computing resources amongst various projects. This was the genesis of the project that would become the Internet.

In the 60’s, American sociologist and information technology pioneer Ted Nelson first described what we know today as the Internet. He called it “Xanadu” and his dream network included hypertext and hypermedia, both his inventions. He is best known for his 1974 book *Computer Lib/Dream Machine*, in which he describes Xanadu and much more.

In 1968 connecting computers was not only difficult, it was essentially impossible if the computers were from different manufacturers. By this time many people had published academic or technical papers on the problem. Several people in wildly different times and circumstances all came up with what is now called “packet switching”. The basic idea is to break up data into small packets, add sender and destination addresses and push them out on a network that allows for multiple paths. When the packets arrive at the destination, they are acknowledged and reassembled in sequence. In mid-1968, ARPA issued a request for quotation (RFQ) for a network to connect three (expanded to five) ARPA-funded computing sites. Bolt, Beranek and Newman (BBN), a small engineering company outside Boston was the winner. Many of the people at BBN, ARPA and the first network sites were all tied together by links to MIT and Lincoln Laboratory, MIT’s research site. Many are also tied together by a common interest in the mathematics of beating the casinos at blackjack. Their ex-

ploits in Las Vegas are hilarious and add to the fun reading. Beating the casinos is a recurring theme in the world of hackers and computer nerds.

As you might guess, “establishment” companies like AT&T and IBM said it would not work. In their bid proposal BBN said it would be “difficult” even though they had already made many of the pieces work in independent tests. The ARPAnet was born October 29, 1969, when the first connection was tested between UCLA and Stanford. There is a trick question: What were the first five letter typed and sent over the ARPAnet? The correct answer is “L O G L O”. Read the book to understand why the answer is not “L O G I N”.

Almost simultaneously to the BBN project, another ARPA-funded project proceeded at the University of Hawaii. The Alohanet (upper case in the middle of words was not yet invented) used radio links to network computers on several Hawaiian Islands. Implemented in 1970, this network proved that the packet concept would work over long distances – even without wires! Several key concepts of Alohanet led directly to the development of Ethernet at Xerox. Imagine that you have just received an advanced degree in engineering and have accepted a new job. As good as that would be, suppose you ask your new boss to pay your expenses for a two month-long trip to Hawaii BEFORE you start work at your new job! That was exactly what Bob Metcalf pulled off when he accepted a job at Xerox’s Palo Alto Research Center (PARC). During his two months in Hawaii, his study of the Aloha and ARPA networks led to his invention of Ethernet with David Boggs. To put this into time perspective, Metcalf left Xerox in 1979 to found 3COM where Ethernet was first successfully commercialized.

The ARPAnet and Alohanet both used packet switching but worked differently. As the ARPAnet grew in the early 70’s it became apparent that the basic protocol had limitations. To get past these issues, Vinton Cerf and Robert Kahn developed what has become the suit of protocols that run the Internet today. Cerf had developed the original ARPAnet program called NCP or network control program and is often called the Father of the Internet. [Read the book and decide for yourself if this appellation is fair to the many other networking pioneers. Personally I think the title should go to Bob Taylor or J.C.L. Licklider or all three.] After several revisions, the current version four was implemented in the “big bang” when all machines connected to the ARPAnet and many interconnected networks all switched to IPv4 on January 1, 1983.

The personal computer became a commercial product in 1975 when M.I.T.S. introduced the Altair. While it would be a few years before personal computers would be networked, the Altair, followed by the Apple II and others created the broader market that networking needed to bring costs out of the stratosphere. This book makes no attempt at a complete history of M.I.T.S. or Microsoft, the company founded to provide it software, or Apple the company that provided the platform for the first killer business application – VisiCalc. (Note that capitalizing middle letters in product names was perfected somewhere in the late 70’s.)

The book continues thru the 1980’s with two important startups, SUN Microcomputers and Cisco Systems. This is also where a new character enters the story, the venture capitalist. As the book moves thru the 80’s and into the 90’s the stories bog down. I believe this is because the stories or the wounds were too fresh when the writers did their research for the television programs. Many key people in these companies either are still there or had just been ousted by the venture capitalists. The story of Sandy Learner and Len Bosack, founders of Cisco is especially maddening. Read the book.

Four reasons this book is so readable is that it includes not just an index, but also a Cast of Characters, a Timeline, and glossaries of both technical terms and acronyms. Refer to these as you read and you cannot get lost. I have greatly oversimplified the stories mentioned above and have omitted several others, but you get the idea. The book is a wealth of fun facts. Read it! Enjoy!

Note: My copy of the book came from Abebooks.com. A quick search just now found several copies available for \$3.63 delivered to your mailbox. You can’t beat that with a stick!

System Tools

Controlling System Restore

By Vinny La Bash

DID A SHAREWARE application you were enamored of turn out to be an unmitigated disaster? Perhaps a device driver installation, system update or modification to a registry key went bad, and your system wandered into an alternate universe. Windows has a utility called System Restore that takes a picture, called a Restore Point, of your system before certain types of operations are started. System Restore is a very handy feature that allows you to go back in time to erase actions you have come to regret. If a problem occurs you can revert back to the way things were, and all is well again.

System Restore, for all its utility and convenience, has its drawbacks. Some argue that if there is not enough free disk space, System Restore will fail to create a restore point, so an unsuspecting person may discover that there is no restore point available when trying to put things back to normal. There is also no way to make a permanent restore point that will not get deleted after a time when automatic restore points need the disk space. This could be a predicament if a problem is intermittent.

It is possible that System Restore may be responsible for your disk drive running out of room. While today’s super-sized drives make that less likely than a few years ago running out of disk space could still happen, especially if you load up your system with videos. You can reduce that likelihood even further by configuring System Restore properly.

The snapshots we talked about in the first paragraph are taken by a built-in program called the Volume Snapshot Service

(VSS). There is no way to access this utility in the standard Windows Graphical Utility Interface (GUI). This means you can’t get to it with a menu option. You need to open a Command Prompt window with elevated administrator privileges.

Click on the Start orb located down at the bottom left corner of your screen, select All Programs, and open the Accessories folder. Right click on the Command Prompt icon, and then select Run as Administrator from the menu. That will open up a Command Prompt window with enough authority to configure System Restore.

Before doing any configuration, let’s take some time to understand how System Restore works. You can do this with the vssadmin tool. At the Command Prompt type `vssadmin /?` (Press Enter after typing a command.)

You see a list of all the commands supported by the utility.

(Note: Shadow copy = Restore Point)

Enter the command `vssadmin list shadows`

This displays a list of all the restore points currently on the system.

The list `shadowstorage` command displays the amount of disk drive space currently being used to store restore points, how much space is set aside to accommodate restore points, and the maximum permitted size for restore points.

To see what’s available on your own system, at the Command Prompt type:

```
Vssadmin list shadowstorage
```

Take a few minutes to understand the way the information is displayed. If there is enough free disk space you can store up to 64 restore points before Windows automatically starts deleting old restore points to accommodate new ones.

Making backups is an essential task, but there is no reason why Windows should be allowed to consume every available byte of storage with System Restore points. The default settings allow Windows to run amok but you can reset the maximum value with the `resize shadowstorage` command.

Here is an example:

```
Vssadmin resize shadowstorage /for=c:  
/on=c: /maxsize = 12GB
```

The `/for=` switch specifies the disk drive where the storage space is to be resized.

The `/on=` switch tells Windows where to save the Restore Point.

The `/maxsize=` switch tells Windows how much space it can use for Restore Points.

If you don’t specify a maximum size you are giving Windows permission to do anything it wants. The minimum size is 1GB. I have seen references stating that the minimum size can be as low as 300MB, but I could not verify that information.

After entering the `resize` command the system needs to be restarted to take effect. Configuring System Restore points won’t solve every problem you may have with Windows, but it will give you more control of how Windows allocates resources.

VINNY LA BASH is a member and regular columnist at the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida: www.spcug.org; vlbash@comcast.net

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Software Review

Fedora 13 "Goddard" Release

by Drew Kwashnak

HOT ON THE HEELS OF Ubuntu's latest release, the Red Hat sponsored community's Linux distribution Fedora 13 is released and "wow's" us again!

Fedora's innovation is often less obvious to the user, but no less significant as they improve the foundation upon which Linux distributions are built. Their dedication to Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and

the printer when it is plugged in. Often, complaints about printing have been caused by the use of incorrect or generic drivers.

Now, instead of including all of the drivers in the Live CD, they are downloaded and installed only if needed. Coupled with the new **GNOME Color Manager** these improvements help display and print images more accurately.



Not only are printer drivers automatically installed as necessary, the **PackageKit** has been integrated with many aspects of the desktop to streamline installing missing programs, drivers and codecs. This is especially handy with unknown media formats.

In addition to easier codec and format installation, the default music player **Rythmbox** has support for iPod Touch and iPhone out of the box. Nothing needs to be downloaded and you have full access to music and pictures on your

Apple device. It doesn't provide app support yet, though.

NetworkManager was developed by Red Hat to streamline the process of networking Linux way back when Dial-Up was most people's method for getting online. Now, they have enhanced it to more easily tether over Bluetooth to a mobile phone and share mobile broadband. Another enhancement most users won't probably use, but is worth noting, is that **NetworkManager**

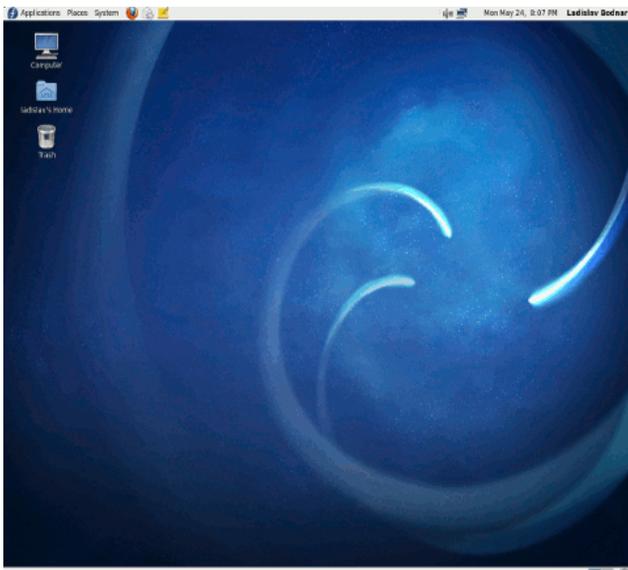
with Fedora 13 now includes Command Line support. This should be a boon to developers and anybody using a non-graphical system such as a server.

Linux has historically had two big sticking points; wireless and graphics. Fedora has steadily focused efforts to improve the situation and with success. Fedora 12 included openFWWF drivers which even allowed my laptop to use wireless out of the box for the first time, as well as experimental 3D support for ATI graphics. Fedora 13 continues this improvement with 3D support for a range of NVIDIA graphic systems through the experimental open source **nouveau** drivers.

Fedora also includes a few newer and exciting programs. For photo-management, they include **Shotwell** instead of Gthumb or F-Spot. It handles importing, organizing, tagging and editing photos in a straight-forward, responsive interface as well as publishing photos to Facebook, Flickr or Picasa. Look for this program to improve as time goes on.

Nobody likes backing up, but they appreciate it when they need it. Fedora 13 includes **Déjà Dup**, a backup utility that is easy to use. The interface includes 2 buttons: Restore and Backup, but this doesn't mean it is shy on options. Déjà Dup provides backing up locally or to remote locations including Amazon S3. It encrypts and compresses your data, provides incremental backups and provides scheduling options. I look forward to testing this one.

I've had a chance to fool around with **Simple Scan** and it is as its name implies. One of the features I like about it, other than it being simple and fast, is that I am able to pre-scan multiple pages and save them as a single PDF or batch of image files. Previously, one would have to scan each page individually

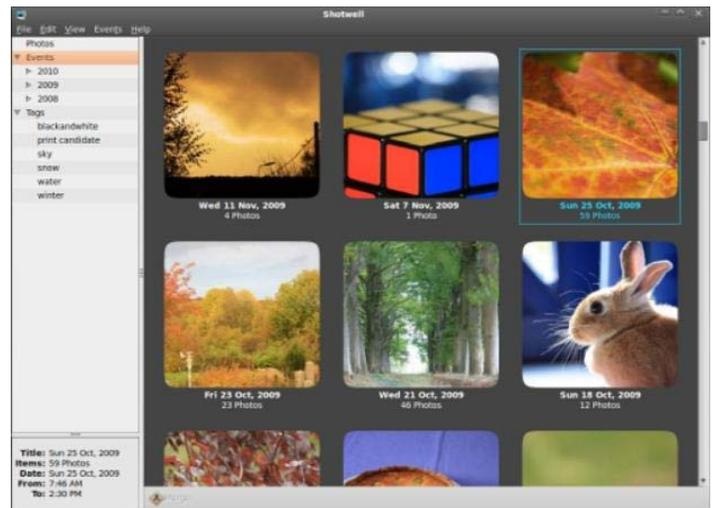


the open source process means improvements and enhancements they develop are always released upstream so the projects can choose to incorporate the changes into the trunk of the application.

The great thing about it is that not only do these projects receive the modified code, they have a chance to see it in action in Fedora and see what it is they are talking about and how it works. Talk about the power of open source!

Although Red Hat is primarily a server-orientated Linux distributor, Fedora gives them a chance to stay involved with the Linux Desktop and make some great enhancements! Below are listed just some of the improvements found in Fedora 13 which may eventually show up in future Red Hat Enterprise Linux releases and other distributions.

Printing has been improved to automatically search for specific drivers for



while Simple Scan and put it together in another program. This is a lot nicer and still provides for cropping what is scanned to exactly what you want.

These are just some of the enhancements to Fedora 13 for Desktop users. For all of the enhancements as well as what improvements they included for System Administrators and Developers, please refer to: <http://docs.fedoraproject.org/en>

Fedora 13 can be downloaded from <http://fedoraproject.org/en/get-fedora> as a full installation DVD with all of the packages included, or from a Live CD with versions running the default GNOME desktop, KDE desktop environment, Xfce and more versions built on the Fedora base. If you need help, have questions, want to try it out or even just to learn more then feel free to come

by the Linux SIG which meets every month on the third Wednesday of the month in the DACS Resource Center.

DREW KWASHNAK is an accused distro-hopper, and cannot stick with one Linux distribution for very long. With any luck, he will be able to continue containing his hopping activities to the handful on which he's focused.

Closing Costs

THIS AND THAT

By Elizabeth B. Wright

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT your program will remember when you close it.

For that reason, if the last file you used in the program happened to be on removable media which has been detached from the computer, you might face a real problem the next time you turn on your computer. So, before terminating whatever program is using a file located on the removable media, CLOSE the file located on that media. Next, still in the program you have been using, locate on your internal hard disk any file which that program will recognize. Open it. You don't have to work on the file, just open it and close it so that the last file used by the program was from the hard disk. You don't necessarily have to do any editing of the file, but you can re-save it as an added step to help the program remember where it found the last opened file, or you can just close it without re-saving it. On my C:\ drive I keep a text file created in MS Notepad titled freecell. You guessed it, that is where I save a list of the games I have failed to win (in other words, LOST). It isn't particularly important, so if it somehow becomes corrupted or deleted, it can always be replaced with new information. This file is easily accessed and opened, after which, for a little added security, I re-save it before closing it.

Hopefully this satisfies the computer's lust for usable information. I have spent too much time thinking a program had taken a permanent dive before remembering that the last work I did before turning off the machine was on a file located on a floppy disk, a camera memory card (either in a card reader or in the camera itself), or from some other form of removable media no longer accessible by the computer. If a file can no longer be physically accessed,

many programs go into an endless loop trying to find it, causing your program to appear to be failing.

If you are lucky, using every trick you can think of, you might get the program to respond to a command to open a file on the hard disk. My all-time-favorite, Paint Shop Pro went to a "White Screen Of Death" recently every time I tried to use it. When my brain's memory kicked in I remembered the last thing I had done before closing PSP earlier was to download pictures from my camera's memory card. The memory card had been in a card reader and was removed to put it back in the camera AFTER I closed PSP. Downloading the camera photos was the last work I did before closing PSP. When next opening the program and getting that "WSOD" (see

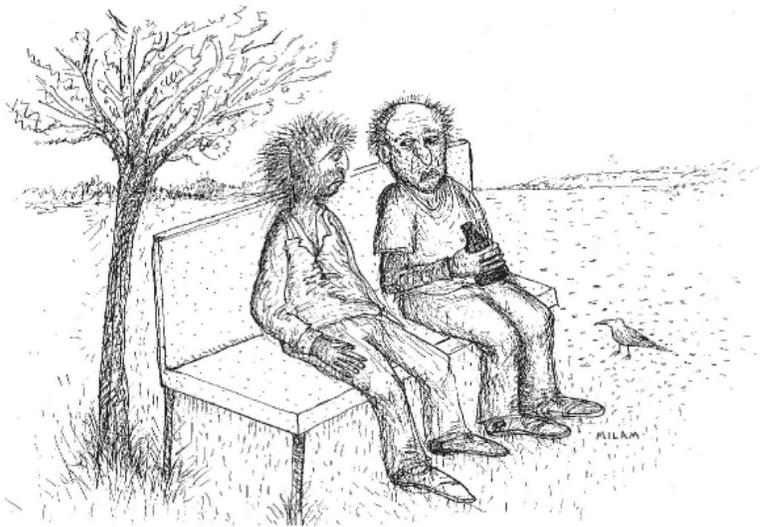
above), I found that even though various messages told me the program was not responding, the mouse would still operate and I was able to get "File/Open/ etc. etc." to open a photo located on my hard drive. Problem solved, at least for that incident.

Of course, you can never count on anything happening exactly the same way twice. So, maybe, instead of "Death" for PSP it should just be "White Screen Of Coma." But your program might just stop working with no change in the screen at all. Quoting one of our knowledgeable members, "it all depends" on how the programmers wrote it.

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"How was I to know I had hacked into the Madoff Investment Fund."

Ask DACS

June, 2010

Moderated and Reported by 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 – The screen saver section of WinXP has a Power button that controls the computer power settings. In addition to the settings to power down the monitor and hard drive, there are settings for when the computer should standby and/or hibernate when running on batteries or plugged in. What is the difference between “standby” and “hibernate”?

A – Both of these settings allow your computer to save the current state of all programs running at that moment so that it can resume running later from that exact moment in time. The difference is in how Windows saves that current status. Standby puts the computer into a low power status where the data in RAM is preserved by powering the RAM. If the computer is running on batteries, the computer continues to draw power from the batteries but as many other parts of the computer are shut down to reduce power consumption to a minimum. Hibernation goes further in that all data in RAM is written to a file on disk and the computer makes a “mental note” to restore that file to RAM when it is next turned on. The computer returns to full operation faster from standby but continues to use power and cannot remain in standby indefinitely on battery power. On the other hand, the computer is completely off when in hibernation so it can remain in that state “forever”. The down side of hibernation is that the system RAM must be restored from disk so the time to resume operation is about the same as a normal boot up. Either of these states can cause problems if the system is “saved” when connected to a network and then “restored” without the network available or where it will connect to a different network. “Unexpected behavior” can result when the computer authenticated to a domain controller and

that controller is not available when activity resumes. This is not an issue for the typical home user.

Q – What is the difference between a “laptop” and a “notebook”?

A – There is no difference. The term notebook was a marketing term adopted by the industry many years ago that indicated a laptop that was about the size of a standard sheet of paper. The name stuck even as machines grew larger with 17” screens. *Netbooks* are a relatively new category of laptops with smaller sizes and features aimed at long battery life together with low cost. The result is lower cost (read slower) processors and reduced storage with amazing battery life.

Q – Back on power settings... The Power applet in Control Panel has a drop-list box with options for “Home/Office Desk”, “Portable/Laptop”, etc. I selected the laptop setting and set the monitor and hard disk timeouts to 180, but the battery still drops off before that. Battery life varies greatly between laptops.

A – The drop-list in the Power applet primarily sets the default timeouts for the display and hard disk. In some machines, the drivers for the system board include additional power settings under the Advanced Configuration and Power Interface (ACPI) specification (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acpi>). Sometimes these are exposed in the Power applet in Control Panel, sometimes they are controlled by the drop-list setting and often there is no way to know.

Q – Do Lithium-Ion batteries have a good shelf life?

A – “Good” is a relative term and not everyone at the meeting agreed with what follows. I urge the reader to visit the Wikipedia page for these batteries

(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lithium-ionbatteries). Shelf life is listed under disadvantages. I will summarize here and say that shelf life is highly dependent on how and where the batteries are used. High temperatures caused by poor ventilation and constant charging will adversely affect the overall life of the battery. My advice is to remove the battery pack from your laptop when you are at home after it is fully charged. Li-Ion batteries deteriorate over time even when not in use and thus it is not advisable to buy an extra battery when you first purchase a laptop unless you need to be able to swap batteries for the extra run time between charging opportunities. There was some discussion about the non-removable batteries in Apple laptops and how this relates. Li-Ion batteries do not have the “memory effect” of Ni-Cd or nickel-metal hydride and thus do not need to be fully discharged. Li-Ion batteries may be stored in the refrigerator which will prolong life of the battery.

Q – How can I transpose rows of data in a spreadsheet into a single column with the rows “stacked” one after another in a single column?

A – A member immediately suggested the “transpose” function in Excel but this does not give the desired single column. Suggestions ranged from recording an Excel macro that would replay to move column after column, to writing a program in Visual Basic for Applications, the programming language built into all Microsoft Office applications. The consensus was that this was a non-trivial problem.

Q – My HP Pavilion desktop computer has six USB ports. Will each port provide one ampere of power or are all the ports limited to a total of one ampere? I want to use an external hard drive.

A – The USB (universal serial bus) is supposed to provide a small amount of power to devices connected to the bus. Generally a modern desktop system board will have two USB “host controllers” that are the primary interface. To these are connected two or more “hubs”. I would guess that in this case, each controller and hub is connected to four ports. The amount of

power provided on port varies with the system. Look in the system specifications to see if the system provides power to each port and how much. At the meeting there was much anecdotal discussion. Newer machines seem to provide more power. In my experience, desktop machines are more likely to provide useable power from the USB ports than does a laptop.

Q – *Another member asked why the instructions for one of her USB devices required the device to be plugged directly into the computer (rather than into an external hub).*

A – Plugging a device directly into the computer puts the device as close as possible to the host controller so that it can get the best speed possible. The device is a “Magic Jack” voice over IP telephone adapter. Call quality will suffer if it does not have adequate speed. Note that a USB bus (one host controller and all the devices connected to that controller) will be ruled by the slowest device on the bus.

Discussion – There is a new version of USB called USB Version 3 (so clever!). Devices are just beginning to reach the market. My reading of the Wikipedia article on USB looks like USB cables will not be compatible with USB versions 1, 1.1, or 2 devices. If you are interested in more on USB, Wikipedia is as good a place to start as any - en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usb.

Q – *When I try to view a CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corp) program, I get a black box where the video should be playing. It plays OK in Windows Media Player. What's wrong with Firefox?*

A – Most suggestions revolved around a missing codec or plug-in for Firefox. Two days after the meeting, the member emailed that he had found a Firefox plug-in for WMA/WMV files and the videos now play in Firefox.

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

SIG Notes, Cont. from page 8

decision is to force update responsibility on to the user by giving the GUI an Update Button. In this case the user specifies the action.

In the MWG page design, we implemented the concept of a no-page postback. The idea is to not to ever have a page refresh, even though the page is visually changing dynamically. We implemented this capability using the Callback features of the AJAX functionality built into [ASP.Net](#).

At the last SIG meeting, we discovered a few bugs in the page presentation. This gave us an opportunity to analyze the JavaScript code and eventually fix the problems. We used breakpoints in the JavaScript code and used the debugger to step through the code suspected of causing the bugs. We then detoured into a discussion on the use of the debugger in both server-side .Net C# code and then in client-side JavaScript code.

Future meetings will look deeper into JavaScript and how to program it.

Drupal. The June meeting was one frustration after another. A few weeks ago I found a Drupal module called “Club” that sounded like it might meet our requirements for DACS and be simpler to set up than CiviCRM. I downloaded it and the required modules so we could make the final installation at the meeting. As I started to activate the modules, we discovered that dependencies had additional dependencies. So we downloaded those but started to have serious doubts when several modules were alpha code. In the end we decided that “Club” was not worth the risks.

Next, we looked at the email problem we have been experiencing on the DACS web server. Several weeks ago we realized that the feedback form on the website was not sending emails. The DACS Forums are similarly incommunicado. To isolate the problem I installed a simple command line utility that sends a very basic email message. This gives a basic test of an SMTP server. Unfortunately the error messages are not exactly clear and we were unable to find a solution. The following day I found that the problem was how we were sending the messages from the web server.

The full solution is beyond this space and could be a topic for a future meeting.

The next meeting will be Thursday, July 8th at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center.

Mac. In June, we took a look at VirtualBox (<http://www.virtualbox.org/>), another program like VMware Fusion or Parallels, that allows running another OS such as Windows or Linux at the same time you are running Mac OS X. The product is free for personal use.

Before the meeting, I installed Windows 7 64-bit edition using VirtualBox. This means it was running in a virtual machine and not directly on the Mac machine. So when you install Windows this way, it will not appear in the list of systems in the Startup Disk System Preference, as would be the case if you install Windows in a Boot Camp partition. So you will need to start the VirtualBox application first in order to start the Windows virtual machine.

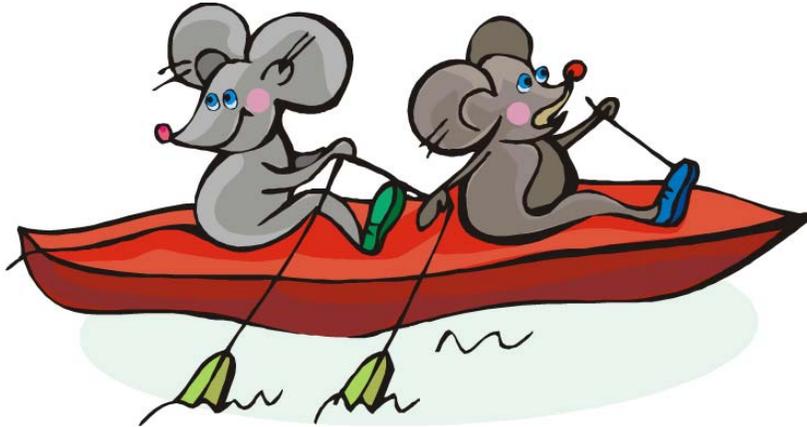
One problem I had with the Windows 7 installation was no sound device. This turned out to be a known problem whose solution can be found in the Windows Guests section of the VirtualBox forum (<http://forums.virtualbox.org/>). The solution was to download and install an audio driver for the AC'97 hardware that VirtualBox emulates. I wasn't able to do this during the SIG meeting because the Internet wasn't working in the Resource Center, but I got it working later at home.

The lack of Internet in the RC provided an interesting detour where we tried to get Internet access by tethering, using a Bluetooth connection to a member's Android phone. The Bluetooth pairing worked, and the phone dialed the server, but the server hung up shortly after the connection was established.

Getting back to VirtualBox, there was a package to install in the guest machine called Guest Additions that provided a better video driver and more seamless switching of the mouse cursor between the guest and host machine. VMware and Parallels have similar packages.

One difference I noticed between VirtualBox and VMware, was a lack of support by the video driver for Windows 7's Aero Glass interface. Also, there did not appear to be any integration feature that allowed running a Windows program outside the virtual machine window directly on the Mac OS X desktop. This may be a perfectly acceptable tradeoff for someone that needs to run Windows, but doesn't want to buy VMware or Parallels.

The Mac SIG will take a break and there will be no meeting in July. We'll return in August.



When you come to the next DACS meeting
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Future Events:

July 6

Hacking Today:
Malware, Botnets,
Organized Crime &
Cyber Spies
Jim Scheef

August 3

MS Office 2010
Jay Ferron

September 7

Apple Mac OS X
Dave Marra

October 5

E-book Readers
Bruce Preston