Next Meeting:
Streaming Video

With Mike Kaltschnee

Directors' Notes

A meeting of your board of directors was held on Wednesday, September 14, 2011. The meeting was called to Order at: 7:15 p.m.

Attending were: Richard Corzo, Jeff Setaro, Jim Scheef, Drew Kwashnak, Bruce Preston, Patrick Libert; Guests: Charles Bovaird.

Minutes of Last Meeting: Accepted with correction: Possible Topic - "How it's done - fill in OS" was suggested by Drew, not Andy.

Treasurer's Report

Balance on hand 8/1/11	$6,012.62
Income:	
Dues	$336.49
Bank Interest	$0 .57
Income Total:	$337.06
Expenses:	
Agent Change fee	$20.00
Corporation fee - Connecticut	$50.00
Printing of fliers	$156.00
Resource Center Phone	$66.11
Resource Center Security	$79.60
Expense Total	371.71
Balance on hand 8/31/11	$5,977.97

Membership Report

	JULY	AUG	SEP
Meeting date	7/5/11	8/2/11	9/4/11
Paying members	146	148	147
w/ email addresses	144	145	144
New members	2	1	0
NL printed	100	100	100
NL mailed	75	76	76
NL mailed-memb	55	56	56
NL mailed-other	6	6	6
NL mailed-free lib	14	14	14

IN THIS ISSUE

Old Business

1. **General meetings**

September 6: Dan O'Connor-Investment Tools Preview: Jim Scheef, Review: Steve Harkness.

October 4: Mike Kaltschnee-Online Video and Streaming Devices Preview: Allan Ostergren, Review: Richard Corzo.

November 1: Andy Woodruff and Sean Henderson-Recording and Editing Live Music, Preview: Drew Kwashnak, Review: Bruce Preston.

Possible future topics:

• Richard has contacted the Ridgefield Library to get a contact for the IBM Watson project. The librarian offered to make contact on our behalf.

• Drew suggested "How is it done with <fill in OS>?" We could use Mikogo to demo the same operations for Windows, Mac and Linux to flip between environments.

We are to put together a list of things that might be interesting, such as:

- Setting up multi-platform network
- Setting up file sharing
- Setting up print sharing
- Various similar applications for …

Drew was to test the newly released Mikogo for Linux with Bruce.

• Andy would like a Windows presentation of "how-tos" for tuning the O/S-Safe Mode, MSCONFIG, turning off unneeded services, Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper (Beta), etc. Do we want to include XP? Is there any point in discussing Vista since it is more like Windows 7?

• Too early for David Pogue - will shoot for early next year.

• Virtual Machines - use for running legacy programs such as old games etc.

• Windows 8 developer preview with new Metro interface.

• Smart Computing's "Presentation in a Box" is still a possibility.

2. **Open positions**

• Due to geographic relocation, Joseph Tobin has officially resigned from the DACS board so we can need to look for a replacement. Richard has identified a prime candidate that he will approach.

• The membership chair position is still open. Due to change of location,

Member of
APCUG

Patrick Libert
APCUG Liaison
plibert@dacs.org

apcug Medium Sized Groups 2nd Place 2007

Apple User Group

HelpLine

Our former telephone HelpLine has been replaced by our web-based DACS Community Forum at http://forum.dacs.org. We have topic-specific forums where DACS members can post questions. Questions may be answered by SIG leaders or other DACS members. If none of the categories fit your question, just post it to the Ask DACS forum.

Topic	Forum
Microsoft Access	Access SIG
.NET Programming	ASP.Net and C#VB.Net SIG
Digital cameras/scanners/image processing	Digital Imaging SIG
Content Management Systems	Drupal SIG
Linux	Linux SIG
Mac and iPhone/iPad/iPod touch	Apple SIG
PC maintenance	PC Maintenance SIG
Virtual machine software	Virtual Computing SIG
Desktop publishing and website design	Web Site Design SIG
Windows	Windows SIG

the 'greeter' needs not be outside in the lobby. Membership records might be maintained by a person other than the greeter. We might look at rotating the greeting function.

3. Andy, Drew and Shawna Kwashnak put together the DACS display showing this month at the Danbury Library. Annette, Jim, Andy, and Richard worked on an update of the DACS trifold brochure to make it available at the library display, for DACS visitors, and wherever we want to publicize DACS.

4. The *dacs.org* domain registration is temporarily on Jim Scheef's *DynDNS.com* account. If we copy the Windows-hosted site to Linux-based Bluehost we can change the registration back to Bluehost. Jim is working on migrating the calendar from ASP/Access to PHP/MySQL. The feedback form also needs to be updated. Work has begun, will be continued by Richard and Jim.

5. No update on 2010 income report and 2011 budget was available.

New Business

1. We need to find a new venue for the general meetings. Due to construction, the hospital auditorium is no longer available for the remainder of this year.

   a. We are looking at Broadview Middle School, not far from the hospital, if they can provide Internet access.

   b. Bruce will provide a document to Richard that details how a DACS router might be used to isolate the DACS presenter from the site's LAN.

   c. Dave Green is also offering us Valley Presbyterian Church in Brookfield.

2. Charlie mentions that the HelpLine in DACS.DOC is essentially obsolete. Some of the few remaining contacts aren't even DACS members any more. We should replace this in DACS.DOC with a mention of the various DACS SIG forums (http://forum.dacs.org) where members can get help online. Richard will confirm that subscribing to a forum can be set up to instantly send an e-mail when a forum is touched. The help line area should be replaced with a link to forum.*dacs.org*.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25.

—Bruce Preston

Meeting Preview

Mike Kaltschnee on Streaming Video

By Allan Ostergren

HACKING IS ONE OF those techie terms that evoke visions of ghoulies, ghosties and goblins— forces threatening to take down the Internet. But there is a kinder, gentler hacking culture that is making cyberspace a more friendly, useful environment—or as defined by Wikipedia, a form of hobbyist "who makes innovative customizations or combinations of retail electronic and computer equipment."

Among the pioneers of this subculture is our own Mike Kaltschnee. A child of the digital age, Mike's imagination quickly grew from exploring the contents of the family cookie jar to probing the far reaches of the digital universe. He got his start locally with Hijaak, a popularly priced screen capture and graphics utility, Webspice, a collection of more than 1,000 royalty-free images, and he is currently developing a collection of graphic editing tools for amateur photographers.

But his greatest claim to fame is perhaps by serendipity. In January 2003, Mike wrote a short article in dacs.doc entitled "No More Late Fees." It was about Netflix, an upstart Internet DVD rental service that was challenging Blockbuster's established business model. With a growing archive of more than 12,000 videos, Netflix subscribers could choose how many movies they would take out and keep them as long as they wanted—all delivered directly to their mailbox.

Shortly afterward, Mike started *HackingNetflix.com*, a blogging venture to find out everything there is to know about this new Internet service and enhance his video rental experience. Fast forward to the future: In 2009, Netflix' inventory of DVDs had grown to more than 100,000 titles, with a pipeline exceeding 10 million subscribers, half of whom were viewing them on streaming

video. Meanwhile, according to *freewebsitereport.org*, *Hackingnetflix.com* has become the premiere Netflix tracking site, with more than 300,000 monthly readers and 16,000 page views

Mike in March 2003, talking about tech toys

daily in 2011. Mike is one of the most oft quoted authorities on the Netflix business, providing information on navigating the video service's complex procedures and inner workings. Along the way, he has also become a wizard of the new streaming technology and the

industry which has grown around it.

Asked about the subject of his presentation our next meeting on October 4, Mike wrote:

• DVD and streaming services like Netflix, Blockbuster, Amazon, Redbox, Hulu, Vudu, HBO Go, etc. I'll compare pricing, title selection, features, and more.

• I'll talk about the hundreds of streaming devices, including game consoles, phones, tablets, dedicated streaming devices, etc.

• I'll talk about the history of the DVD rental business, and shed some light on the future of movie watching.

• I'll be bringing a number of streaming devices for people to see, including the Roku Player, Wii, iPad, etc.

If your curiosity extends beyond this comprehensive list of topics, just raise your hand—Mike will have an answer.

Due to construction at the Danbury Hospital, the next general meeting will be held at Broadview Middle School, a short distance north on Hospital Avenue.

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.

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635 C

My kid has a higher klout rating than your honor student!!

. MILAM .
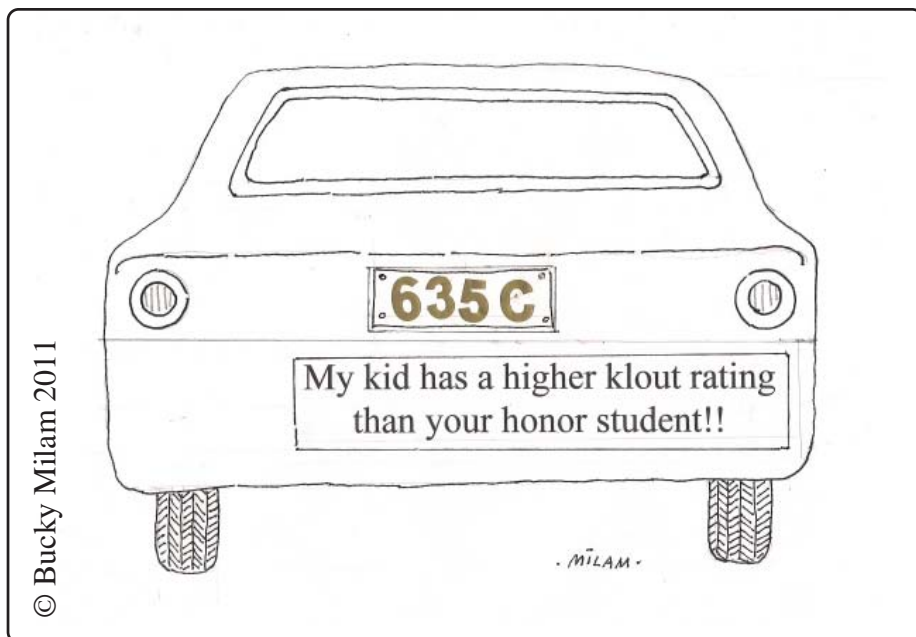
Meeting Review

Chaikin Power Tools

By Steve Harkness

DAN O'CONNOR GAVE US an interesting presentation on the Chaikin Power Tools software for self-directed online personal investing which empowers individual investors to make better investment decisions.

Marc Chaikin is a recognized expert in stock market analysis and investment management with over 40 years of experience developing stock selection models and investment strategies. He pioneered and created the first real-time analytics workstation for portfolio managers and stock traders. His company has developed several key software products for the investment community including the Chaikin Oscillator and Chaikin Persistency Money Flow. Marc founded Chaikin Stock Research to provide professional quality stock evaluation tools to self-directed investors. Their software provides the end user various proven investment metrics to analyze the technical and fundamental aspects of stock performance.

Dan has worked for Marc for several years and is a senior technical support person working with their professional clients and organizations to effectively use their investment tools.

The Chaikin Power Tools environment evaluates 20 different factors for a potential investment including long term debt to equity, price to book value, return on equity, price to sales volume, enterprise value (theoretical take-over price), earnings performance, 12-month price target range and many other important investment criteria. The software simplifies buy/sell decisions for a private investor by processing and evaluating a company's up-to-date financial information and displaying the bullish, bearish and neutral aspects of a company's stock. These| factors are evaluated and provide the basis for their overall consensus and investment recommendations.

Each stock is evaluated daily by the Chaikin staff and is provided in an online synapsis covering key investment measures, analyst opinions on the firms fundamentals, earnings estimate revisions and pertinent news events that could affect the stock's value. Chaikin Money Flow shows market momentum and its effects on each stock. The Chaikin Power Gauge stock rating widget includes an online downloadable Power Gauge Report. Their News Sentiment Engine and a Financial Metrics Rating application provide the investor with up-to-date data to make more educated decisions for building their personal investment portfolio.

Dan demonstrated many of these stock evaluation techniques and reports available for several companies provided by the DACS audience.

To find out more information and to download their free Desktop Widget and iPhone App, go to *ChaikinPower Tools. com.*

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.

We're Moving

Our General Meeting location will be moved during Danbury Hospital reconstruction.

The next DACS meeting will be held at Broadview Middle School Auditorium, 72 Hospital Avenue, Danbury, CT. A map is available on our Website, *www.dacs.org*.

This new location may be temporary, so look for future announcements here or on our Website.

Special Interest Groups

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: Oct 11 (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: Oct 6

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: Oct 12

Digital Imaging. All about digital cameras, retouching, and printing using various programs.
Contact: Ken Graff at 203 775-6667 *(graffic@bigfoot. com)*.
Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m.at the DACS Resource Center.
Next Meeting: Oct 26

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: Oct 19

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

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: Oct 19

SIG News & Events

Apple. In our September meeting we took a look at OS X Lion (http://www.apple.com/macosx/) features. This time I had Lion installed on my MacBook Pro.

I explained how I decided to do a clean install instead of the typical upgrade from Snow Leopard. Lion is not available on disc and typically is downloaded from the Mac App Store (so you must have Snow Leopard installed). When you download Lion, the Mac App Store places an icon in your Applications folder. You install Lion from that icon, but once Lion is installed, that icon is removed. So if you want to do a clean install, you will need to pause before you initiate the install. See this post in the Apple SIG forum on our DACS Community Forum (http://forum.dacs.org/thread-315.html) for instructions on how to create an installation disc.

When I did the clean install, to reclaim some of the space on my laptop, I requested that the data be restored from my Time Machine backup, but not the applications. That way I would reinstall only the applications I wanted. That meant I needed the installation media and license keys for the software I would install.

With that background out of the way I showed off Lion's new features. There are some new gestures if you have a trackpad, or Magic Mouse. A three-finger swipe to the left or right switches between desktops and full-screen applications. Swiping one more to the left will get you to the Dashboard. Swiping three fingers up will bring up Mission Control. This is a replacement for Exposé. Mission Control shows a miniature view of all your desktops, full-screen apps, and Dashboard at the top of the screen, and all your open windows below that, so you can get to the thing you want most quickly.

Scrolling up and down is accomplished with a two-finger swipe, but the default direction follows the iOS (iPhone) convention of swiping up to move the window view up, rather than moving the scroll bar up (and therefore the window view down).

The aforementioned Mac App Store is included in Lion and is the easiest way to find and install new Mac applications. You can still install Mac applications the old-fashioned way from installation discs or website downloads. However note that old PowerPC applications will not run in Lion because the Rosetta layer has been omitted from Lion.

Launchpad can be invoked with a thumb and three-finger pinch to show all your application icons, taking up multiple screens if necessary, as you may be used to seeing apps on your iPhone or iPod touch. Swipe two fingers to the right to get to the additional screens of icons. Then click on an application icon to start it.

October 2011

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Sep 2011 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	**Nov 2011** 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			*1*
2	*3*	*4* 6:30 P.M. GENERAL MTG	*5*	*6* Apple 7:00 PM Richard Corzo macsig@dacs.org	*7*	*8*
9	*10*	*11* MS ACCESS 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Bruce Preston bpreston@dacs.org	*12* 7:00 PM Board of Directors	*13* 7-9 PM Drupal Jim Scheef 860 355-0034	*14*	*15* DACS.DOC Deadline
16	*17*	*18* Web Design Annette van Ommeren 914 232-0149	*19* 7:30 PM Linux John Ritterbusch linuxsig@dacs.org	*20*	*21*	*22*
23	*24*	*25*	*26* 7:00 PM Digital Imaging Ken Graff 203 775-6667	*27*	*28*	*29* Tech Fest Nonnewaug High School Woodbury, CT
30	*31*					

Ask DACS

September, 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.

Q – *DACS.doc ran a series of articles on computer health (see the July, August and September, 2011, issues at dacs.org). In Part 3 (September) the author mentioned a program called CCleaner (www.piriform.com/ccleaner). Has anyone had experience with this program and is it any good? Does the free version do anything at all?*

A - One member said that he does use the product, and the free version does clean out temporary files. The only possible side effect he has noticed is that the schedule of future programs in his Media Center PC will disappear; but he had no hard evidence that this was caused by CCleaner. He also noted that there are many options in the program that he does not use. My observation with such programs is that if the free version detects something that can only be removed or fixed by the pay version, the program will make this abundantly clear. Another caveat would be that a 64-bit version of Windows will require a program that understands the 64-bit registry format.

D - Another member recounted that his antivirus program detected something questionable, so he took the opportunity to do a clean reinstall of Windows. This would be an alternative to using a registry cleaner product that can only find anomalies in the registry, like references to files that no longer exist. The result is a Windows installation without all the old programs that are no longer used and a much smaller registry. The downside is that all application must be reinstalled and reconfigured. He stated his computer had (almost) all data on a separate partition and he had backups of things like Outlook mailbox (pst) files that normally reside on the C-drive. This process requires that you find all of the installation media for all of the applications you plan to reinstall, which can be a deal-breaker for some.

Q - *Recently I had a situation where my email program mysteriously sent out copies of an email to everyone in my address book. What happened?*

A - This problem is caused by malware that reads your address book and uses that list to propagate to more computers. You need to run a thorough antivirus scan using up-to-date virus signatures which will (hopefully) find and remove the problem malware. Until then your computer is still infected. The first such program was the Melissa virus (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melissa_* (computer_worm) in 1999 that clogged corporate email systems for several days as it propagated wildly. This proof of concept led to more nefarious email worms over the years.

D - The discussion then evolved into a discussion of rootkits that can hide the existence of files on the computer. The reader is directed to the Wikipedia entry for rootkits (*en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rootkits*).

Q - *Sometimes while browsing the New York Times Website (and possibly others) my computer will become sluggish and I'll see references to Google Analytics in the status bar. Is Google mucking around in my computer? What's happening?*

A - The NY Times, like many other Websites, uses tools from Google and other places to build the final page that you see. You can see more clearly by installing the Firefox add-on NoScript. NoScript (*noscript.net*) is a "script firewall" that runs in Firefox. By default NoScript prevents all JavaScript from running when you open a Webpage. What you see is a list of the domains (such as *googleanalytics.com*, or *doubleclick.com*) that have scripts embedded in the Webpage you just opened. Generally, these scripts are not malware but were placed there by the Web developer to format the page to suit your browser, track your visit, display advertising, run a shopping cart, etc. NoScript then allows you to authorize each script (or all at once) either forever or just for this visit. This process will drive most people nuts, but I've grown used to it. In my case I have blocked some domains permanently - like doubleclick.com - and some domains, like googleanalytics.com, are whitelisted so they always run automatically. Occasionally I'll see a script referenced from a server identified only by an IP address. This is not always something nefarious, but I generally just ignore those so they cannot run. NoScript has many, many options that are beyond the scope of this discussion.

The image at right is what NoScript shows on my machine when I open *nytimes.com*.

Note that *nytimes.com*, *nyt.com* and *googlesyndication.com* have already been enabled, while *chartbeat.com* and others are blocked. Three domains have been marked as "untrusted" which means that NoScript blocks those scripts while tricking the webpage into thinking that they ran successfully. The price for this can be a slight delay in loading the webpage.

Q - *I use Norton Anti-Virus; is that or MacAfee the best, and will it prevent me from getting a keylogger, rootkit or similar program?*

A - My view on this is that picking an anti-virus program is like choosing between a Ford and a Chevy. The various anti-virus or anti-malware programs are constantly changing as they adapt to the threats out in the world. One member gave good advice when he suggested the need to read the feature lists of any such program you consider for your computer. Some programs have a limited feature list and do not attempt to detect rootkits. These limited anti-virus programs are typically the free versions with more extensive detection reserved for the "pay" version. The bottom line is that no anti-virus or anti-malware program will detect everything. All of these programs are "reactive" in that they cannot protect against unknown threats. This is why it
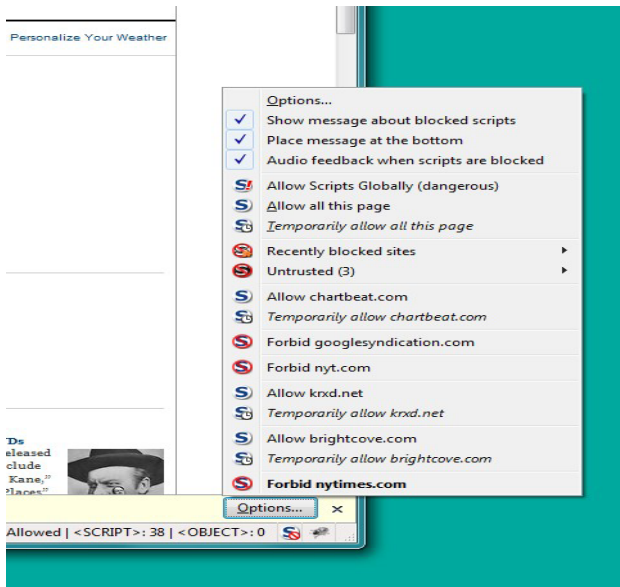
is critical to keep your virus definitions up to date. A program that does not check for and install updates automatically is worthless, because it will be out of date tomorrow. A member suggested *AV-Comparatives.org,* where they offer: "independent comparatives of Anti-Virus software. All products listed in our comparatives are already a selection of some very good anti-virus products. In order to get included in our main tests, vendors must fulfill various conditions and minimum require-ments."

Q - Will reinstalling Windows 7 get rid of a rootkit? What about deleting the partition?

A - There is malware that installs a stub in the area of the hard drive where the master boot record and partition table are stored. Since the partition table is not destroyed when a partition is deleted, these malware programs can survive not only a conventional reformat, but even deleting the partition. This was demonstrated at the Black Hat Security Conference a couple years ago. The only sure way to eliminate such malware is to totally wipe the hard drive using a tool like Darik's Boot 'n Nuke (*www.dban.org*) that totally writes over every sector of every track on the disk. When I use this tool I just write 0's to the disk in one pass. DBAN offers wiping routines that will overwrite the disk so thoroughly that even the NSA can't recover the data. These routines will run for days and are not worth the trouble. With just a single pass, the

computer will think the disk just came from the factory and write a new partition table during disk initialization and format. A member cautioned that if your malware came from something that you reinstall, you will reinstall the malware. So be use care when choosing what you reinstall.

D - The discussion then moved to suggested methods to rebuild the computer "clean" of malware. Rob suggested buying a new hard drive and installing that in place of the original drive. After installing Windows and your chosen anti-virus program, you can install the old drive as a second drive and gradually move your data files over to the new drive. When you have recovered all your data, wipe the old drive.

When installing Windows, I suggest the following procedure:

1. Install Windows from the CD that came with your machine. For some manufacturers, this is the only way you can reinstall Windows due to limitations in the BIOS. The CD is often called a "restore disk" because it puts your machine back to the way it came out of the box from the factory.
2. Install the latest Service Pack for your version of Windows. The best way to do this is to download the SP and burn it to a CD prior to starting the rebuild.
3. If the manufacturer's CD did not install all the device drivers, do that now. These may be on a separate CD.
4. Run Windows Update multiple times until it says there are no more updates for your machine. This can require as many as four passes to get all the updates.
5. Install the anti-virus program of your choice and run its update procedure until it says your AV is up to date. Again, this may require more than one pass to update both the program and the thread definitions.
6. Install the old drive as a secondary drive and scan it with the freshly installed and newly updated anti-virus program. Delete anything found to be infected.
7. Make a backup of the new hard drive at this point while it is still "pristine". Just

be sure you never boot the computer off the old hard drive, or all your work could be for naught.

8. Begin the process of reinstalling your applications under the new Windows installation.

Q - I'm finding that fewer and fewer laptops offer a FireWire port. What's happening?

A - Richard suggested that as the industry moves to USB 3.0 the extra speed makes FireWire superfluous. Even Apple seems to be phasing-out support for FireWire. Rob added that as devices like camcorders have internal hard drive (or flash drive) storage, there is no longer a need to transfer at full uncompressed video speed.

Q - There is a "mystery partition" on one of my machines. It's about 50 GB. Fdisk reports that it is formatted NTFS, but Windows says it's "empty". Is there something like an editor that can look at this space to see if there is anything on it?

A - Rob suggested installing EXT2IFS (*www.fs-driver.org*) to see if the partition is actually formatted for Linux using the EXT2 file systems. Another tool is one of several GUI-based clones of Partition Magic called QtParted (*qtparted.sourceforge.net*) or GParted (*gparted.sourceforge.net*) that runs under Linux. The easiest way to use it is to boot your machine using a Linux "live CD" such as Knoppix and look for the partition program included with your particular Linux distribution. Both of these tools use the same partitioning software under the covers and only the GUI varies.

Q - Last was my question: does anyone know of a light-weight reminder program that runs on Windows 7? I need to replace a program called XReminder that will not install on Win7. XReminder could display a small desktop clock—although that is not critical, the critical part is the ability to display an alarm at 10:03 pm every weekday or at 6 pm on the third Sunday of each month or . . . you get the idea. It must be light weight, so it can start automatically with Windows and not use a lot of resources; and a simple interface is, of course, a plus. The alarm function must be sufficient to get my attention even in another

room, which means it must sound until acknowledged. I paid for XReminder, so cost is not a factor.

A - Suggestions included one of the Windows 7 desktop gadgets. Searching there I find calendars and clocks, but no reminders; one gadget could display a single event, but only one! (Useless) The Outlook calendar is oriented to specific dates and the alarm is barely adequate when you're sitting at the machine. At the other end of the spectrum was a suggestion to use the Task Scheduler to run command line scripts to pop up a reminder. Anyone finding an appropriate program is invited to send me an email with a link to the program's website.

[**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!

DACS at Tech Fest

DACS will be supporting Nonewaug High School's Team Beta to promote science and technology to their community at their annual Tech Fest on Saturday, October 29, 2011 at Nonewaug High School in Woodbury CT.

Team Beta comprises High School students who participate in the **FIRST Robotics Competition** and the **CT Electrathon Challenge,** as well as promoting science and technology to the community.

The FIRST Robotics Competition brings together students and professional engineers from different fields to design and build robots to compete with other High School teams. Teams are limited in their resources and time, not only to keep teams on fair footing, but to also give the students a taste of real world development.

With the Electrathon, students design, build and drive an electric car at the Lime Rock speedway twice a year against teams from across New England. The cars compete on their speed and efficiency.

The Tech Fest is put together by Team Beta to promote science and technology to the community and to inspire students to become excited about science, mathematics, engineering and technology.

DACS will have a table there to promote the organization and support this hard working team of students. Volunteers interested in helping to staff the table please contact Drew Kwashnak at (203) 910-6605 or dkwashnak@dacs.org.

LINKS
Tech Fest : *http://www.teambeta.org/techfest/*
Team Beta : *http://www.teambeta.org/*
FIRST Robotics Competition : *http://ctfirst.org/*
CT Elactraton Challenge : *http://ctelectrathon.org/*

Tips & Tricks

The Seventh Son of Windows Desktop Gadgets

By Lee Reynolds

Introduction

WINDOWS VISTA introduced a new feature called the Sidebar, which was a narrow section of your Desktop where you could have small applications running called Gadgets. These Gadgets could be moved out of the Sidebar and anchored somewhere else on your Desktop, if you wished, but still the Sidebar application had to be running.

In Windows 7, there is no longer any Sidebar, but Desktop Gadgets are still present, and you set them up in a new Control Panel applet of the same name. (In Windows Vista, the Sidebar was on by default, whereas in Windows 7 there is no Sidebar and any Gadgets you want must be configured in Control Panel.)

Windows 7 Gadgets

The Gadgets present in Windows 7 are the same as those provided by Vista, with an additional one that is connected to Windows Media Center. These Gadgets are mini-applications designed to use web technology so as to provide real-time access to information of one type or another available through the internet. The built-in Gadgets are these:

• a Calendar application which shows the month, day, year, and day of week. If you click it, you will see the entire month
• a Clock which can be configured to show one of 8 different clock faces and any time zone
• a CPU meter which shows two analog style dials measuring current memory usage and CPU utilization
• a Currency converter
• a Headline Feed of RSS feeds that you are subscribed to via Internet Explorer
• a Media Center gadget that shows a revolving set of links to various parts of Windows Media Center
• a Weather gadget which can be configured for any location in the world
• a Stocks gadget for tracking stocks
• a Picture Puzzle where you slide tiles around against a timer

• a Slide Show gadget for showing the photos you configure for it

Other Gadgets

There are many other Gadgets that can be downloaded from the internet and installed, if you so desire...

Windows 7 Gadget Options

If you click on the Show Desktop area of the Taskbar in Windows 7 (a narrow rectangular area on the extreme right end), then you will see the Desktop with its Gadgets (if any.) In Windows Vista, when you clicked on the Show Desktop icon of the Quick Launch Bar, the Gadgets were not visible.

Gadgets can be shown on your Desktop in Windows 7 even if you are not on line with an internet connection, but they will in this case feature a time stamp which shows how out of date the associated data is.

Some of the Gadgets, e.g., the Calendar, can be toggled between various sizes. Some of them have Touch capabilities for those users who have a touch screen attached to their PC.

LEE REYNOLDS *is contributing editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL. This article appeared in the April 2011 issue, Boca Bits, and is distributed for use by other user groups.* www.brcs.org; leetutor @ exploringwindows.com).

Software Tools

Convert a PDF File to a Text File

By Sr. Dorothy Robinson

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

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

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

On the left side, under a header that says "Convert PDF to Word for Free" you'll see a place to browse your computer and select a file. Note that there is no need to provide your email address, since you'll just download the file directly.
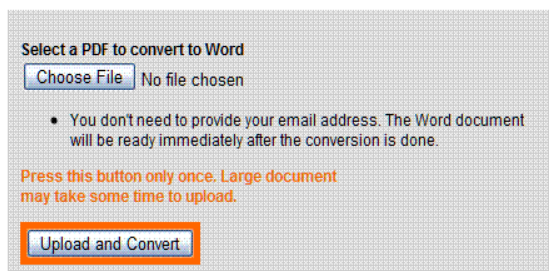
Find your file and double click it (or click once, then click Open), then click the Upload and Convert button. Press it *only once*, and wait; larger files may take a while to upload. The conversion is pretty fast, under a minute for the one or two page files I tried. There is a 2 MB limit on uploads, so really big files won't work.

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

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

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

The dialog asks, What should (your browser) do with this file? The first choice is to open the file with the default application (mine showed OpenOffice); or you can choose another from a drop-down list. The second choice is to save the file, and if you choose Save the file, your download manager will save it to the default location—or you might get a Save as dialog and choose where to save it. One caution: opening the file directly rather than downloading it got me a Read Only file, which of course I couldn't edit. So for editing purposes, save the file before opening.

Make your choice by clicking a radio button, then click OK. You now have a text file you can edit. And the quality is very nice, too—for **mostly text** documents. I tried a PDF file that I had originally created in OpenOffice Writer, which contained a calendar in a table. The results were not pretty! And for a postal PDF which was a requisition form using tables, the results were somewhat better but still unusable, since the tables overlapped, hiding some of the text.

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

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

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The Resume feature takes some getting used to. It remembers all the documents (or websites) you had open the last time you used the application, and reopens them, even if you are opening a new document. You can change this behavior in the General System Preference. Just uncheck Restore windows when quitting and re-opening apps. Or you can try to remember to close all the documents before quitting, or just use Option+Command+Q to quit the application and close documents at the same time.

There is also an Auto Save and Versions feature that works with applications that have been updated to take advantage of this Lion feature. Without you remembering to explicitly save, Lion will save versions of your document for you. You can get back to previous versions of a document with an interface similar to Time Machine.
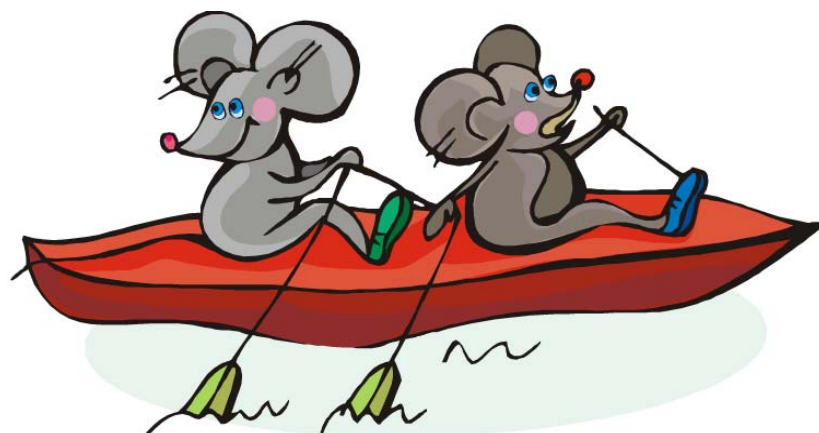

When dining at the DACS Resource Center, please carry your leftovers out with you.

Thanks!

The Management

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

Future Events:

October

**Mike Kaltschnee
Online Video
and Streaming**

November

**Andy Woodruff and
Sean Henderson
Recording and
Editing Live Music**

December

TBA

January

TBA