

NEXT MEETING: BEYOND THE VINYL CUT

DO YOU STILL LONG FOR THE SOUNDS OF A DIFFERENT MASTER? DACS' TECH GURU, BRUCE PRESTON, WILL SHOW HOW TO TRANSFER THOSE OLD LP'S AND TAPES TO DIGITAL MEDIA WITH SOME TIPS AND TRICKS THAT EVEN AN OLD DOG CAN LEARN.



Directors' Notes

A meeting of your board of directors was held on Wednesday, June 8, 2011. The meeting was called to Order at: 7:15 p.m.

Attending were Andrew Woodruff, Bruce Preston (Secretary), David Green (Treasurer), Jeff Setaro, Jim Scheef, Patrick Libert, Richard Corzo (President). Minutes of Previous Meeting were accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Balance on hand 5/1/11:	\$6,387.86
Income: Dues:	\$313.83
Interest:	\$0.57
Total:	\$314.40
Expenses:	
Printing Apr+May:	\$170
RC Security:	\$79.34
Total:	\$249.34
Balance on hand 5/31/2011:	\$6,452.92

Membership Report:

Months:	APR	MAY	JUN
Paying Members:	152	154	154
e-Mail Addresses:	149	150	151
New Members:	0	2	0

DACS.DOC:

Printed:	100	100	100
Mailed:	75	76	76
to members:	54	56	56
to other:	6	6	6
mailed-free library:	14	14	14

Meeting Attendance:

APR (John Patrick - State of Internet)			
MAY (Jeff Setaro - Virus etc.)			
JUN (Kunst & Milmerstadt - Banking/ eCommerce Security)			
Seat count:	54	48	35
Members signed in:	42	44	31
Visitors signed in:	11	4	4

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Old Business

1. General meetings

- June 7: Frank Kunst & Chris Milmerstadt of Fairfield County Bank-Safe Internet Commerce, Preview: Rich DiFranco, Review: Bruce Preston
- July 5: Converting Analog Recordings to Digital, Preview: Joseph Tobin, Review: Andy Woodruff
- August 2: Norbert (Bob) Gostischa - Protecting Yourself and Your Identity Online (Avast! Security Seminar), Preview: Dave Green, Review: TBD
- September 6: Dan O'Connor - Investment Tools, Preview: TBD, Review: TBD

Possible future topics:

- a) Walt Mossberg or associate - technology
- b) Tech Gifts in time for the holidays
- c) Advanced Music editing - multi-track, mixing, live recording, etc.
- d) Building Watson - contact IBM via John Patrick

2. Open positions

- a) The membership chair position is still open.
- b) Richard DiFranco is leaving the area and the board in July. David Green was nominated and voted in as Board member to fill out remainder of Rich's term.
- c) Patrick Libert has picked up the responsibility for press releases.

3. DACS communications infrastructure update: The problem with dropped sessions has been resolved by replacing the DSL modem with one donated by Jim Scheef. In addition, the Resource Center is once again behind the Netgear security router.

4. Our Google Voice number (203) 744-9198 is in operation. The website is updated with the new number, but the newsletter boilerplate still needs work. In the last issue it listed our Google Voice number as the Resource Center number. The RC number is still (203) 748-4330.

5. We'll be putting together a display on DACS at the Danbury Library for September. Various people have contributed ideas, the Marketing & Public Relations forum in the DACS forum will be the place to collect material. Jim, Andy, Charlie are on board, Drew has expressed interest as well, needs confirmation.

6. The *dacs.org* domain registration is tem-

Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 3

Membership Information

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DACS, its officers and directors assume no liability for damages arising out of the publication or non-publication of any article, advertisement, or other item in this newsletter.

The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Ahmad Asgharian (dacseditor@dacs.org). Advertisers, contact Charles Bovaird at (203) 792-7881 (aam@mags.net)

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



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Apple User Group

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MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR: CHARLES BOVAIRD: aam@mags.net

RESOURCE CENTER: (203) 748-4330 • **WEB SITE:** <http://www.dacs.org>

HelpLine

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

d = day e = evening

Program	Name	Phone/E-mail
APL	Charles Bovaird	(203) 792-7881 (e)
ASP.Net	Chuck Fizer	
C/Unix/ObjC	Kenneth Lerman	(203) 426-4430 (d e)
C#, VB	Chuck Fizer	cfizer@dacs.org
Electronics	Andrew Woodruff	(203) 798-2000 (d e)
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SQL	Lewis Westfall	(203) 790-0229 (e)
SQL Server, MySQL-5	Chuck Fizer	
Malware	Jeff Setaro	(203) 748-6748 (d)
VB.Net, Visual Basic	Chuck Fizer	

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 2

porarily on Jim Scheef's *DynDNS.com* account. This needs to be moved.

7. The DACS Forum software has been updated to use MyBB and is now located at forum.dacs.org on Bluehost. The templates have been updated to reflect the new URL. There is a copy of the DACS site on Bluehost, but it needs to have the calendar moved from ASP to PHP. The feedback form also needs to be updated. The registration mechanism has blocked 20 spambot registrations in the few weeks that it has been running. The remaining piece to be converted is the feedback form.

8. 2010 income report and 2011 budget - Dave received samples from Andy, it is in Excel. Jim suggests using Quicken since the data is already there. However Quicken's budget vs. actual module seems to be oriented for annual, whereas we are looking for monthly recording; thus Excel will be used.

New Business

1 David Green will see if he can get online access to bank account at no cost. Current bank has \$5.00/month fee.

2 David Green has changed AT&T bill (RC phone/DSL circuit) to be direct withdrawal rather than mailed to RC and subsequently manually passed to him.

3 Patrick will look into keeping the website page that lists discounts for products to user group members updated with current offers.

4 New or renewing members should get an e-mail welcoming or thanking for signing up.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08

—Bruce Preston

This is Your Last
Newsletter

If the membership date on your
mailing label reads

**EXP6/3/2011
or earlier**

You need to renew your
DACS membership

NOW

Meeting Preview

Converting Vinyl and Tape to MP3 and CD with Bruce Preston

By Joseph Tobin

DO YOU HAVE a collection of music that consists of analog formats like LPs, 45s, 78s? Or even cassette tapes, reel-to-reel tapes, or 8-track? Would you like to be able to play your music on your CD/DVD player, computer, or portable media player, without having to repurchase your entire library? If so, you may be interested in attending the general meeting on July 5th to learn about how you can convert your analog music into digital formats.

During the meeting, Bruce Preston will explain how to do this using free, open

source applications available for Windows, Mac, and Linux. These tools are also lightweight enough that most home computers would be fast enough to run them, and if you already have a turntable, all you will need is a cable that can be purchased for less than \$10 at RadioShack.

Bruce will describe the process in layman's terms and give a live demonstration, where he will also explain how to repair the recorded audio. He will show how to digitally remove the hissing and crackling of records from the 1930s.

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. The meeting is scheduled to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

DACS General Meetings are free and open to the public. Members and prior attendees are encouraged to extend invitations to anyone interested in this topic.

An illustration of a road sign. The sign is rectangular with a blue background and white arrows pointing up and down. It is positioned at a road intersection. In the background, there are green trees and a city skyline under a light blue sky.

Did You Know?
Danbury Hospital is undergoing renovations, and the parking access for the auditorium has changed. You can find up-dated directions and a map on the DACS Website.

Meeting Review

Internet Security – Banking and e-Commerce

By Bruce Preston

IN THE “GOOD OLD DAYS,” a bank could secure its assets by using a vault with thick iron walls and a large door with combination and/or time lock, bars on the windows and an armed Pinkerton guard or two. If they controlled physical access to the money they were all set. Now things are very different, assets move electronically rather than in canvas bags and armored trucks, and the ‘bad guys’ use ingenious methods to divert the stream of bits to their own use. They don’t even need to be on the same continent to commit their crime, and generally don’t leave fingerprints or appear on surveillance videos.

At our June 2011 general meeting, Frank Kunst and Chris Milmerstadt of Fairfield County Bank guided us through some of the behind the scenes techniques

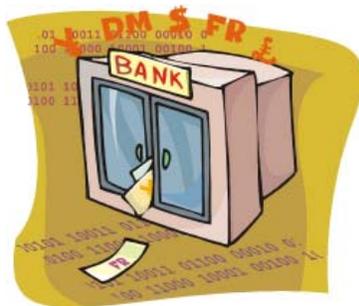
that financial institutions use to protect customers’ assets.

Authentication: Frank started with the very basics—login account and password. Frank stressed that this is just the first layer of defense, that a password should be ‘complex’—containing a mixture of uppercase and lowercase letters, a symbol or two, a digit or two. It most definitely should not be a pet’s name or other easily guessed thing such as license plate, phone number etc. Unfortunately passwords can be

cracked by brute force, dictionary attacks, etc. So banks now often impose a ‘three strikes and you’re out’ lock down mechanism. It’s a start. The next level up is “multi-factor authentication” which might consist of providing the answer to a ‘secret question’ etc. Taking it further, until very recently a more secure mechanism was the

use of a cipher key, such as provided by RSA. Here a random 6-digit sequence is displayed on a key chain device, changing every 30 seconds. The device is synchronized with a generator associated with the account. The user must provide the digits as part of the login process. Even this has now been bypassed. The next step up is ‘out of band’ authentication, whereby the system lists one or more phone numbers associated with the account and as part of the login sequence places an automated call to the selected phone number and expects a response through that circuit rather than via the internet connection. Frank took it even further: for some high volume, high value accounts, they provide an environment on a USB flash drive. This is an entire computer environment that is set to ‘tunnel’ via VPN (Virtual Private Network) to the transaction processor – a completely closed environment. The user must still “unlock” the environment using techniques as previously described.

Best Practices: Chris then discussed ‘best practices’ when surfing the internet in that following these can greatly reduce the likelihood of having your computer compromised by malware. For example, the first thing to observe is “Where is that link I am about to click going to take me?” He suggests getting out of the habit of



directly typing a URL into the browser's address bar. Instead, do a search, find the site, and then observe and dissect the link. If you hover over a link in search results, the actual address will be displayed by the browser – usually at the lower left. Find the first backslash, and look at the TLD (Top Level Domain) immediately to the left. Common TLDs in the U.S. are .COM, .EDU, .GOV, .NET etc. For outside the U.S. the TLD is often a country code - .UK (United Kingdom,) .FR (France,) .CA (Canada,) .RU (Russia,) .CN (China) etc. He gave an example of doing a search for “Gift Card” and found a site with .RU as the TLD. He suggested that you not find it prudent to go to Eastern Europe when searching for a gift card. Be especially aware that some sites try to impersonate legitimate sites by putting in a legitimate sites domain as a sub domain. A made-up example would be “<http://order.amazon.com.process.cn/check-out.asp>” which may look good, but it isn't Amazon.com!

Chris introduced two browser tools – Web of Trust (www.MyWOT.com) and McAfee's SiteAdvisor (www.siteadvisor.com). These add-ons give you a visual indication as to the level of safety for a site. WOT provides evaluations provided by the user community and tend to be a bit more aggressive, while McAfee is a commercial service and tends to be a bit more liberal. Some internet security packages (suites) integrate this functionality as well.

Another recommendation was to watch out for sponsored ads at sites. The site you are at may be perfectly legitimate, but the ad could take you to a place you don't want to be.

Chris also discussed the prevalence of the bogus “your computer has been infected” scareware alerts. The user goes to an infected site and gets what appears to be a legitimate notification that the computer has been infected with buttons of “OK”, “CANCEL” and perhaps the ‘red X’ in the corner. Clicking anything on the window will often initiate the downloading of malware as the browser interprets the click as authorization to accept a download. The best things to do are to immediately do a Ctrl-Alt-Del, bring up Task Manager, and kill your browser session.

Phishing: A common attack is Phishing – sending an e-mail that appears to be from a legitimate source saying, for example, that the institution needs to confirm your account credentials and requesting that you click on a link that will take you to a page where any of several things may happen: You might be infected by malware – a key logger, etc., or you may be prompted to enter credentials such as account logon,

password, SSN, etc.. Don't fall for it. If you get such a message, do not use the link. Instead contact the institution to confirm the request by closing the e-mail and logon to your account via normal means.

Social Networks: Chris and Frank continued to discuss other means whereby the bad guys can gain access to your computer and thus obtain information. For example, links in social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, etc. could contain malicious content. A recent example given was that there were links purporting to have photos of the dead Osama Bin Laden available. If you clicked on the link you'd be infected. They use all sorts of “social engineering” to entice the user to click on something.

Wi-Fi: Frank returned to discuss wireless safety. To start with, if you set up a Wi-Fi access point, be sure to change the administrator password from the default, change the ESSID (Wi-Fi network name) from the default (When I visit the NJ shore every summer there are dozens of open networks named “LinkSys”). Be sure to secure the network using WPA-2 encryption. He wouldn't even consider using an open Wi-Fi (such as McDonald's, Starbucks, hotel, etc.) for e-mail or transactions of any kind unless using a VPN tunneling mechanism. For web-mail such as GMAIL, use the HTTPS preface rather than HTTP, if available This will encrypt your session.

Notebook Security: If your portable device contains any sensitive information – tax data, bank data, essentially anything that should be kept private, then obtain and install an encryption mechanism that will protect the entire drive or at a minimum designated folders. Do the same for removable media such as USB flash drives.

Firewalls: The firewall in a consumer-grade router is only good for thwarting various intrusion attempts, it can not prevent an unauthorized connection that originates within your machine. For that you typically need a software firewall in your machine which may be set to prevent connections using ports other than those you authorize. A typical machine needs to have several ports open - 80 is used for web browsing, 443 for secure web sites (SSL), and you generally need ports 25 and 110 or 143 for e-mail. The bad guys know this, so they often make use of these ports since the firewall can't differentiate between good and bad on the basis of the port in use. Some firewalls may be configured to examine the application that is using the port and permit via an exception list. The Windows firewall available in XP SP3 and newer is such a firewall. Frank identified

two utilities – TCPView and WireShark as being able to identify which applications are making use of which ports. You may use them to identify things that have snuck into your system.

Account Hijacking: Frank described the method by which organized crime sets up “Money Mules” – typically innocent people who are hoodwinked into setting up bank accounts that end up being intermediate stops in a process whereby a cash-rich organization such as a non-profit educational institution is drained within minutes once the trap is sprung. There were enough moving parts to make your head spin.

Suggestions: While they do not endorse particular products or speak for FCBC, some of the consumer-grade products mentioned include: TrueCrypt, GPG, Commodo, ZoneAlarm, Keepass, SuperAntiSpyware, and MalwareBytes. Some of these have free for home use editions. In addition, many internet service providers bundle security products with their service.

Space does not permit me to repeat all of the items that Frank and Chris addressed, but they have generously provided us with a PDF (see the DACS Downloads page: (<http://www.dacs.org/downloads/dacsdownloads.htm>), which contains their notes from the presentation, as well as a list of references and resources; and we thank them for an excellent presentation on a topic of interest and concern to us all.



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, and your question will be taken up at Ask DACS at the next meeting.

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: July 2011

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: July 12 (check Website for technical details)

Apple. 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: Aug 4

ASP.Net. 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: July 6 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: July 14

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 27

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 15

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: July 6

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: July 19

SIG News & Events

Apple. In June we took a look at video conversion, starting with a recorded DVD of a local cable show, Practical Talk Time, with former DACS president Jim Scheef and myself as guests.

I used HandBrake (<http://handbrake.fr/>) open source software to convert the DVD to H.264 format, which is viewable in iTunes and QuickTime on the Mac or a PC, on iPods, iPads, iPhones and Apple TVs. HandBrake has a list of presets that you can choose from to select a more specific target for your video conversion. Some alternate programs mentioned by SIG members were VideoLAN (<http://www.videolan.org/>) and Video Monkey (<http://videomonkey.org/>).

Converting to H.264 format allowed me to import the video into iMovie. My ultimate goal was to upload the video, so that I could stream it from our Website. I understand that YouTube has a 10-minute limit on videos, which wouldn't work without splitting up the half-hour show. One of the members suggested Vimeo (<http://vimeo.com/>), to which it turns out that iMovie '11 can upload directly.

The Apple SIG will be on vacation in July and return in August.

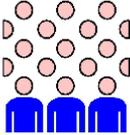
Drupal. This month, we took a minor break from Drupal and focused on setting up a new PHP-based calendar for the DACS website. First we looked at the calendar in MyBB, the new forum software.

While this calendar has many of the features we need, displaying it in the current iframe was not satisfactory. So we moved on to the PHP version of the calendar we use now called Vcalendar. First, we created a new MySQL database on Bluehost. After extracting the files, we ran the install script and had a new calendar page. The next task is to copy the current calendar entries from the old calendar page. That means extracting the records from the existing Access database (no sweat) and importing them into the MySQL database after massaging the data as needed (unknown). We should have this by next month.

The next meeting of the Drupal SIG will be Thursday, July 14th, at 7 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center.

July 2011

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Jun 2011</p> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Aug 2011</p> <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> </div>					S	M	T	W	T	F	S			1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			S	M	T	W	T	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			1	2
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Connections

USB Explained

By Sandy Berger,

USB, OR UNIVERSAL Serial Bus, is a hardware bus standard that allows users to plug a peripheral device into a USB port and have it automatically configured and ready to use. It is one of the success stories of the personal computer. It not only works well, but also makes the life of the average computer user easier.

Most computers that were manufactured after 1995 have USB ports. Windows 95 had only erratic support for USB, but all newer Windows operating systems have support for USB. iMacs and other Apple computers also support USB.

So what's the big deal about USB? USB has a lot going for it. It has three great features: speed, power, and ease of use.

What's a Port?

A port is an interface for attaching external devices to a computer. The original IBM personal computers came with two ports — a serial port and a parallel port. Typically, devices such as modems were attached to the serial port and devices such as printers connected to the parallel port. Another type of port called the SCSI port became a mainstay in the Mac world but never caught on in a big way in the PC world.

Ports not only connect an external device, but also control the transfer rate, the rate at which data can be transferred between the computer and the attached device. This is where the USB port excels. On the average, USB allows data to travel ten times the speed of the normal parallel port. It is also faster than a serial port. This means that a USB printer or scanner can operate faster than a printer or scanner that hooks up to the parallel port. The average serial port transfer rate is 150 kbps; the parallel port is 1.2 mbps. The USB port transfers data up to 12 mbps depending on the type of device that is connected.

Because USB ports are so much faster and easier to use, they have almost completely eliminated parallel and serial ports.

What Does USB Look Like?

To find the USB port on your computer, look at the back or front of your desktop computer or on the side of your laptop computer. Older ports had rows of small pins or pin-



holes where peripherals can be plugged in. The USB port looks slightly different. It is a small thin opening about 1/2" long. It has no obvious pins or pinholes. It is often, but not always, marked "USB." Most of today's computers have two or more USB ports. Many desktops even have the added convenience of USB ports in the front of the computer as well as the back, a boon for devices like cameras, which are hooked up and removed often.

USB 2

Why not take something good and make it even better? That's just what the computer industry did with USB 2. With a maximum transfer rate of 480 mbps, or 60 mb per second, USB 2 is 40 times faster than USB 1. Better yet, it is backwardly compatible with USB 1. That means that if your new computer comes with USB 2, you can still use your old USB devices. Of course, they will perform at USB 1 speeds, but they will still work properly. To take full advantage of the speed of USB 2, the devices that you purchase must be USB 2 enabled and must be run from a USB 2 port. These speedy devices have already made their appearance and are sure to be plentiful in the future. The speed of USB 2 will be beneficial to many devices including digital cameras, hard drives, and DVD drives. To recognize a USB 2 port or device, look for the USB High-Speed logo.

Since the computer world never seems to stand still, USB 3 is now in the works. Of course, USB 3 will be even faster than USB 1 or 2.

Stackable & Swappable

USB has other advantages as well. Although I can't imagine why anyone would want to, you can attach up to 127 devices to one USB port. USB ports are self-powered, so you can say goodbye to those big chunky power blocks.

If you run out of USB ports, you can add a USB hub. This is a small device that will plug into one USB port and give you ports for two, four, or even more USB devices. However, if you attach more than a few devices, you will need to add a self-powered hub, which is a small mechanism that provides extra power to the attached devices.

The idea behind USB is that the devices will be daisy-chained together. The USB device that you purchase may have another built-in USB port so you can hook other devices to it. Many of the USB monitors that I've seen come with three USB ports for attaching other devices. Some USB keyboards also have several built-in USB ports where you can hook up other devices. For instance, your mouse might connect to your keyboard, your keyboard to your monitor, and your monitor to your computer. This eliminates the mess of power cables that often accompany a computer system.

USB devices are hot swappable. You can plug in and remove any USB devices without turning the computer on and off. This is a great feature for those of us who want to purchase only one peripheral to use on two or more computers. It's also great for devices like cameras that are attached and removed from the computer often.

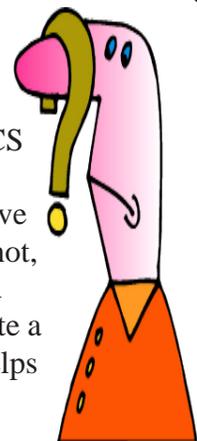
USB Devices

You can plug just about anything into a USB port: keyboards, cameras, mice, joy sticks, modems, zip drives, floppy drives, printers, and scanners. You can even purchase USB speakers to produce great digital sound on your computer.

SANDY BERGER is a nationally respected computer authority, and founder of *Compukiss*, a technology information Website (www.compukiss.com); You can reach her at Sandy@compukiss.com

This article is distributed for reprint by computer user groups.

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.



Back to Basics

Your Computer's Health – The “Uh Oh” Moment, Part 2

By Art Gresham

O P S. DARN, WHAT THE....? You know the feeling. Yesterday everything was fine. Today you are wondering what happened overnight.

What can you do if your computer seems to have suddenly gotten sick? Perhaps it was caused by that neat new application or game you installed yesterday, or maybe something got installed when you visited that website that promised to speed your computer's Internet access; but when you opened the page it ran a moment and then seemed to hang up, with no sense that it really did what was expected. Maybe you should not have installed that app/game/utility because it was some kind of rogue or worthless program, or worse, and you are now stuck with a sick system.

Don't you wish you could go back in time to last weekend when everything seemed to be running fine? Well, you can. Probably.

If you are running a Microsoft Windows ME, XP, Vista or 7 then the System Restore is available to offer you protection for many of these kinds of illness, and might be worth checking to see if you can regain your computer's health.

System Restore allows you to roll back most system files, registry keys, and installed programs, the DLL Cache folder, local user profiles, and more. When installed and not disabled (more about that later), you may manually create a restore point or use one of the automatically created points. And it does this without affecting your personal files or data, such as e-mail, documents, or photos. We will discuss full backups that include your data in a future article.

Also note that in Vista and later versions it has been improved and now uses “Shadow Copy” Technology with even more backup capabilities.

So where do you look to see if you

have any restore points? You should do this today to be sure it is not disabled. Open System Restore by clicking the Start button, clicking All Programs, clicking Accessories, clicking System Tools, and then clicking System Restore.

Be sure to select “Restore my computer to an earlier time,” then click Next.

You will see a calendar of the current month, and several of the dates should be marked in Bold. These dates have restore points available, and some may have more than one as shown below.

You may have multiple restore points for several reasons.

Wikipedia lists the Restore points that are created:

- When software is installed using the Windows Installer, Package Installer or other installers which are aware of System Restore.
- When Windows Update installs new updates to Windows.
- When the user installs a driver that is not digitally signed by Windows Hardware Quality Labs.
- Every 24 hours of computer use (10 hours in Windows Me), or every 24 hours of calendar time, whichever happens first. This setting is configurable through the registry or using the deployment tools. Such a restore point is known as a system checkpoint. System Restore requires Task Scheduler to create system checkpoints. Moreover, system checkpoints are only created if the system is idle for a certain amount of time.
- When the operating system starts after being off for more than 24 hours.
- When the user requests it. On Windows Vista, shadow copies created during File Backup and Complete PC Backup can also be used as restore points.

Older restore points are deleted as per the configured space constraint on a First

In, First Out basis. [Wikipedia] To begin a restore simply click on the date you want, and then click Next a couple times. Your system will restart and hopefully you have healed the patient.

If you do not see any restore points, you might want to check that the process is not disabled. To do this in XP you can right click My Computer, open the Properties, and click on the System Restore Tab. There you will see a checkbox where you can “Turn off System Restore on all drives. Be sure that is un-checked. For Win 7 see the FAQ How do I turn System Restore on or off?

References:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/System_Restore

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/What-is-System-Restore>

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/What-types-of-files-does-System-Restore-change>

ART GRESHAM is editor at Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA. The article appeared in the February 2011 issue, UCHUG Drive Light. You can reach him at editor101@uchug.org.

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Membership has its Privileges!

Become a member and support DACS. Each member has access to the HelpLine volunteers, the newsletter online in PDF form, group related news via email, SIG meetings, online forums, and any group-only related events, promotions, or activities. There is also an option to receive a mailed newsletter. For information on how to join DACS, see <http://www.dacs.org/aboutdacs/joining.htm>.

Ask DACS

June, 2011

Moderated and reported by Jim Scheef

WE WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM the floor at the start of our General Meetings. The role of moderator is to try to guide the discussion to a likely solution to the problem. 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.

(Prior to the session this month, we had a short presentation on IPv6 in recognition of World IPv6 Day, which was held the day after the meeting. As a result, AskDACs was shortened. We will learn more about IPv6 in coming months.

Q – *Does anyone know how to stop a PowerPoint slide show from changing automatically? (This question was prompted by my trouble with my IPv6 slides.)*

A – On the 'Slide shows' menu, uncheck the option for 'Use rehearsed timings'.

Q – *My YouTube account has twenty subscribers; I cannot find a list of the subscribers. Does anyone know how to find the list so I can contact the subscribers?*

A – I had to admit defeat on this question as I do not have a YouTube account and no one at the meeting could offer a solution from current experience.

Judging from items I found when searching on Yahoo, it appears the menus have been changed.

Q – *I want to find a friend's Facebook page but do not have a Facebook account of my own. I searched on Facebook for the person's name but did not find the proper person.*

The search results page intimated that if I were to log into Facebook, I would get more search results. Does anyone know if this is true?

A – Several members offered suggestions. The short answer is "yes, it is true". There are numbers of privacy settings can affect how much, if any, of your Facebook profile is visible from outside Facebook. The single setting to allow or disallow outside (of Facebook) searches is almost diabolically hidden. Naturally you

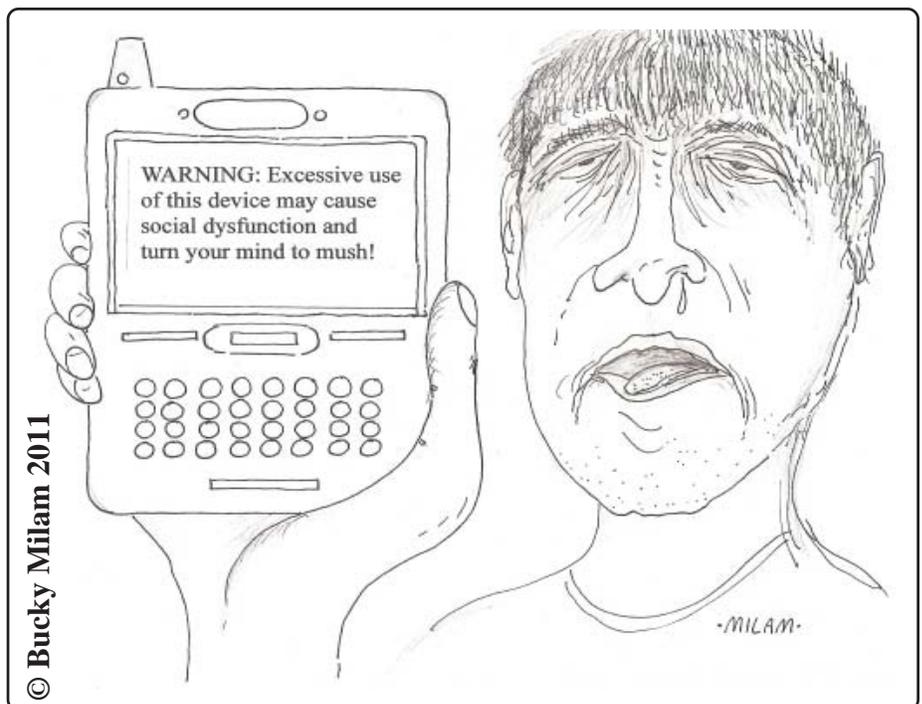
words 'See preview' are a very useful link that shows you what information will be visible to someone searching outside of Facebook. The most fundamental observation here is that no one could possibly remember how to find this setting without actually searching for it.

There is also a setting to allow/disallow search within Facebook. If you disallow this you must send friend requests or otherwise tell other people on Facebook that you have a Facebook page.

Once this connection is established, your other privacy settings control what is visible to friends and friends-of-friends.

D – *One member detailed his experience with the Facebook app for Blackberry phones. Installing and using this app resulted in changes to his Facebook settings (email notifications and possibly others). The implication is that this could also happen on Android and iPhones.*

Beyond these search settings, everyone should periodically take the time to review all of the privacy settings on their Facebook profile. Privacy settings can be changed or nullified when you add an application to your page, so read carefully what information you are sharing when you add an app. The



New York Times has several articles on Facebook security.

Q – *Once you have a Facebook account, can you ever remove it completely?*

A – This question has been a news item over the months. The Facebook policy statements change from time to time (as do all companies). There is an option to “deactivate” an account that makes the account inactive but does not delete the data. The intent is for you to resurrect the account at a later date. The concern would be the visibility of the inactive account to friends, friends-of-friends and the public. Read the current policy to see what Facebook says now; however, as one member

pointed out, your data is “in the cloud” and you no longer have direct control. The bottom line is that you will be fine so long as you never share anything that would be embarrassing if made public.

D – *In follow-on discussion a member noted that posts to bulletin boards (like the DACS Forums) are almost always indexed by search engines and are thus available widely, even though the bulletin board may be “private.” So even if you must log in to post, your message may be visible to the public. This can be of concern in health-related support groups and other sensitive discussions.*

This is a good note. The degree of privacy on bulletin boards varies widely, from totally visible to

completely hidden. For instance, most of the DACS forums (<http://forums.dacs.org>) are publicly viewable but you must create an account and log on before you can post anything. Some parts of the DACS Forums are labeled members-only and some are viewable only by members. The forum with deals and other member benefits is an example of a restricted forum.

[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!]

Windows Tricks

The Seventh Son of Windows Customizing the Notification Area

By Lee Reynolds

INTRODUCTION

THE “NOTIFICATION AREA” is that area on the right-hand side of the Taskbar where your system clock resides, and probably a large number of other icons. It used to be called, prior to Windows XP, the “system tray.” Programs just love to install an icon there, to supposedly speed up access to their features. You doubtless have a lot of not very useful icons there, which can sometimes be removed by selecting an option or preference from the menus of the associated program. And in XP and Vista, you can right click the Taskbar, select Properties from the context menu that scrolls out, click on the Notification Area tab, and then perform various operations in order to “hide inactive icons.”

Windows 7 DEFAULT

This situation has improved a lot in Windows 7. By default, there are only four icons that will appear in your Windows 7 taskbar notification area:

- The Sound icon (so you can adjust the volume of your speakers or mute them)
- The Network icon (so you can perform maintenance tasks concerning your network connection).
- The Battery icon (if you’re running Windows 7 on a laptop) to tell you how

much charge is remaining to your pc’s battery or whether it’s charging if you are running your laptop plugged into a wall outlet

- An icon connected with a new Control Panel applet called Action Center

Additional

If you have any other icons in the Notification Area (such as one for your antivirus program, for example), they will usually be found by clicking the little upward-pointing caret to the left of the Action Center icon, which causes a small popup window to be shown. If you want to see any of those icons in this popup window in your Notification Area instead, you can just drag them down there.

Windows 7 Action Center

The Action Center icon will normally handle all those notification messages coming from the system when some program thinks you need to take an action of some kind.

For example: download important updates from Microsoft Update, or perform a scan with Windows Defender, or download the most recent antivirus data, etc.

In Windows 7 there is now a new Control Panel applet called Notification Area Icons, which takes the place of the

corresponding tab of Taskbar Properties in Windows Vista, XP, and previous versions.

When you go to that Control Panel applet, you will be shown a list of each of the Notification Area icons, and for each one you can use the “list box” next to it to choose one of three possible settings:

- Show icon and notifications
- Hide icon and notifications
- Show only notifications

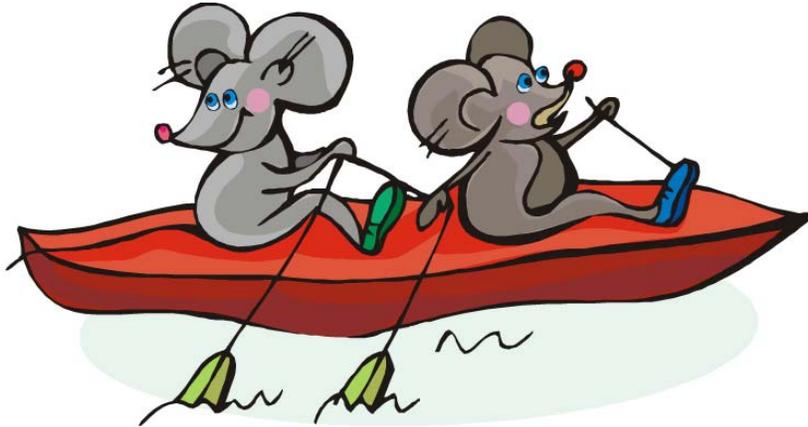
LEE REYNOLDS is contributing editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL. The article appeared in the February 2011 issue of *Boca Bits*. You can reach Lee at www.brcs.org; leetutor@exploringwindows.com.

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