

NEXT MEETING, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7:

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO CLIMB A
MOUNTAIN TO FIND THE
SNOW LEOPARD. AT OUR
NEXT MEETING, APPLE'S
DAVE MARRA WILL
SHOW YOU HOW THE
NEW IMPROVED OS X
WILL MAKE YOUR
SYSTEM PURR.**

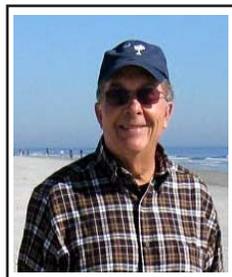


From the Editor

Does anyone remember the Maginot Line?

By Patrick Libert

Remember my comments from last month? There have been a few recent articles mentioning potential threats to our infrastructure: “critical system flaws” “Stuxnet could Hijack Power Plants, Refineries”



Those are some of the latest. But, the one that really caught my attention was the one on “What’s Off Limits.”

Of course, our enemies will consider certain sectors to be “off limits” to cyber attack in times of war!

Let’s think back to 1939 and the treaties between the European nations and Germany, in particular France, my native country.

Any invasion would only come from across the Rhine, which was heavily fortified along the Maginot line. Yeah! Right! My father was captured with much of the French army as those “off limits” agreements were honored.

Does anyone think it would be different today? “All is fair in love and war!” Enough said.

July’s Presentation

Jay’s Office 2010 presentation was excellent and piqued my interest as to what Office for Mac 2010 will offer

when it is released in October. The integration of several applications within the Office application finally makes it more creative and fun to use. I plan to upgrade from Office for Mac 2008 and will reserve detailed judgment until then.

September’s Presentation or What’s Up Mac?

Disclaimer: The writer of this column is hopelessly prejudiced in favor of the Mac operating system. Any opinions are strictly those of the writer and should not reflect on his sanity.

Now that I have opened the door to unleash endless pro-Mac propaganda on the reading public, I can enthusiastically endorse and recommend the upcoming general meeting presentation by Dave Marra.

Why? Well, I have been using the Mac platform since 1992 and still find it to be simpler, safer and more fun to use. Dave will delve into the details of the latest OS, Snow Leopard, with all its capabilities for today’s networking environment.

Mark your calendars for September 7 at 7 p.m.



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!

Membership Information

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



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HelpLine

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

d = day e = evening

Program	Name	Phone/E-mail	
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ASP.Net	Chuck Fizer	cfizer@dacs.org	
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VB.Net, Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	cfizer@dacs.org	

Directors' Notes

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Danbury Area Computer Society was held on Wednesday, Aug 11, 2010. President Corzo called the meeting to order at 7:11 PM.

In attendance: Richard Corzo (President), Jeff Setaro, Jim Scheef, Bruce Preston (Secretary), Patrick Libert, Charlie Bovaird.

Minutes of Last Meeting: accepted as submitted.

Treasurer's Report:

Bank checking account	\$6,105.57
Postal Stamp inventory	\$15.20
Subtotal	\$6,120.77
Liabilities - prepaid dues	<u>\$65.00</u>
Total Net Worth	\$6,055.77

Old Business

1. General meetings
 - a) Reviews – September: Patrick Libert; October, November: TBA
 - b) Previews – September: Frank Kromer; October, November: TBA
 - c) 2010 meeting topics
 - Sep: Apple Mac OS X—Dave Marra. What do we want for raffle prizes?
 - Oct: E-book Readers—Bruce Preston
 - Nov: New Trends in Digital Cameras—Gary Spring
 - Dec: Need to ask John Patrick
 - General Meeting dates for 2010: 1/4, 2/2, 3/2, 4/6, 5/4, 6/1, 7/6, 8/3, 9/7, 10/5, 11/2, 12/7. 10/5 meeting will be in Conference Center across the hall from auditorium

Patrick will ask Richard Teasdale if he is interested in doing review and/or preview of October.

Chris Furey has agreement from Gary Spring to do November presentation subject to Ritz Camera corporate OK.

Richard will confirm John Patrick for December meeting. Jim mentioned we want to get newspaper stuff out in timely fashion.

2. Open positions

- a) Need backup/replacement for Treasurer – work with Intuit Quicken, write checks, process deposits. Charlie will document treasurer's responsibilities, so we can put position description in dacs.doc.

- b) Membership chairperson – want someone who can be a greeter at general meetings, keep the database up to date, etc.

3. Open board position: Andy Woodruff has agreed to join the board in September

SIGS, Cont. on page 5

Meeting Preview

Apple OS X "Snow Leopard"

By Frank Kromer

DACS MONTHLY meetings do not often have Apple computers as a topic. On Tuesday evening, September 7, that will all change. Dave Marra, from Apple, Inc., will be our guest presenter for that evening.

Dave is a Senior Systems Engineer for Apple, and he has conducted thousands of technology presentations, keynote addresses and workshops for schools, Mac and PC user groups, businesses and other professional organizations. Both an Apple Certified Technical Coordinator and Apple Certified Systems Administrator, his specialty areas include digital multimedia, Internet technologies, accessibility and Mac/PC integration. He has a web site at www.marrathon.com.

Dave will take us through Snow

Leopard which he describes as building upon a decade of Mac OS X innovation with hundreds of refinements, new core technologies and out-of-the-box support for Microsoft Exchange, all engineered upon a rock-solid, 64-bit UNIX foundation.



The last time Dave made a presentation to DACS, I didn't attend because I didn't think I cared about what Apple was doing. That all changed with the iPhone. Once I learned what the iPhone was all about, learning about the Apple Mac became a necessity.

I converted my computing from a Windows environment to Snow Leopard in February. It used to be that I would turn my computer on, go down to Starbucks for a cup of coffee, return home and my computer might be ready to perform.

Not any more. Now, when I turn on my computer, Snow Leopard is there!

There are many other features that Dave will cover including a more responsive Finder (in Windows, that's the Explorer), faster built-in applications, a Dock with Exposé integration, Safari 5, QuickTime, and many more features. Don't pass up this opportunity to learn about a leading operating system. I'll be there and you should too. Come to the meeting on September 7th and discover more about this advanced operating system.

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:

Microsoft Office 2010

By Marc Cohen

WE WERE PRIVILEGED to have Jay Ferron as the evening's presenter. Jay is a noted author and lecturer, who has covered years of Microsoft and computer history. He was able to lead us quickly thru the many new features of Office2010.

Office2010 includes a suite of the most used home and office applications: Word, Excel, Outlook, OneNote, and a broad selection of Web applications.

Jay started with a tour of the ribbon bar interface features that many find intimidating. He showed how the controls are rapidly understandable when using the many self explanatory templates and graphic tools that are provided in the ribbon bar.



Starting with a text document, Jay demonstrated how to quickly format page size, page numbering, column layout, fonts, styles, colors, by using the ever present ribbon bar. He then imported and positioned a chart and a photo within the text. He added outlines, frames and shadows to both, and was able to edit the color and rotate the photo using the tools and prompts displayed in the ribbon bar. All without the need for exiting to an additional photo or video editing program.

There are many text style editing tools that can create effects that can turn plain text into attention getting headlines by choosing glows, shaded and shadowed styles from a visual preview accessed from the ribbon bar.

Another application, Back Stage, gives you more options to apply to your work once it's finished. Share and Send allows sending the document in E-mail, save to a company SharePoint site, in Word2010 or publish a blog post.

Windows Live Sky Drive is a free online service (cloud?) that allows you to store documents on line.

You can then access it from wherever you have an internet connection. You just log on to your SkyDrive site with the same username and password you use for Windows Live Messenger or other Windows Live sites. You can save all your Windows2010 files and folders without leaving the applications.

More than ever before, you can store documents and folders that only you can access or you can store documents in folders that you can give to everyone or to selected users to whom you have given access permission.

MARC COHEN is a retired professional photographer. He was named Director Emeritus of DACS after serving as a director since the club began. Over the years he served as editor or co-editor of DACS.doc in addition to numerous other positions.

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 3

4. Using Drupal for the DACS Web site— update from Annette: She has not done anything to the front end of the DACS-Drupal test page. It needs some more tweaking, but she doesn't want to start adding real content/pages until we're on a 'live' pre-launch platform. From Jim and Jeff - There is a problem with the e-mail that goes out confirming registration. Suggested that a noreply@dacs.org be set up to handle outgoing mail for such one-way communication. Alternative may be an RSS feed – but assumes recipient is set up for RSS.
5. DACS feedback — update from Annette: She received several of the testing form submissions sent by Jim through the DACS feedback form, so it appears to be working OK. There is a problem with some receiving sites failing on SPF, Jim to talk to Mags.Net about getting settings correct.
6. Scholarship Committee – Jim tried contact at New Milford H.S. – unavailable until school year starts. Mary was to approach Bethel H.S., no report as of yet, suspect same situation.

New Business

1. Membership info required when member joins using PayPal. Right now Charlie can send e-mail requesting info, or phone – would much prefer that it be on the PayPal form. He'd like physical mailing address to use for such things as postcard renewal reminders etc.
2. A member requested that we get someone to speak about EMF detection and abatement, as she has found levels sufficient to cause symptoms similar to vertigo. Do any DACS members have experience with EMF or someone who could speak to it?
3. Charlie brought up what it costs for publishing and distributing DACS.DOC and made suggestions for additional/alternative distribution means. One suggestion is two copies to various libraries, one for reference/saving, one for display, and that they be 'hand delivered'. Reason is that currently the mailed copy gets delivered, distributed among staff, then filed – not made available to general public. Charlie suggests taking all library copies to a single library; they then use inter-library mail system. Would want a one-time visit to each library (reference librarian) to confirm that they would display a copy.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:25PM.

—Bruce Preston

**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

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



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"Nah - I don't care nuthin' about fashion -
I just need a picture for my Facebook"

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: September 2010

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

Contact: Bruce Preston, 203 431-2920 (*bpreston@dacs.org*).

Meets on 2nd Tuesday, 7p.m., by virtual connection.

Next meeting: September 14 (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. (Note change below)

Next Meeting: September 1 at DACS Resource Center

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: September 9

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: September 29

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: October 7

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 (*avo@annagraphics.com*).

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

Next Meeting: September 21

SIG News & Events

Drupal. This month I related my experience at DrupalCamp NYC groups.drupal.org/nyc/drupalcampnyc8 which was held at the NYU-POLY Brooklyn Campus, in (you guessed it) Brooklyn, NY. After many years of wondering, I finally saw the Kosciuszko Bridge on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. I paid a \$10 donation for my ticket which covered food at both breakfast and lunch. There were three tracks of concurrent sessions and sometimes it was hard to pick. I attended sessions aimed at new Drupal users plus two sessions on using CiviCRM with Drupal. Slides from most of the presentations are linked on the page above.

Another DrupalCamp drupalcampct.org is planned for New Haven, CT, but will have passed by the time you read this. Following my epic story, we discussed progress on the new dacs.org website.

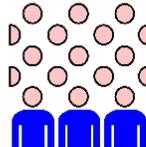
The next Drupal SIG meeting will be Thursday, September 9 at 7p.m. in the DACS Resource Center.

Mac. At the August SIG meeting we discussed iOS4 for the iPhone and iPod touch. It is the update to the former iPhone

SIG Notes, Cont. on page 9

September 2010

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																												
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<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>  <p>Labor Day</p>	<p>7</p>  <p>6:30 P.M. GENERAL MTG</p>	<p>8</p>  <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>7-9 PM Drupal Jim Scheef 860 355-0034</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>																																																																																												
<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>MS ACCESS 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Bruce Preston bpreston@mags.net</p>	<p>15</p>  <p>7:30 PM Linux Drew Kwashnak 203 910-6477</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																												
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Tech Etiquette

Creative Griping Makes Friends and Brings Rewards

By Gabe Goldberg

IN A PERFECT WORLD, there'd be no problems with hardware, software, or services; businesses would be fully staffed with articulate human beings ready to accommodate all requests, and every product would meet or exceed customer expectations.

But that's not how things work on planet Earth in 2010. Instead, things break quickly or are badly designed; customer service is outsourced to far-away lands; and even when they're accessible, company staff often aren't responsive.

So what to do? Nobody I know is cut out for frontier living, self-sufficiency, and subsistence farming. That means we're all making the best of living in our techno-fragile and sometimes irritating culture. So let's have at it.

First, when life's little outrages intrude, avoid the temptation to accept them as unavoidable — and, worse, unfixable. Just as Slickdeals tips help you find bargains, a few techniques and some practice can remedy a bad situation or even turn it pleasant.

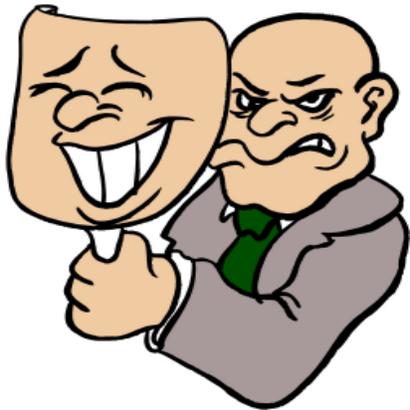
Stay Calm and Be Convincing

Complaining courteously to the right person with a specific remedy in mind can be rewarding. If a company Web site has a "Contact us" link, start there with an email or telephone connection. Be polite, identify yourself, mention how you're connected to the organization (current or potential customer, etc.), and describe your dissatisfaction.

If you're always happy after your initial dialogue with a company, you're a unique individual, and you can stop reading now!

Too frequently, however, a first complaint contact goes nowhere. That's when to escalate. Calling may work but you'll likely deal with a low-level (and low-powered) call center. So writing is better.

No matter how you're communicating — phone, email, instant message, letter, online support chat — keep records of contact names and what's said. These are essential for recapping, summarizing, and (especially) escalating. If it's a large company or you expect to have further contact with them, request a case or "ticket" number for tracing your request.



Use company Web sites, Google, and other online resources to identify and locate senior executives. Check Web site links such as "About us", "Press room", and "Investor relations". Write to the CEO by name and title, briefly describing, with a

tone of regret, what went wrong. You certainly won't hear back in person from Ms/Mr. CEO, but most large companies have an Office of the Chairman with staff to calm down and cheer up unhappy customers. Pursuing matters to the top works. After Starbucks' Web staffers were unresponsive to a complaint, escalating to the chairman resulted in an apology and a \$50 store card.

Remain courteous. Don't rant or threaten and surely don't overuse CAPITAL letters. That makes your message hard to read and look like a crude ransom note. No matter what you're told, emphasize that you're not angry at whoever you're speaking or emailing with and that you understand they're probably bound by company policies. Staying calm and cheerful sets you apart from most people and improves the odds of your getting satisfaction.

Be brief but complete. Provide enough history and detail to be clear and compelling but don't ramble or include non-essential details.

Be precise. Quote error messages, identify people involved, list event sequences so you're believable. When I complained that a Web site didn't use encryption for processing credit card

information, the owner at first disagreed but when I proved my assertion, he was outraged — at his Webmaster, for botching security. He then asked what I'd intended to purchase and sent it to me free, along with other items.

Include good news. If you're a long-time customer, had a recent pleasant experience with the company, can praise a particular employee, or have ever recommended the company's products or services, say so. If whatever you're griping about was a mixed picture, begin by describing what you liked.

Let Companies Turn Problems Into Rewards

Raise issues when there's time and flexibility to remedy them. For example, when finalizing a stay at Nemaquin, a luxury Pennsylvania resort, I was unhappy to learn that two signature restaurants would be closed during our planned stay. Instead of suffering in silence or — with difficulty — changing our travel dates, I politely contacted the general manager to suggest that guests be informed of such restrictions when initially making reservations. He agreed, and offered to have his Five-Diamond chef prepare a fantasy meal for us including anything we requested. His only advice was, "Challenge the chef." So we did — and the world-class chef and two assistants spent three hours serving us privately, with Champagne and cocktails, on a day that the restaurant was indeed closed. And — as arranged in advance — one of the most memorable meals of my life cost half the normal price of dining there. So a problem identified early and solved graciously resulted in my being a huge fan of the resort, the general manager, and the chef.

Complaining, even to the top, doesn't always work. I've certainly been ignored — received no response — and received dismissive responses offering neither apology nor any gesture of atonement. When this happens, the final option is going public via Twitter, blogs, etc. Many companies monitor their online reputations and respond to credible complaints with remedies.

But usually, company management values and responds to customer feedback; I've established cordial relationships with executives by identifying areas needing improvement. Writing letters is easy and inexpensive enough — and after sending a few you'll have stock phrases that make it simple — that it's worth doing to remedy all but the smallest problems.

Five minutes and a stamp has been a small price to pay for a \$50 Starbucks card, a unique luxury meal, Web site merchandise, and many hundreds of dollars worth of refunds, merchandise, and services.

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SIG Notes, Cont. from page 6

OS, now called iOS. It runs on iPhone 3G and later iPhone models, and the second generation and later of the iPod touch.

Its biggest feature is multitasking of third-party programs, but that feature on the iPhone requires at least an iPhone 3GS.

Note that there has always been multitasking of Apple-provided apps. For instance you could run the iPod app in the background and start another app, or you could be on a phone call and then open the Safari browser at the same time. What's new is that now you can run an audio app like Pandora in the background while working with another app, or receive a Skype call when you are doing something else on the iPhone. To view which apps are running or suspended, just hit the Home button twice to see a scrollable list at the bottom of the screen and choose which.

Another new feature is app folders, so that you can organize related apps in folders on any of your Home screens. With up to 9 apps in a folder, this also increases the number of apps you can access easily.

The Mail app has been improved with a unified Inbox for those of us with multiple e-mail accounts, and more direct access to the inboxes of those accounts.

There is also a new iBooks app you can download from which you can view books from the new iBookstore, books in ePub format, as well as PDFs you can load through iTunes.

We also had time for user questions, and two people asked about the Time Capsule. One had a friend who wanted to partition the hard drive inside the Time Capsule, but there is no easy way to do this. It turns out the reason he was interested in partitioning, was he wanted to back up more than one Mac on his network. To do this you don't need to partition the drive. On each Mac go into Time Machine preferences in System Preferences, and select the Time Capsule as the backup drive. The Time Capsule will happily back up the multiple Macs and keep them separate.

There will be no Mac SIG meeting in September, but be sure to see Dave Marra's presentation on Snow Leopard at the DACS general meeting on Tuesday, September 7. We'll resume the Mac SIG in October.

Letter to the Editor:

Dear Editor:

In the August (2010) DACS.doc Letter from the Editor you brought up the National Security Agency, or NSA, which sounds like a bi-polar organization between spying and protecting. We have actually been benefiting from their involvement for a number of years already.

The NSA had provided guidelines on how to secure Windows XP and 2000, and had a hand in securing Vista. It wasn't until Windows 7 that the NSA was allowed to fully participate in securing it during development [1]. The NSA has also helped Sun and Apple, but to what extent I don't know.

Meanwhile, the NSA was, and may still be, the primary developer of SELinux which was open sourced under the GPL in 2000, and merged in the mainline kernel by 2003 [2]. Being open source, people more paranoid than you or I have been able to scour the code to ensure it does not include any nefarious back doors.

This SELinux has been included in Fedora since Fedora Core 2 came out in 2004, and Red Hat Enterprise Linux 4 released in 2005. Ubuntu included SELinux support with version 8.04 LTS (Long Term Support) released in 2008.

So I think there is little need to split up the NSA, as they have already proven that they can handle the political pitfalls of assisting even the most closed-source systems and has already been available in Linux over five years now.

Drew Kwashnak

REFERENCES:

[1] NSA helped with Windows 7 development http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9141105/NSA_helped_with_Windows_7_development

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Commentary

Circuit Writer Version 8.0

By Jim Scheef

So much to write about

THE EVENTS AND stories of this past month have been earth-shattering in their importance, so I will get a little note out of the way right now: last month (version 7.11) finished my eighth year writing this column. I can never understand people who say they have nothing to write about.



It's all about our Constitution

This month the theme is the Constitution of the United States of America, and yes, I will tie this into computers. When the Constitution was submitted to the states for ratification in 1787, many people were concerned that the rights and freedoms for which they had just fought so long and hard were not codified, were not guaranteed, in the original seven articles of the Constitution. A compromise was needed to gain approval in Massachusetts and some other states. The compromise was the agreement to follow the Constitution with a set of amendments that we know today as the Bill of Rights. The first of these amendments reads as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." This month the First Amendment has been much in the news.

Here is the first computer tie-in, otherwise known as Net Neutrality. Net Neutrality is more than which web sites have the fastest speed, or what devices you can connect to the Internet. Net Neutrality is free speech. It is who has the right to determine which messages can reach the recipient and if other messages have priority over other messages. The "agreement" between Verizon and Google could lead to a tiered "private" Internet where extra-cost premium traffic takes precedence over regular traffic from folks like us. Could this lead to stifling the free exchange of ideas? The level playing field provided by the

Internet has given groups from the smallest blogger to the Ku Klux Klan, all the various Tea Partiers and WikiLeaks the same ability to publish. How many people would be using Linux today if free software did not have the same ability to make a website as Microsoft does? Of these examples, perhaps the most important is the person with something to say who starts a blog.

Net neutrality really is about free speech. The flow of information has changed dramatically over the last twenty years. Ask the people who used to work for daily and weekly newspapers all over the country. Media consolidation has drastically reduced the number of news outlets. Cable television has not countered this trend; it has made it worse, as these outlets are owned by the same corporations as the remaining newspapers and radio stations. As the number of corporations owning media outlets decreases, our ability to hear independent ideas shrinks every day.

The one remaining open medium is the Internet, but not if the telecommunications companies are allowed to control the flow. Here is some suggested reading. The first is Senator Al Franken's op-ed on CNN (tinyurl.com/2vsgxbz), which is the most lucid explanation of the issue I have found. Next are reviews of the Verizon-Google deal; first from EFF (tinyurl.com/373gut2) that explains the relation between this deal and FCC regulation of the Internet, and then another on Ars Technica (tinyurl.com/24jcf8u) "Google-Verizon NN pact riddled with gaping loopholes" that explains the evil. For some lighter (as in depth, not humor) reading, take a look at "What Would a 'Private' Internet Look Like?" on ABC News (tinyurl.com/2vnts72).

I believe the Verizon-Google deal is an outgrowth of a federal circuit court ruling that the FCC does not have the authority to mandate net neutrality in the manner it currently proposes. Read about this in an Op-ed piece from the New York Times from April, "An Internet for Everybody" (tinyurl.com/ydy8wma) by Susan Crawford (former special assistant to President Obama for science, technology and innovation policy, now a professor at the University of Michigan Law School).

Keep in mind that free speech is not a left or right, conservative or liberal issue. When someone or something impinges on anyone's speech, we are all diminished. It never hurts to tell your Congresspeople how you feel about an issue and I urge you to do so. Your letter or email could be what shapes their opinion on this issue.

Well, one last blog. I include it only for the humorous irony, "Tea Party groups out against net neutrality" by Sara Jerome of *The Hill*. She writes that Tea Party groups object to FCC regulation of the Internet on free speech grounds: "The free-speech argument holds that, by interfering with how phone and cable companies deliver Internet traffic, the government would be thwarting the free-speech rights of providers such as AT&T, Verizon and Comcast." Sorry, but you just can't make this stuff up.

Back to the First Amendment

My hat is off to Research In Motion (RIM), the Canadian makers of the Blackberry smart phone. It is so secure that governments are threatening to block the devices unless RIM provides these governments with a back door allowing them to read every email sent to or from Blackberry devices in these countries. Wow! That must be some encryption they use! Of course these governments, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and India are only asking for the same access they assume RIM is providing to the United States government. See "BlackBerry Security Stance Sows Anxiety" in the NY Times (tinyurl.com/2vmwb8g) for a good synopsis of the story.

Digging a little deeper, we find that this is not the first time the UAE has tried to get access to Blackberry emails, the first time, they did not ask so nicely. Read this post on Engadget "Etisalat BlackBerry update was indeed spyware, RIM provides a solution" (tinyurl.com/m52l6y). It seems that Etisalat, the wireless carrier in the UAE, sent an SMS to their customers asking that they download and install a "performance enhancing" update. Those who installed the patch noticed vastly decreased battery life. Rather than coming from RIM, the patch was coded by SS8, a U.S. security firm, to reroute email to government servers. In other words, UAE used social engineering to get Blackberry users to install spyware on their phones. RIM has issued a removal tool on their website at tinyurl.com/lr93tx. Like I said before, you can't make this stuff up.

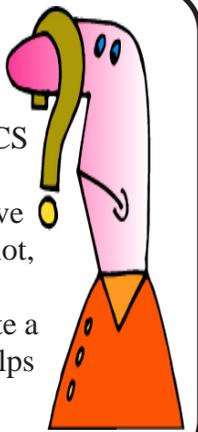
Aren't you glad we live in a country that guarantees your free speech so we can be sure that our government is not spying on our email! If you think this is unimportant, read "Digital Privacy: If You've Done Nothing Wrong, Do You Have 'Nothing to Hide'?" by Barton Gellman at (tinyurl.com/25m9xkg). I particularly like: "Oracle's Larry Ellison ("the privacy you're concerned about is largely an illusion") is the guy who wants to supply software for a national ID system."

One more

The first freedom mentioned in the First Amendment is that of religion and there is no computer tie-in for this one. The founding fathers thought that religious freedom was so important, that religion is actually mentioned in the original seven articles of the Constitution. Article VI specifies, among other things that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." Given this level of importance, it would seem insane to deny any religious group the right to build a community center on private property anywhere in this country. To do so in lower Manhattan where we, as a nation, were attacked by terrorists who it was said at the time "hate us for our freedoms", would serve only to make true what our detractors say about us. There have been so many news stories, editorials and op-ed pieces on this topic, I make no reading recommendations. Besides, you've probably already made up your mind and it is unlikely that anything I could say or suggest is going to change that.

The opinions expressed here are the author's and not necessarily those of the Danbury Area Computer Society, its board or officers.

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.



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. 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 newer versions of Firefox save bookmarks in a database of some sort rather than the old HTML file. I used to use an add-on to have Firefox maintain both the new bookmarks data file and the HTML file. I can no longer find that add-on, so does anyone know how to find it?*

A – The first answer was that no add-on is needed as Firefox can export the bookmarks into an HTML file, which should solve the problem. I then plugged my favorite Firefox add-on, PlainOldFavorites. This allows Firefox to use Internet Explorer Favorites (internet shortcuts) instead of (or in addition to) bookmarks. Apparently this add-on is so popular that it will be built into the next major version of Firefox. We had a similar discussion a few months back and several members recommended Xmarks that can synchronize favorites or bookmarks between computers and browsers and even across platforms.

D – The discussion then digressed into privacy, tracking cookies and add-ons that can block advertising and related third-party cookies. Those who are interested in such things can search the Firefox add-ons on Mozilla.org to find add-ons that suit their needs. Some members suggested using the "InPrivate Browsing" mode of IE 8, which keeps all browser history for the current session in an isolated sandbox and deletes it all at the end of the session. This is found on the 'Safety' menu. Firefox has a similar feature on the Tools menu: 'Start Private Browsing'.

Q – *I have a 22-inch large screen monitor and I have trouble reading the type on the screen. Is there a*

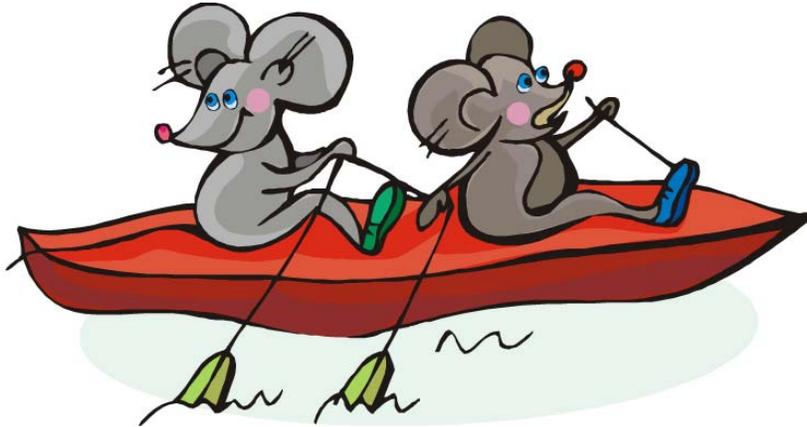
way to make the type larger?

A – Vista and Windows 7 support font scaling. To change this setting on Vista, right-click on the desktop and select Personalize; then click "Adjust Font Size (DPI)" from the menu on the left. The dialog that opens offers 'Normal' or 'Larger' plus a button for 'Custom DPI' where you can scale fonts to whatever works for you. The procedure is similar on Win 7: right-click on the desktop and pick Screen Resolution; then click the link "Make text and other items larger or smaller"; the resulting dialog allows you to change the DPI (dots per inch) setting for your screen. Try a few different settings doing your regular tasks to see the effect.

D – Discussion turned to Adobe Acrobat and Flash players. Jay Ferron, the speaker at the August meeting, noted that a significant security hole in both Acrobat and Flash as been patched. The recommended procedure is to uninstall whatever versions you have now and then do fresh installs of the current versions (10.1 for Flash, 9.3.3 for Acrobat). This ensures that the problem DLLs are replaced.

Unfortunately this was the last question that I could hear on the recordings for this month.

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
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Future Events:

September 7

Apple Mac OS X
Dave Marra

October 5

E-book Readers
Bruce Preston

November 2

New Trends in
Digital Cameras
Gary Spring

December 7

TBA