

## NEXT MEETING, TUESDAY, AUGUST 3:

**MICROSOFT LAUNCHES ANOTHER INVASION OF THE "KILLER APPS" ... IS OFFICE 2010 SOMETHING "TO DIE FOR?"**



## From the Editor

### "There's Trouble in River City"

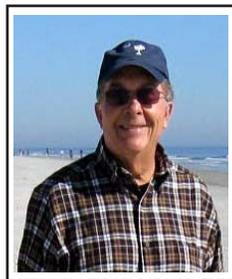
By Patrick Libert

#### Cyber War

Yes, folks. There is trouble brewing in this great land. After attending Jim Scheef's eye opening presentation earlier this month and, researching the topic, I think that we "ain't seen nothing yet" when it comes to potential terrorist attacks. We take too many daily activities for granted, in my opinion, and we are not protecting ourselves as a country to the best of our ability.

OK. That's the pessimistic side of the story.

Conversely, there is much we do not know (as we should not) about how we are protecting ourselves. Referring to a recent article in Wired Magazine, "Geeks Versus Spies," The NSA is most likely monitoring many infrastructure systems to protect them against malicious infiltration. According to this article, the NSA is actually two agencies; the "Geeks" who are the cyber security nerds who protect the systems, and, the "Spies" who can tap into any electronic communication. The premise of the article is that the "Geeks" should be split from the "Spies" as a separate entity called the CSA (Cyber Security Agency). The latter, not being associated with "spying" would have greater acceptance by the government and



private sectors and be much more effective.

Think about it; would you not want the very best to protect us from any of the potential "disasters" mentioned in Jim's presentation?

#### The Office

I am looking forward to seeing Jay Ferron's August 3 presentation on Microsoft's Office 2010.

I presently use Word in Office for Mac 2008 for most of my editing and composing for this newsletter. The Mac version is very well adapted to the platform and it offers tons of flexibility. I have used individual components of Office as far back as 1992 when our operation was entirely dependent on Excel. We would design our spreadsheets in the wee hours of the night when we were not out calling on customers. Excel allowed us to intertwine multiple spreadsheets so that when a value was added to one, all the others would sync automatically. In the early days of the snail-like Mac processors, this was an accomplishment.

I digress. Jay's presentation will be about the latest Office 2010 Suite for Windows. I do read that a Mac version will follow. I have used the open source NeoOffice, Apple's iWork and tried some of the other contenders, but in the end I revert to the Microsoft software because of its compatibility with so many different document formats.

Don't miss the August 3 general meeting with this captivating presentation from an expert.

#### New and Notable

Summer responsibilities, such as trying to keep one step ahead of the weed kingdom in my garden, have put some of my previously mentioned technical projects on hold until we have a rainy day.

Here in the Litchfield Hills, it looks as if that's not going to happen any time soon. But, the weeds are suffering from the lack of rain as much as the lawn so I am a happy camper.

Last Summer: the Deluge! This Summer: The Sahara!



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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

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held July 14, 2010 at 7:00 PM at the DACS Resource Center.

Directors present were:

Richard Corzo, Drew Kwashnak, Patrick Libert, Bruce Preston, Jim Scheef, Jeff Setaro, Joseph Tobin, Annette van Ommeren

President Corzo presided, Secretary Preston took the minutes.

As there was no formal meeting in June, the Minutes for the May meeting were accepted as published.

### Treasurer's Report:

Members: 171, Members with mailed newsletters: 65, Free mailed newsletters: 22, Members with valid email addresses: 166, Cash & checking accounts: \$5,877.56, postage stamp inventory: \$31.49, Total Assets: \$5,909.05, Prepaid dues: (\$325.00), Net Worth: \$5,584.05

### Old Business

#### I. General meetings

- a) Reviews – August: Marc Cohen?/ Rich DiFranco? September: Patrick or someone from Mac SIG. October: open
- b) Previews – August: Drew Kwashnak; September: Someone from Mac SIG or Patrick; October: open
- c) 2010 meeting topics
  - Aug: Microsoft Office 2010—Jay Ferron—reconfirmed today, will send info tomorrow.
  - Sep: Apple Mac OS X—Dave Marra
  - Oct: E-book Readers—Bruce Preston
  - Nov: possible topics: gaming consoles, Digital Camera/Video Survey – Gary Spring from Ritz Camera?
  - Dec: John Patrick – State of the Internet – John needs to be contacted.

General Meeting dates for 2011: 1/4, 2/2, 3/2, 4/6, 5/4, 6/1, 7/6, 8/3, 9/7, 10/5, 11/2, 12/7. The 10/5 meeting will be in the Conference Center across the hall from the auditorium.

#### 2. Open positions

- a) Need backup/replacement for Treasurer
- b) Need membership chairman  
Discussion – will talk it up at the next General Meeting, try to recruit

*SIGS, Cont. on page 5*

# Meeting Preview

## Microsoft Office 2010

By Drew Kwashnak

**M**ICROSOFT'S OFFICE Suite is one of the industry's longest lasting "killer apps". Even with competition from OpenOffice.org and Google Docs, it proves to be like a fine wine, improving with age. Microsoft is taking notice of what their competitors are offering and addresses them with new features and enhancements to the applications you've come to know so well.

Lucky for us, Jay Ferron will be returning to the DACS stage August 3rd to show us all of Microsoft Office's newest features and enhancements for 2010. You may remember Jay from a previous presentation he gave us on the then-new Microsoft Vista and Office 2007.

Jay is a self-proclaimed geek who has authored; Architecting Microsoft Server Virtualization Solutions with Hyper-V™, System Center Virtual Machine Manager, and assorted articles on Microsoft Tech-

nologies published in Smart Computing Magazine.

He is also involved with the American Red Cross National Headquarters Emergency response team dealing with computing and communications in a disaster.



Microsoft Office 2010 has improved the capabilities for the user to not only include graphics and video into files, but to edit them as well! While this may not be as powerful as a stand-alone professional editor, it also doesn't require pur-

chasing an expensive suite to do most of the changes people do make and it is easier to use.

Office 2010 is also Microsoft's latest foray into integrating with Cloud computing! Office combines the power of the desktop applications with the accessibility of an online storage site and availability to open these same files with their

online office cloud applications! This means you never have to be far away from your documents, nor are your collaborators even if they do not have Office 2010 installed on their systems.

Even the ribbon interface introduced with Office 2007 has seen some improvement. The layout and controls are better laid out and, even better, are customizable!

So, if you've held off on upgrading your Office, now may be the time to jump. With numerous improvements from interfaces to integration and collaboration to graphics you'll be pressed not to find a new feature you like!

Danbury Area Computer Society (DACS) is a registered nonprofit and has been serving the region since 1990. Members receive an award-winning newsletter, members-only workshops and events, and access to volunteer phone support.

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

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

# Meeting Review:

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

By Patrick Libert

**J**IM SCHEEF'S captivating presentation began with a brief definition and history of computer hacking. Hacking is big business as it used for identity theft, espionage, and theft of intellectual property.

Jim prefaced his presentation with the comment that he is not an expert on the subject but a devoted reporter. His main sources were Richard A. Clark and Robert K. Knake's book,

*Cyberwar, The Next Threat to National Security and What To Do About It* and the July 1, 2010 issue of *The Economist* – *War in the Fifth Domain*.



The biggest concern is not from the more common spam and phishing activity but from the use of malware to "hijack" a computer and turn it into a remotely controlled botnet.

Using this capability, one's seemingly innocent computer could be sending large volumes of spam without any visible evidence. Jim

cited the example of a person whose computer was sending so much spam that Comcast asked him to stop or the service would be cancelled. Have you asked your computer lately what it is doing while YOU are sleeping?

Jim takes us to the next level by describing how these botnets have also been used to saturate and immobilize networks by creating Distributed Denial of Service attacks (DDoS). Several attacks in past years have targeted the private and the government sector with disruptive effects.

Jim gave several detailed examples of how malicious malware targeted specific companies and government entities. One of the most fascinating examples was that of the Soviet gas pipeline explosion in 1982 that allegedly occurred due to tampering of the software, by the CIA, of the electronic controllers.

As Jim continued, I began to feel less comfortable about our relative safety. If malware can be so readily attached to *any* software, our infrastructure is quite fragile. It is hoped that there are many more safeguards than we are told. We are warned that this electronic warfare will be the next conflict and it behooves us to be aware, ask questions of our politicians and insist that action be taken.

Jim's detailed program was more than a DACS presentation – it was an awakening!

*Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 3*

at meeting; Patrick will put something in next DACS.DOC – position responsibilities, estimate of time commitment, etc.

3. Using Drupal for the DACS Web site—update

**Annette** – making progress on front-end design, test site not yet ready for prime time, but available for review. She will provide the board with a URL that will provide access.

**Jim** – CiviCRM – will load membership database into MySQL as test back end data for evaluation. Jim and Jeff to work out existing details on e-mail interface.

4. Scholarship committee—any update?

Jim recruited Mary Tobin to join the committee. Jim Scheef and Mary Tobin to contact several high schools to determine what info needs to be provided such that we can offer a scholarship.

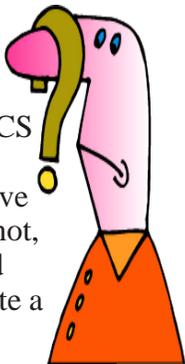
New Business

1. Due to a new job, Andrew McGinitie will be unable to restart the Robotics SIG
2. Andy Woodruff has agreed to join the board in September, this will fill our board vacancy.
3. Jim has requested that we obtain Windows Server 2008 R2 – need to determine whether 32-bit or 64-bit. Question has been submitted to Chris as to what hosting platform he would provide.
4. Discussion as to DACS Community service – possible service to Danbury Senior Center, LVA, Voice for Joanie.

Motion to Adjourn made and approved 8:20 PM

—Bruce Preston  
*bpreston@mags.net*

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



## SeniorNet Open House Elmwood Hall - Monday, September 13 - 9am to 4pm



SeniorNet, in continuous operation for eleven years, has taught thousands of local residents to use and enjoy computers at our up-to-date computer center. We now want to showcase some exciting new classes from Microsoft.

At Open House you will learn about four classes in the new MY PC series...

- Getting started with Windows 7
- Connecting with Family & Friends
- Digital Photo Editing
- Creating Photo Slideshows

You can also tour our computer center and try some of these innovative, but easy to use, applications. What's more, learn about some new courses/workshops on Picasa (photos), Using Help, SmartPhone and Social Networking. Plus, see the schedule for our regular offerings for new and experienced users.

No reservations, no fees - just come to Elmwood Hall anytime between 9am and 4pm on Sept. 13  
See details at... [www.danbury.org/seniornet](http://www.danbury.org/seniornet)

SeniorNet -- high quality computer instruction at unbelievably low cost!

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A little-publicized dome idea that might have contained the Gulf oil spill and solved many other pressing national problems

# Special Interest Groups

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## SIG NOTES: August 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:** August 10 (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:** September 1

**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:** August 12

**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:** August 25

**Jobs.** Networking and jobs search

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

Meets by e-mail.

**Next meeting:** TBA

**Linux.** Provides Help in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. Also of interest to Apple owners using OS X.

Contact: Jim Ritterbush, *linuxsig@dacs.org*

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

**Next Meeting:** September 15

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

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

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

**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, announced by e-mail.

**Server.** Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook. SIG is on hiatus and 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:** August 17

# Special Interest Groups

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**Drupal.** A significant external factor influenced this month's meeting. I had just completed the presentation at the general meeting, which left me no time to prepare anything for the SIG. So at the start of the meeting I asked if the others had any problems or successes they wanted to share. From that point on we had a great discussion, addressing one problem after another.

The things we discussed were:

1) how domains are managed on the Dreamhost service and how to move blocks of files;

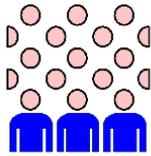
2) how to install and configure WAMP (Windows-Apache-MySQL-PHP) as a second webserver on a single computer;

3) the steps needed to install Drupal on WAMP.

Next month, we will review a prototype DACS website built using CiviCRM running on Drupal. The next meeting will be Thursday, August 12 at 7pm in the DACS Resource Center.

# August 2010

## Danbury Area Computer Society

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8	9	 <p>MS ACCESS 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Bruce Preston bpreston@mags.ne</p>	 <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>	 <p>7-9 PM Drupal Jim Scheef 860 355-0034</p>	13	14																																																																																																		
15	16	 <p>Web Design Annette van Ommeren 914 232-0149</p>	18	19	20	 <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																																		
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# Software Tools

## openSUSE 11.3 Released

By Drew Kwashnak



openSUSE startup screen

OPEN SUSE, A LINUX distribution started and still popular in Germany, means “sweet” and regardless of how you pronounce it, this distribution lives up to its name. Personally I pronounce Suse similar to Zeus, but I have no practical experience with German so who am I to say anything?

OpenSUSE is one of the few distributions available on a Live CD as well as DVD, where you can choose to install whichever desktop environment, packages and applications you want. Traditional Live CDs of Gnome and KDE desktop environments are available for easy installation with their compliment of applications carefully selected.

This latest release includes some new features as well as the usual complement of updated versions of applications and kernel. Of course the flagship application, **Yast** (*Yet another Setup Tool*), is still included to provide a single point to configure the system tools and services. Already available as a graphical application or as a command line application, openSUSE is developing **Yast Web** which will provide the full power of using Yast to manage a system, but accessed through a web browser just like one probably used to set up a router or modem.

People using openSUSE for their personal computers have a number of changes to look forward to.

### LXDE, Plasma Netbook Workspace & Gnome-Shell

Starting with desktop environments, openSUSE has added to its default KDE and available Gnome desktops the option to install LXDE, or Lightweight X11 Desktop Environment. This desktop environment has been growing increasingly popu-

lar with lower-powered machines such as netbooks and older machines as it is much lighter on resources than the more traditional environments.

Speaking of Netbooks, openSUSE includes two desktop environments aimed at the diminutive screens and power-sipping chips of popular netbooks including the new **Plasma Netbook Workspace**. This KDE desktop environment, which openSUSE contributes heavily to, is specifically designed for the smaller screens of a netbook. The Plasma Netbook Workspace provides easy access to applications through its Search and Launch interface and includes Internet applications for mail, micro blogging and social networking.



Plasma Netbook Workspace

MeeGo, a project headed up by Intel and Nokia, is another netbook-focused desktop environment packaged by the openSUSE Goblin team. This environment provides a visually rich experience for the user and uses the latest Banshee media player, which will include the ability to access the Amazon MP3 store very much like iTunes connects to Apple’s iTunes Store.

Of course the traditional KDE and Gnome desktop environments are still available, and even the next generation Gnome environment, the Gnome-Shell is available as an option. This environment is fresh and new, and represents the direction Gnome is going.

### SmartPhones

Desktop environments are not the only features improved for the personal computer user. What can be more social and

modern than the latest batch of smartphones? Androids, iPhones and Blackberrys have been increasingly popular with their plethora of useful (and not-so-useful) apps and computer-in-your-hand experience. OpenSUSE provides for accessing and syncing your music, photos and files with your smartphone while allowing the phones to act as a gateway to the Internet practically anywhere!

### SpiderOak

While Internet storage is nothing new, openSUSE includes a deal with SpiderOak to provide an easy, secure backup, sync and sharing location. SpiderOak is configurable to sync with Linux, Mac, Windows and smartphones and provides access to files stored in the cloud from practically anywhere.

SpiderOak preserves historical versions and deleted files, a means of sharing folders with RSS to alert when changes are made and offers 2 GB for free and 100GB blocks for \$10 per month or \$100 per year. OpenSUSE users can get a 15% discount for buying additional space.

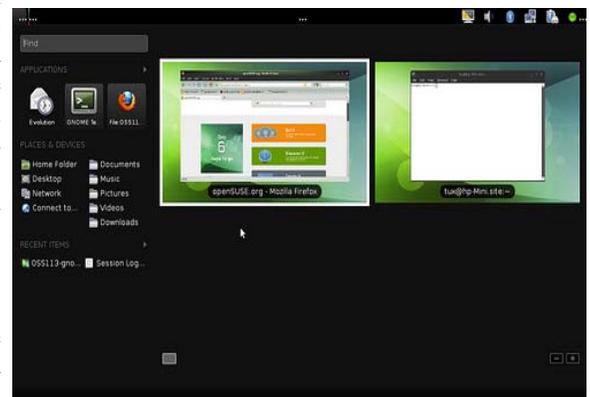
Currently SpiderOak is not open source, so it will be found on the non-OSS add-on DVD.

### Btrfs file system

While there are too many enhancements and upgrades to list here, the last one I am going to go over is the next generation file system Btrfs, which is available from the DVD installer. Btrfs aims to enhance fault tolerance, easy repair and administration, writable snapshots and greater efficiencies.

Originally developed by Oracle and now released under the GPL, the Btrfs file system is still under heavy development. Thus, openSUSE allows one to get a sneak peek of this coming technology.

So, with many enhancements for netbook users, social media hounds and people connecting anywhere anytime, openSUSE 11.3



Gnome Shell Desktop

has a lot to offer over and above their Enterprise-level offerings which benefits from its corporate sponsor, Novell.

OpenSUSE releases every 8 months and each version is supported for 2 releases +2 months, meaning 11.3 will be fully supported for 18 months.

You can get it either by downloading it

from the openSUSE website (<http://www.opensuse.org>) or if you don't have broadband or don't want the hassle, openSUSE is available in a retail box ([http://en.opensuse.org/Buy\\_openSUSE](http://en.opensuse.org/Buy_openSUSE)) for only \$65.

Information and screenshots from OMG! SUSE! Meet openSUSE 11.3

(<http://omgsuse.com/content/meet-opensuse-113>)

**DREW KWASHNAK** is a distro-hopper who has narrowed his movements to the "big three" distros; Ubuntu, Fedora and openSUSE. Every time he gets into openSUSE he intends to develop some application in Mono, the open source and compatible .NET framework for Linux, Mac, Solaris and Windows.

## Communication Tools

### SharedView & Skype Attending a Remote SIG Presentation

By Judi McDowell

**A** FEW QUAD CITIES Computer Society SIG leaders have been using Microsoft SharedView and Skype to allow participation from members remotely. We have been practicing with small test groups; and although SharedView is limited to 15 participants at one time we would like to provide detailed written instructions to all members.

First you need to download Skype, available at [Skype.com](http://Skype.com). [tinyurl.com/yjuzbbg](http://tinyurl.com/yjuzbbg) Click the download button and then follow the instructions below provided by Skype for installation.

#### How do I install Skype?

Run the Skype Setup application. A window will open asking what you want to do with a file called **SkypeSetup.exe**. You might see a confirmation message, asking if you're sure you want to run this software. Click 'Run' again.

#### Follow the Setup Wizard

When the download has finished, the **Skype Setup Wizard** will appear and guide you through the rest of the installation.

After the installation has finished, you can open Skype at any time by clicking the Skype icons located either on your desktop or in your system tray (this is found at the bottom right of your screen).

Now you need to add your "new contact," from the contacts menu. A hello window will appear where you type a brief message to introduce yourself; send and wait for the "contact" to accept you. After your invitation is accepted, the "contact" will appear in your contact list.

#### How do I install SharedView?

Next you need to download Microsoft's SharedView, available at the

following website [connect.microsoft.com/site94](http://connect.microsoft.com/site94)

After downloading and installing SharedView you will have to obtain a Windows Live ID in order to use it. This is a simple procedure that requires providing an email address and a password.

#### Please Note:

If you do **NOT** obtain a Windows Live ID, you may still be able to join a session as a guest, but it will require a password. This password is unique to **each** session and you will have to obtain it from the facilitator to join as a guest. A Windows Live ID makes joining a session much simpler.

On the night of a SharedView opportunity, you will receive a Skype call from "your contact" to start the audio.

\*Open SharedView and sign in with your Windows Live ID and password.

\*Once signed in, click on the button that says "join a session". Enter the session name.

\*After clicking "Join now" at the bottom, wait for the search to find the session; when found, your name will pop up to the SharedView facilitator who must allow or deny your connection to their computer.

After the connection is established, you will see the desktop screen of the SIG Leader. Try again if you aren't accepted the first time. The facilitator may not have seen your request to join.

\*The audio and facilitator's voice will be heard through the Skype connection. While listening to the presentation, remember to mute or turn down your microphone. Otherwise, every sound picked up on your end will be heard by all the other participants in addition to the facilitator's voice.

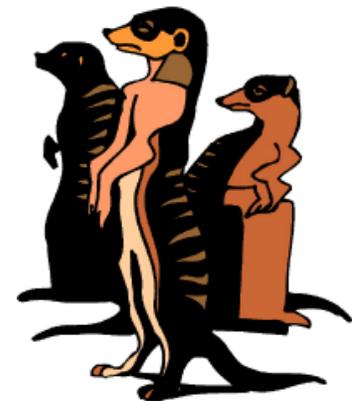
Only 15 people are allowed to join a session at one time so if demand exceeds

that, it will be "first come first served". To assure the best results, let the SIG leader know in advance you plan to attend and if this is your first time, it is recommended that you have a short trial run a day or two prior to meeting night.

Attending a SIG in person is still preferable to a remote log in, but we have had a couple people use it when they were out of town and this is a great opportunity to keep in touch with your favorite SIG if you can't be there in person. To learn more about SharedView and how you could use it with your friends for collaboration— Visit this website: Shared View User Assistance Home Page / [tinyurl.com/a4lt7h](http://tinyurl.com/a4lt7h)

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Do you have a burning computer question, but can't make it to the meeting or just never seem to get your hand up in time? Email your inquiry to Jim Scheef, the answer guy, at [askdacs@dacs.org](mailto:askdacs@dacs.org), and your question will be taken up at Ask DACS at the next meeting.

# Commentary

## Circuit Writer Version 7.11

By Jim Scheef

### The Next HOPE

**I** JUST SPENT TWO entire days at a hacker conference I have wanted to attend for years. The Hackers On Planet Earth (HOPE) conference ([thenexthope.org](http://thenexthope.org)) is held every other year at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York. [Note: the HOPE website was up and down as I write this; hopefully (sic) it will be available reliably again soon once they have moved it out of the hotel.]



The HOPE conference is organized by the same Emmanuel Goldstein who edits and publishes 2600 Magazine, the hackers quarterly (2600.org). [Note the extremely rare all-numeric domain name.]

This year's conference may have been the largest ever; several times I heard volunteers cite attendance of "thousands". I do know that even on Friday morning, the first sessions had more than enough people to make all three main rooms (named Tesla, Bell and Lovelace) seem full and on Saturday every session was standing room only.

You may be surprised when I tell you that HOPE is not about computers. Only about 20 of the 120 session time slots were about writing actual computer code and less than half of those were about breaking into anything – although lock picking is an ever-popular topic and pastime at every HOPE.

This year the HOPE badge was actually hackable. As delivered, the badge is a three inch round circuit board with a battery clip, two chips (one is a microcontroller), three LEDs, some minor components and places to mount more stuff. These make the badge a radio beacon that transmits the badge's unique "ID" number several times a second. Sensors dispersed around the conference hotel floors recorded the passing of each badge with a time stamp to track movement during the show. Two sessions dealt with the technology in the badge and on Saturday a website was available that showed badge movement in near real time. All this is active RFID technology in that the badge transmits

all the time rather than passively waiting for energy from an external reader.

A "hacking kit" includes a USB jack plus another chip. Unfortunately, these are both surface mount so the soldering is a little out of my league. The USB port allows interfacing the badge from both Linux and Windows (I believe) to reflash the firmware or read data directly. The board also has holes to mount four pin headers allowing access to more of the "guts". The organizers published the full "badge API" and by Friday nite, several Android apps appeared that used the badge data stream. Hopefully (sic) this data will become available again at [badge.hope.net](http://badge.hope.net), [openamd.org](http://openamd.org) and related websites. I'll include more when this column appears on the DACS website.

So, if The Next HOPE wasn't so much about computer hacking, what was it about? Many speakers talked about the social aspects of hacking, threats to our civil liberties, life as a hacker, and electronic privacy. There was one marathon 3-hour session entitled "Privacy is Dead – Get Over It". In this session the speaker covered how your information is first captured and then exploited by everything from the obvious ones like Facebook to your insurance companies, your phone company, etc., etc. record and track your activities and never let the information go. Google and Facebook were covered extensively. As frightening as all this might be, the real worry is that the government does not need to collect this information itself, it merely issues a national security letter (NSL) and the relevant company is required to turn over whatever information it has.

What I feel was the most unusual session was presented by three women about "Towards Open Libraries and Schools". One of the women was your typical pure-as-the-driven-snow educator, but the two librarians from rural Vermont were a little more "cutting edge". One of them appeals to the hacker community to help the libraries in their communities to adopt open source software and improve their technologies. She emphasized that many hackers could make it easier for the library staff if they softened their approach and brushed their teeth before coming to the library.

On the lighter side, two of the guys from my other computer club ([midatlanticretro.org](http://midatlanticretro.org)) in New Jersey gave a talk on computer history in the local (NJ, PA) area. They started with John Mauchly and J. Presper Eckert of the University of Pennsylvania, the designers of the ENIAC (considered to be the first electronic, general purpose digital computer) continued with the MOS 6502 (heart of the Commodore PET and Apple II) from MOS Technology in Norristown, PA, and many other companies. They even managed to mention Bell Labs and AT&T. They also had a booth in the "Hacker Village" on the second floor where several MARCH members exhibited some vintage computers and generally talked hacking with attendees.

Overall, The Next HOPE was a lot of fun. I'll award a prize to the first person who correctly identifies the hacker references in the names of the three conference rooms – Bell, Tesla and Lovelace. No, the last is not the actress Linda Lovelace who died a year or so ago. You need more than just the person's name to win.

### Cool Stuff

Have you been avoiding taking the train between Boston, New York and Washington D.C. for fear of being disconnected from the Internet for so long?

Well, Trains Magazine notes that Amtrak passengers on the **Acela Express trains now have continuous Wi-Fi** Internet access on the entire Northeast Corridor. What will they think of next?

**Droid owners can now use their phone as a 3G wireless "modem"** to connect a computer to the Internet without paying an exorbitant fee to Verizon. The instructions on [eHow.com](http://eHow.com) ([tinyurl.com/2fdzk59](http://tinyurl.com/2fdzk59)) use an app called PDAnet that does the heavy lifting. The process requires installing the USB driver for the Droid so you can connect it to your PC.

Later, you can use a Bluetooth link to the PC, but the initial connection requires the USB cable. The thing that caught my eye is that this app does not require root access. With the 2.2 version of Android due for the Droid in just a few days, I have been reluctant to root my phone. PDAnet costs \$24 for continued use. The app is licensed to the phone so you can use the phone with as many PCs as you wish. The latest version adds support for Macintosh. If you don't own a Droid, there are versions of PDAnet for PalmOS, Windows Mobile, Blackberry and the iPhone. How egalitarian!

# Ask DACS

July, 2010

Moderated and Reported by *By Jim Scheef*

**W**E 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](mailto:askdacs@dacs.org). We will ask the question for you and post the reply in *dacs.doc* and on *dacs.org*. Please provide as much information as possible, since we can't probe during the session.

***Q. I have a new Windows 7 installation, and Windows Explorer windows fail to open if I'm logged into my domain (defined by a server machine running Windows Server).***

A. A member guessed that it sounded like a permissions problem, and the questioner should ensure that the account experiencing the problem is added to the Local Administrators group. The questioner indicated he had already done that. A further suggestion was to look for services in the Services application that were of startup type Automatic, but didn't start. It was also suggested to look for related error message in Event Viewer. Services and Event Viewer are both found in the Administrative Tools folder in Control Panel. Then look up any error message in the Microsoft Knowledgebase or other Net resources.

***Q. What is meant by the term ports?***

A. Aside from the physical ports on a computer (serial, parallel, USB, Ethernet, etc.), ports is also a networking term. In Internet terms, computers and devices have an IP (Internet protocol) address, but for particular networking services to work, they must also use a specific port number at that IP address. For instance to browse a Web site, the Web browser connects to port 80 on the Web server hosting that Web site. To receive e-mail, port 110 is used to connect to a POP3 e-mail server. Port 25 is used to connect to an outgoing mail server for sending e-mail. Webopedia ([http://www.webopedia.com/quick\\_ref/portnumbers.asp](http://www.webopedia.com/quick_ref/portnumbers.asp)) has a list of some "well-known ports", and also gives a definition of the term port. A firewall controls which ports are open to network traffic. To protect your machine, only those ports that you need should be open.

***Q. At the library I found a book on Windows Vista Ultimate that talked about a program called IIS. What is its purpose?***

A. It stands for Internet Information Services and is Microsoft's software for running a Web site. Normally you would run it on a server, or you would use a hosting service on the Internet that might be running IIS. Apache (<http://httpd.apache.org/>) is the other popular Web server software, but is not included with Windows. You can install Internet Information Services by turning on that Windows feature in Programs and Features in Control Panel. You'll then find IIS Manager in the Administrative Tools folder. You can try it out on your home machine, but it is not recommended that you open up the Web server to the Internet. By the way, IIS is not a program designed for creating a Web site, just serving it up. If you are interested in building a Web site, try out the Web Design SIG (<http://www.dacs.org/siggroups/websitedesign.htm>).

***Q. My laptop has been overheating, so I tried an energy saving mode. After a bit the screen brightens and I have to use a function key to dim to the display. This keeps happening.***

A. If you leave the machine idle, the screen should dim after a bit of time. If you start using the mouse or keyboard, the screen will then brighten again. If this is not what's happening, there may be something wrong with your computer that would be worth taking it in for a warranty repair. Check to make sure the fan is working by checking for airflow coming from the output vents. Check for dust in the vents and if necessary use a vacuum cleaner device rather than a blower. If you need to send it in for repair, be sure to back up your computer data first.

***Q. My neighbor got a new machine with Windows 7 and Internet Explorer 8. Initially his Wi-Fi connection will work, but then shortly after die. The cable company verified that the cable signal was fine.***

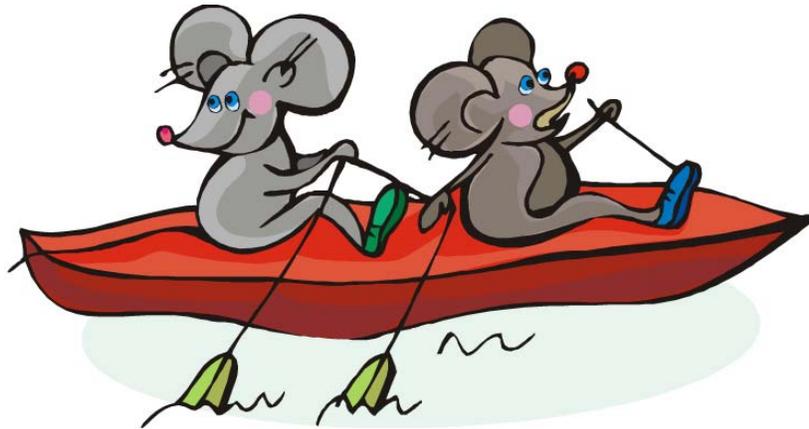
A. An audience member mentioned once having a similar problem and found that her cordless phone was interfering with the Wi-Fi. The neighbor should try connecting used a wired (Ethernet) connection to see if the problem goes away. If not that would indicate a more fundamental problem with the router, cable modem, or cable connection. He could try pinging the router (enter the command 'ping 192.168.0.1', or whatever the address of the router is). If that works then try pinging an Internet address outside his local network. If need be, contact the cable company again and make sure they send someone who can diagnose Internet connection problems.

***Q. I have a laptop that I leave plugged in most of the time. To prolong battery life, someone said I should remove the battery when I'm not using it. Will that help?***

A. One audience member maintained that that was a good practice, and had read that recommendation from several sources. Another questioned whether anyone had really done a side-by-side study to prove that it actually prolonged the battery life. He said the useful life of a laptop battery was 3 to 5 years, which is the same as the useful life of a laptop. A third member suggested that it was a good practice to let the machine run down on battery power once a month, let it cool down, and then recharge it.

Questions for the upcoming meeting can be emailed to [askdacs@dacs.org](mailto:askdacs@dacs.org).

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!



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



**Voice  
for  
Joanie**

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

# Future Events:

**August 3**

MS Office 2010  
Jay Ferron

**September 7**

Apple Mac OS X  
Dave Marra

**October 5**

E-book Readers  
Bruce Preston

**November 2**

TBA