

NEXT MEETING: TURN YOUR PERSONAL COMPUTER INTO A LIVE MUSIC STUDIO



**NEW MEETING
LOCATION - SEE PAGE 9**

Directors' Notes

A meeting of your board of directors was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2011. The meeting was called to Order at: 7:10 p.m.

Attending were Richard Corzo (President,) Jeff Setaro, Annette van Ommeren, Jim Scheef, Bruce Preston (Secretary,) Patrick Libert, Andrew Woodruff; Guest: Charles Bovaird. The Minutes of the last Meeting were Accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Balance on hand 9/1/11	\$5,977.97
Income	
Dues	\$325.61
Bank: Interest	.49
Total:	326.10
Expenses	
ISP Service (3 months)	117.00
Resource Center Phone	70.48
Newsletter Printing	85.00
Newsletter Postage	48.64
Auditorium Rental	149.66
Posters and Frames for Display	38.12
Total:	508.90
Balance on hand 9/30/11	\$5,795.17

Membership Report

	AUG	SEP	OCT
Meeting date	8/2/11	9/6/11	10/4/11
Paying members	148	147	142
w/ email addresses	145	144	137
New members	1	0	1
NL printed	100	100	100
NL mailed	76	76	76
NL mailed-memb	56	56	56
NL mailed-other	6	6	6
NL mailed-free lib	14	14	14

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	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
Date	6/7	7/5	8/2	9/6	10/4
Seat Count	35	37	36	30	
Mbers sgn in	31	32	32	23	28
Visitrs sgn in	4	3	4	3	7
Net worth	6453	6026	6013	5978	5795

Old Business

1. General meetings

- 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 contacted Lesley Lambton at the Ridgefield Library to get a contact for the IBM Watson project. Jennifer Chu-Carroll at IBM responded that she wouldn't be able to come to Danbury. She copied her colleague Jim De Piante, but Richard has not heard from him.

- 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. Drew has not yet tested the newly released Mikogo for Linux with Bruce. Bruce and Richard successfully tested Mikogo on Windows and Mac, respectively.

- 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.

- Migration - Windows to Windows, Windows to Mac etc.

- Home Networking, File Sharing, networking devices such as printers

- David Pogue after the first of the year.

- Smart Computing magazine's presentation in a box.

- Google - their topic choice.

- Opera web browser

- Apple - Mac, Lion, Apple Cloud services, etc.

- Mossberg staff

2. Open positions

- We are looking for a replacement for Joseph Tobin who has resigned

Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 3

Membership Information

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Bruce Preston	Jim Scheef
Joseph Tobin	Annette van Ommeren

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

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

Microsoft Access
.NET Programming
Digital cameras/scanners/image processing
Content Management Systems
Linux
Mac and iPhone/iPad/iPod touch
PC maintenance
Virtual machine software
Desktop publishing and website design
Windows

Forum

Access SIG
ASP.Net and C#VB.Net SIG
Digital Imaging SIG
Drupal SIG
Linux SIG
Apple SIG
PC Maintenance SIG
Virtual Computing SIG
Web Site Design SIG
Windows SIG

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 2

from the DACS board after moving out of the area. Richard contacted Dave Wilkinson who is unable to serve at this time.

- We need the slate for the December board member elections.

- Current members whose terms are expiring will be polled as to whether they will run again.

- The membership chairperson/greeter position is still open.

3. The DACS display at the Danbury Library has been extended another month. We need to add a small article and photo to DACS.DOC and the web site about the display and the individuals who put it together. Andy has lined up the Bethel Library for the month of November. Will we need any display materials for Tech Fest (in Woodbury) on October 29?

4. We are removing the references to DACS placing rebuilt XP machines etc., and recycling machines from the Web site. We will retain the links to external organizations that do recycling.

5. The dacs.org domain registration is now on Bluehost and www.dacs.org is now hosted on Linux-based Bluehost. Jim and Richard migrated the calendar to the PHP/MySQL version of VCalendar. Annette updated the feedback form so it no longer depends on ASP. She is working on adding CAPTCHA to the form. Richard will take care of the archive template and let Jim know when to decommission the old site.

6. Update on 2010 income report and 2011 budget. No progress to new reports, looking at interface from Quicken.

7. We will reserve Broadview Middle School Auditorium for November and December. At present we anticipate returning to the hospital as early as January.

8. Short discussion as to checking the RC's network infrastructure.

New Business

No new business items were submitted.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

—Bruce Preston

Meeting Preview

Recording and Editing Live Music using a Personal Computer

By Drew Kwashnak

TODAY YOU CAN LISTEN to your music just about anywhere, from your computer to your MP3 player to your cell phone. Unfortunately, it means purchasing online or ripping your music from CDs, which, unless you are a professional musician, does not include music you make yourself.

On Tuesday, November 1, the Danbury Area Computer Society (DACS), is hosting a presentation on “Recording and Editing Live Music” using a personal computer.

This is the second part of a three-part series on Music Production with Personal Computers which started with “Converting Vinyl and Tape to MP3 and CD”.

“Recording and Editing Live Music” is sure to be a fun and toe-tapping presentation as two DACS members involved in music on a professional level will talk about their own systems, including interfaces and microphones, and discuss what software goes with which task.

Andy Woodruff and Sean will perform on cello and guitar on our stage, in order to demonstrate recording their own live music with several microphones. Then they will demonstrate how they make corrections and how to mix several tracks down to two stereo channels.

They will offer advice on software that is available for purchase, and they will of-



fer tips on how to set up equipment and software. The meeting will end with a question and answer period, but that is not the end of the series. Stay tuned for more information regarding Sean’s “Annual Music Production Workshop” on November 18th. That workshop will offer hands-on experimentation with Sean’s equipment and an opportunity for in-depth questions.

Sean has a rock-and-roll background and has performed for years. Andy has dual careers as a professional cellist and electrical engineer. He has engineered and produced 30 CDs, including artwork.

Due to construction at the Danbury Hospital, the next general meeting will be held at Broadview Middle School Auditorium, 72 Hospital Avenue, Danbury, CT. Directions to the school are on the DACS Website.

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.

Meeting Review

Mike Kaltschnee on Streaming Video

By Richard Corzo

PERHAPS YOU’VE HEARD of people “cutting the cord”, getting rid of their cable or satellite TV subscription, and relying on the Internet to watch television programming. Maybe you just want to catch up on episodes that you may have missed, or be able to watch movies that aren’t available from your cable or satellite provider.

Mike Kaltschnee explained the options, both services and devices you can hook up to your TV. He is well known for his web site www.HackingNetflix.com. So of course he mentioned Netflix, which has both a video streaming service and DVD rental-by-mail service. The streaming service seems to be available on every TV, Blu-

ray player, and game console; along with all the streaming devices he showed us, and a Windows PC or Mac.



Hulu and Hulu Plus is another service featuring mostly TV programs, and come in both free and paid versions. Amazon offers streaming through its Amazon Prime offering, as well as a huge selection of video on demand titles. HBO Go is available only to HBO cable subscribers, but lets you watch shows on portable devices and selected set-top boxes.

Blockbuster is similar to Netflix in offering both streaming and DVDs by mail. However, the streaming option for now requires a Dish satellite subscription.

You can select from the various options

based on the service’s selection of titles, price, how often you watch, and what devices they support.

To find where particular titles may be offered, Mike mentioned TV Guide (<http://www.tvguide.com/>), Fanhattan (<http://www.fanhattan.com/>) which has an iPad application and will soon offer a website guide, and clicker (<http://www.clicker.com/>), the “Internet Television Guide.”

To watch Internet TV on your television, you could hook up your Windows PC or Mac with an HDMI or VGA cable, or use your game console. Your TV itself or Blu-ray player may offer some of these services. You might also want to watch TV on your portable devices, phone, iPad, etc.

Finally, there are dedicated streaming boxes such as the Roku, Boxee, Apple TV and Google TV. A TiVo combines a DVR with an offering of Netflix, Hulu Plus, Amazon Video on Demand, and Blockbuster. The Sony Dash was an interesting device I wasn’t familiar with, and has a built-in screen.

So there are a lot of options, and we’re no longer limited to cable or satellite TV. It was great for Mike to explain it all to us.

Book Review

Two Books Worth Reading

by Bruce Preston

The Soul of a New Machine, by Tracy Kidder. New York: Back Bay Books, 2000.

OUR PCs AND MACs, etc. are categorized as micro-computers. The room-sized computers are categorized as mainframes. There is also a less-familiar category called mini-computers; these are physically about the same size as a desk or large filing cabinet. In the 70's and 80's these were common for production control, accounting, etc. They typically supported a dozen or so 'dumb terminals'. Probably the best known brand of mini-computer was Digital Equipment Corporation, "DEC" – but there were others, and most of the companies making mini-computers were within the 128 beltway around Boston.

Data General was a manufacturer of mini-computers – at the time of the start of the book their product line was 16-

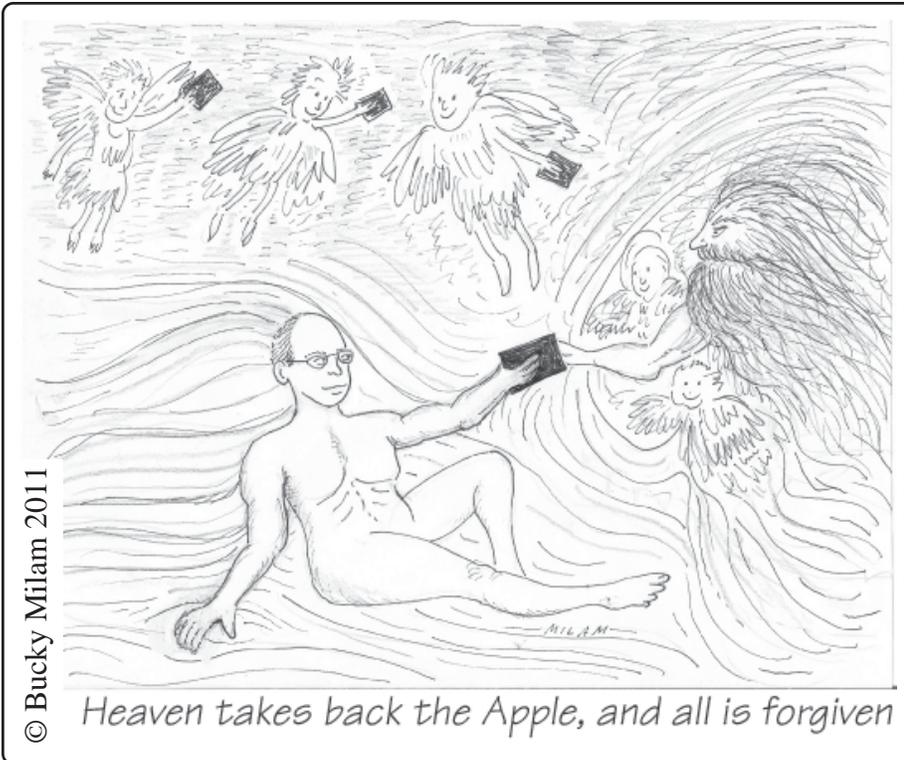
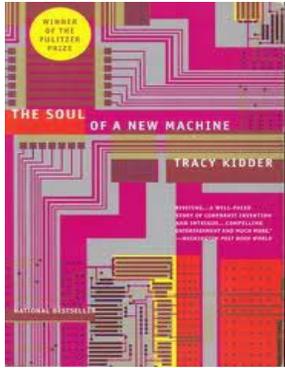
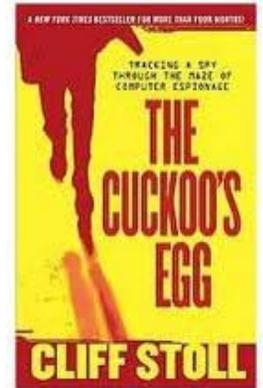
bit architecture. This limited the amount of memory and instruction set, and thus the number of users and/or complexity of the application programs. The CEO announced that he was sending 'our best and brightest engineers' to a new facility at Research Triangle Park (North Carolina) for the purpose of developing a new 32-bit product line. This did not go over well with those left behind to maintain the current 16-bit product line.

Somehow, the author, Tracy Kidder, got permission to become a 'fly on the wall' and went inside Data General to chronicle the development of a 32-bit machine by the 16-bit engineering team. They had convinced management to let them have a shot at it by promising to deliver a machine capable of supporting existing 16-bit applications simultaneously with new 32-bit applications, something the RTP team was not going to attempt. Such a capability would be an enormous cost benefit to their existing customers, as they would not have to purchase updated software, or re-write applications developed in-house. Kidder covered the entire development cycle from project proposal to machine roll-out. Kidder won a Pulitzer Prize for this book.

The Cuckoo's Egg: Tracking a Spy Through the Maze of Computer Espionage, by Clifford Stoll. New York: Gallery Books, 2005.

THIS BOOK TELLS A TRUE story of computer espionage. The author was an astronomy graduate student at University of California, Berkley. His funding ran out, so he got a paid position in the IT department. On the first day he was given a rather mundane assignment – find out why there was a \$0.75 discrepancy between the Unix operating system's accounting records and the UC-Berkley's accounting records.

At the time, the internet was still a closed system, available only to educational institutions, the military, and selected industrial entities supporting the military. This was also the era of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), also known as "Star Wars". Over a period of time Stoll developed techniques to first detect the intruder, and then track the intruder's circuitous route and method of gaining supervisory permissions on various intermediate computers. He ultimately was responsible for identifying an international spy ring leading to their arrest and conviction.



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Heaven takes back the Apple, and all is forgiven



Let's Make Music

The fifth annual PC Music Production Workshop will be held at the Resource Center on November 18. DACS' maestro, Sean Henderson, will encore some of the sounds and themes from this month's music show at the General Meeting, including the following:

- * What software goes with which task
- * Gotchas
- * Configuration tips
- * History of MIDI
- * History of synthesizers
- * Software demonstration

For more information, come to the meeting November 1, and check the DACS Website

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: November 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: Nov 8 (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: Nov 3

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: Nov 10

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: Nov 30

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: Nov 16

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: Nov 15

SIG News & Events

Apple. In October we took a look at Parallels Desktop for Mac (<http://www.parallels.com/products/desktop/>), virtual machine software that allows you to run Windows (or even Linux) on your Mac without leaving Mac OS X. Parallels has been updated for OS X Lion, and I downloaded a trial version. I have previously used VMware Fusion (<http://www.vmware.com/products/fusion/>), and Parallels is able to convert a VMware virtual machine into a Parallels version. This was convenient as I didn't have to reinstall my copy of Windows Vista from scratch. When you first start the Windows, you are prompted to install Parallels tools from a virtual CD inside the virtual machine. This installs drivers for your virtual machine hardware.

I ran into two issues with the converted virtual machine. First I had no Internet connectivity inside the virtual machine. I poked around the virtual machine settings and found a setting for the network adapter. In addition to a "default" choice I could see a couple of virtual network adapters left over from my VMware installation, vmnet1 and vmnet8, plus two new ones I didn't recognize, vnic0 and vnic1. Guessing that the latter were added by Parallels, I chose vnic0 instead of the default network adapter. That solved my Internet connectivity problems in the VM.

The second problem was getting a spooler subsystem error, which is related to printing in Windows. Consequently I was unable to set up a printer in the virtual machine. This was unfortunate, as I had hoped to show how to share a USB-connected printer on the Mac with the Windows virtual machine. Because of this I wasn't even able to show how you could "disconnect" the printer from the real Mac and assign it to the virtual machine.

Otherwise, I was able to run a few Windows programs that I tried. It's possible to run them inside the Windows virtual machine window or right on the Mac desktop using the Coherence feature in Parallels. A folder is automatically added to the dock so you start individual Windows programs from the Mac desktop.

In summary, it looks like Parallels may be a reasonable option if you are not already using other virtual machine software. However, it doesn't look like a good option if you were thinking of switching from VMware Fusion. I also didn't notice any particular advantage over VMware, which I have always found to work well.

Web Design. In October we explored the way the @Font system works, things to consider when choosing fonts for a website, and how to find free fonts on www.fontsquirrel.com. We demo'd the installation and CSS settings required to make them work, checked different browsers, and even an iPad. We also compared Google's offerings, and saw how to use the fonts found on www.google.com/webfonts. This is somewhat easier to use, but obviously depends on accessing the Google servers.

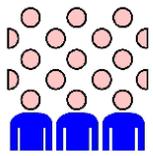
After looking at fonts, we went over some WordPress issues, tweaking the installation, adding security, and briefly addressing design customization.

In the near future, we will continue to keep Drupal in mind (as we adapt the DACS site). However, other web related techniques and subjects won't be ignored. If requested, we can explore advanced WordPress customization techniques. Contact Annette (avanommeren@dacs.org) if you have ideas for meeting subjects.

SIG Notes, Cont. on page 11

November 2011

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																								
		<p><i>1</i></p>  <p>6:30 P.M. GENERAL MTG New Location</p>	<p><i>2</i></p>	<p><i>3</i></p>  <p>Apple 7:00 PM Richard Corzo macsig@dacs.org</p>	<p><i>4</i></p>	<p><i>5</i></p>																																																																																																								
<p><i>6</i></p>	<p><i>7</i></p>	<p><i>8</i></p>  <p>MS ACCESS 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. Bruce Preston bpreston@dacs.org</p>	<p><i>9</i></p>  <p>7:00 PM Board of Directors</p>	<p><i>10</i></p>  <p>7-9 PM Drupal Jim Scheef 860 355-0034</p>	<p><i>11</i></p>  <p>Venerans' Day</p>	<p><i>12</i></p>																																																																																																								
<p><i>13</i></p>	<p><i>14</i></p>	<p><i>15</i></p>  <p>Web Design Annette van Ommeren 914 232-0149</p>	<p><i>16</i></p>  <p>7:30 PM Linux John Ritterbusch linuxsig@dacs.org</p>	<p><i>17</i></p>	<p><i>18</i></p>  <p>Music Production Workshop</p>	<p><i>19</i></p>  <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																																								
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Connections

Negotiating tough deals with your cable company

By Gabe Goldberg

FOR SOME PEOPLE, their cable company is “the company they love to hate”. Most folks just accept the cable company for what it is, a semi-regulated utility providing useful or necessary services. And the remainder — often to the mystification of the first group — just love their company, even singing its praises when cable service is discussed. To make sense of this variation, remember that cable service is generally provided by regional monopolies, with territories granted by local governments, so features, customer services and costs indeed vary widely. And even one company’s characteristics can vary with geography, depending on factors such as local management, franchise arrangements and fees, and infrastructure age and quality.

As early as possible in this process, request your free credit reports and ensure that you’re shown as being financially responsible, with all account payments up-to-date. Felicia Blow, Cox Cable’s director of public affairs, notes that the better a credit history is, “the more flexibility Cox has in avoiding the customer having to pay deposits and the like to get or restore service.”

Effective negotiation

But separate from everything else is the need to negotiate effectively with the company, whether establishing new service, changing what’s provided, or simply haggling for a better deal. So, prior to any conversation or transaction, do your homework. Understand everything you’ll need to consider and perhaps mention: competition to cable services in your area (satellite and over-the-air TV, phone company DSL or FiOS, cell phone service), services offered, service levels (e.g., Internet connection speeds, TV channel bundles), features (telephone caller-ID, voicemail, speed dialing, three-way calling, etc.), list prices, bundle discounts, and current or recent promotions offered.

This is complicated enough that you want to get it right, selecting no more or less than what you need and want, while paying the best price possible. So start with a list (or,

better, a spreadsheet) showing what to discuss, each item’s relative importance to you, the cable company’s quoted price, and any available bundles or promotions.

Just as a retired couple likely doesn’t need a seven-passenger SUV and a young singleton won’t rent a McMansion, don’t get carried away by glittering features and services. Cox’s Blow suggests remembering your “station in life” before ordering the fastest Internet connection if you’ll just send

email and do light Web surfing, though if you have a far-flung family, a generous phone package might ultimately save money.

Similarly, a killer online gamer might go for blazing DOCSIS 3.0 Internet bandwidth and skip phone service entirely, depending on cell phone connectivity.

Bundles — combination service packages costing less than the sum of their individual components — can save or waste money. Think carefully about whether it’s worth spending more money to save some, or whether better value comes from mixing and matching bits from multiple providers.

TANSTAAFL

Consider freebies offered, but remember that they only have value if they’re useful. Internet services may include spam filtering, security tools, parental controls, anti-virus, anti-spyware, etc., but compare their quality to other free and fee tools to ensure that you’re getting best of breed. If you won’t use them, don’t let a cable rep seduce you into paying premium prices because they’re included. You’ll likely be offered prepaid protection for inside cable facilities. Unless you’re aware of problems, it’s usually best to decline this — it’s essentially overpriced insurance against rare problems with cable wiring. The company is responsible for connectivity to your dwelling’s main termination, and will usually address (Internet, TV, phone) signal quality issues at no cost. But check with neighbors regarding company service and fee policies regarding inside work.

No complacency

Once you’re a customer, you’re not done chatting with your CableCo. Don’t suffer service problems or billing issues silently, or just gripe to friends and neighbors. Cable companies understand they’ve had public relations problems and work to be better liked. Online services such as real-time customer service chats may resolve problems at 3 a.m. And some companies have online monitors watching for complaints in forums and on Twitter.

Even satisfied customers benefit from occasionally evaluating services and adding/deleting features, and calling to request lower prices can cut monthly bills. This can involve citing competitive services — for example, if your neighborhood has just been wired for FiOS with promotional rates offered, you can threaten to terminate service unless the lower price is matched.

Make this more credible by mentioning that you’re not tied to CableCo email addresses; note that you use Webmail service accessible through any ISP or that you have your own domain (both of which are good practices to avoid having to change email addresses when moving from one company’s territory to another!). If you’ve suffered problems or outages, suggest that it’s only fair for you to be compensated by lower rates.

You may be required to commit to service for some period in order to have fees reduced. One customer reduced his monthly Internet cost \$20, to \$29.99, while getting about 30Mbps download and 3.5Mbps upload speeds — hardly shabby, and worth agreeing to stick around for a year. If you’re content to remain a customer and don’t expect to move soon, that’s a good bargain. Of course, watch the calendar and haggle again if your rate ever increases.

Finally, if you work with a competent and helpful rep — whether for initial orders, account changes, service or billing issues — ask for direct contact information, both telephone number and email address. It’s immensely helpful having continuity in dealing with normally faceless businesses, and service providers increasingly recognize how much personal service improves customer satisfaction. Not all companies or reps provide this, but -as with everything else this article suggests -it can’t hurt to ask.

Gabe Goldberg is APCUG Region 2 Advisor (ggoldberg@apcug.org.), and has developed, worked with, and written about technology for decades.

This article originally appeared on the slickdeals.net Web site, <<http://slickdeals.net/>>, and is distributed for publication by computer user groups.. (c) Gabriel Goldberg 2010.



Tips & Tricks

Synchronize Your Bookmarks Between Computers

By Sandy Berger

IN TODAY'S WORLD, more and more of us are accessing the Internet from several different devices. We may use a computer at work, a tablet PC at home, and a smart phone or a laptop computer when we are on the go. When we bookmark a website at the home, we might like to bring up that bookmarked webpage when we are at the office or when we visit a relative. If we are using the default settings of an Internet browser, we cannot do this. However, there is a way to synchronize bookmarks between devices.

Just about every web browser today offers some way to synchronize bookmarks, either through an add-in, a toolbar or a setting. Most of these solutions, however, only work if you use the same web browser on each device. For instance, if you use a Firefox add-in called Sync, you can only access your bookmarks from a device that has Firefox installed. So if you use Firefox at home, but Firefox doesn't work on your mobile device or your mother doesn't happen to have Firefox installed on her computer, you can't easily access your bookmarks while at those places. There are several stand-alone programs that solve this problem by allowing you to synchronize bookmarks between browsers, but I have a better answer.

The best and easiest solution for synchronizing bookmarks and favorites is a free service from Google called Google Bookmarks. I have used Google Bookmarks for several years. This service keeps a copy of all your bookmarks securely in the cloud, so you can access them from any Internet-connected computer or tablet and most smart phones.

To use Google Bookmarks, you simply surf over to www.google.com/bookmarks. If you already have a Google account from using Gmail, Google Calendar or another Google service, you can just sign in and add Bookmarks to your account. If you don't have a Google account, you can sign up for the free Google account and activate Google Bookmarks right from this page.

When you add the Google Bookmarks to your Google Account you will be asked if

you want to copy your current bookmarks or favorites from your web browser. You will want to do this, unless your bookmarks or favorites have become so unruly that you would like to start with a clean slate.

Once you have the Google Bookmarks set up, the easiest way to access your new bookmarks is to install the Google Toolbar, which is a free download available at www.google.com/toolbar. You should install this toolbar on the computer that you use most often in the web browser that you

usually use. For instance, if you use Internet Explore on your home computer, installing the Google Toolbar there will give you quick access to your Google Bookmarks as well as some additional features.

If you are using another computer that has the Google Toolbar installed, you can simply log into your Google account to access your bookmarks on that computer. On computers and mobile devices that don't have the Google Toolbar, you can log into your Google account and access your bookmarks at www.google.com/bookmarks. Google also has a small icon that you can drag to the links bar of any browser to access your Google bookmarks. It is available on the same page. Just click "Add Bookmark" at your Google Bookmarks page and you will see a blue box marked "Google Bookmark" that can be added to your web browser toolbar.

The only difficult part about this whole process is remembering to use the Google toolbar or icon to create your bookmarks, rather than using your browser bookmark icon. Once you get in the habit of doing that, you are good to go.

Using the Google Bookmarks offers two additional perks. First, their bookmark page is extremely well organized. If you have ever tried to delete, rename, or rearrange your bookmarks or favorites in Internet Explorer, Firefox, or any other web browser, you know that this can be a trying task. Google Bookmarks, however, makes it easy. Just surf over to the Google Bookmarks page. As long as you are logged in to Google, you will see all of your bookmarks and find that it is easy

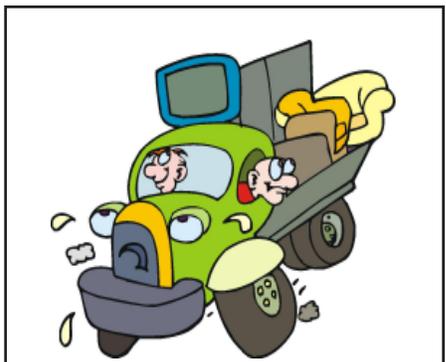
to work with them.

The second perk is that Google has recently introduces a feature called "Lists" to their bookmarks. This feature lets you create a list of websites that revolve around one topic. It is a great way to research a topic, plan a trip, or organize an event. You can share your lists with selected people if you need to collaborate on any project. Google will also give you suggestions that pertain to the items in your list and sometimes these are very useful. So if you decide to try Google Bookmarks, you may also want to try the list feature.

If you use multiple devices, Google Bookmarks will keep your bookmarks in sync. Although this may only be a small step in keeping your world organized, being in sync can give you a very good feeling.

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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.

Ask DACS

October, 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 - A question submitted by email: A currently "popular" type of spam is an email addressed to you and some of your friends that seems to have been sent by someone you know and includes a link sometimes without any text. Sometimes there is a sentence recommending whatever is in the link. What is going on? Has the apparent sender's computer or email been hacked? What, if anything, can I do to stop this?

A - This topic could fill an entire general meeting program. First, do not click on the link in that email; it will surely infect your computer with malware. This malware will then run with your security privileges (do you run as an administrator on your system?) and thus have complete control of everything on your computer. Second, the odds are that the email did not come from your friend. The sender's email address is almost certainly spoofed. Rather than summarize material from various websites, I will send you to a couple of resources I found while investigating this question:

Someone's sending from my email address! How do I stop them?! (tinyurl.com/3wmy9)

Open this webpage and then explore the "variations on a theme" to see the many ways this type of spam is created and sent. At the meeting I implied that the problem emails were coming from a DACS member's computer and, as stated above, this may not be the case .

Q - There are many programs, such as media players, Java, Adobe Flash, Acrobat Reader, etc., that all need to be updated once they are installed. I just moved to Windows 7 and don't want to install any more of these programs than necessary. How

should one decide which program(s) to install? Some of these programs are redundant, so which media player is best and how should they be configured?

A - This is another excellent question that all of us confront when we buy a new computer or do a clean install of Windows. Once again, this could be an entire presentation - and there was some excellent discussion. Here is a scenario: you turn on your new computer and copy your personal files and documents over from the old machine and click on a document to read it. Windows pops up a dialog asking you which program should be used to open the file. Since there are many file formats that can be opened/played by many programs; it is up to you to decide which program best meet your needs. For example, Microsoft Word files (the DOC file type) can be opened and edited by many word processing programs. Corel WordPerfect 10 is a competitive word processor that can open and edit the DOC file format. There several free, open source programs such as Open Office (openoffice.org) that will also work. There is no one "best" program; the choice is yours. Plus, the overly generous size of today's hard drives makes it easy to install several programs, in case you can't narrow it down to a single choice. With this in mind, some discussion highlights follow:

- While Windows includes programs to view or play many different file types, many file formats are proprietary and require that you install a specific program.

- Adobe Flash is a good example of a proprietary format. If you want to be able to view the content on many websites, you must

install the Adobe Flash player. I know of no alternative.

- Adobe Acrobat files (the ubiquitous PDF file type) are also a proprietary file format, but there are now many alternatives to the Adobe Acrobat Reader program. Because Acrobat files can carry executable code, I feel it is best to use a program that gets regular updates to plug newly discovered security holes. A third-party viewer may or may not have the same flaws as the Acrobat Reader program, but at least Adobe provides regular updates.

- One place where it would seem you could make a choice is sound and video files. Windows includes the Windows Media Player that handles many such formats - except for a few that belong to Apple. Those formats require Apple QuickTime which can also play many of the same formats as Windows Media Player. And then there is the RealPlayer from Real Networks, Inc (www.real.com). As long as these programs are updated regularly, I see no harm in installing them all, plus it is nearly impossible to actually remove Media Player.

- In addition to proprietary media players, naturally there are a multitude of open source players. One member mentioned the VLC media player (www.videolan.org). When choosing programs from open source projects, make sure the program is supported and updated. Media files can all introduce malware into your computer and open source programs offer no freedom from such vulnerabilities.

- A member offered a great suggestion on how to configure media players (see side bar) to make your favorite player run every file that it is capable of playing, while QuickTime handles the remaining formats that it can play, and the Creative MediaSource 5 Player runs the 5 remaining formats that of the three players, only it can play. I have no idea what those formats might be, and I don't need to know.

Q - I had an unfortunate confrontation with a rootkit. The malware hidden by the rootkit disabled my AVG anti-virus program. Can anyone recommend a program to remove the

rootkit? Note: I could not hear on the recording the name of the scanner used to find the rootkit or the name of the rootkit.

A - My somewhat flippant answer was Darik's Boot 'n Nuke, also known as DBAN (www.dban.org). As someone quickly pointed out, DBAN is a program to completely wipe a hard drive of everything. When DBAN completes, your hard drive will be as clean as it was the day it left the hard drive assembly line. Then you need to reinstall Windows and hopefully follow the procedure outlined last month. Here is why I recommended DBAN: once the bad guys run codes on your computer, you no longer own that machine - they do. In Internet slang, you have been "pwned". You may be able to find and remove the rootkit and any obvious files it was hiding, but how can you ever be sure you found and removed every bad program? When Windows is first installed, your hard drive has 20-40 thousand files. The bad guys are deviously clever in hiding their malware amongst those thousands of programs. That said, there are AV programs that claim to find rootkits and maybe even remove them. None of these are the free versions. Also, remember that anti-virus programs can only find things that are known and are included in the signature files. Since many malware programs disable AV updates (but not the messages the "Update successful" messages), this type of malware is super difficult to even find. As noted last month, there are malware programs that can survive a normal drive reformatting as done in the Windows installation. The bad code lives in the partition table that is not rewritten even when you delete the partition. DBAN wipes the partition table and the master boot record (everything really means everything).

This is the only procedure that I guarantee will rid your machine of all malware. You then must use care to prevent reintroducing the same malware when you reinstall your applications and restore your data files, documents, pictures and music, etc.

A member suggested buying a new hard drive and installing

Windows to the new drive. When Windows is completed updated and your AV program installed and updated, you can install the old drive as a second drive and copy your files to the new drive. Once you are sure you have moved all your old files, run DBAN on the old drive. This is an excellent suggestion and well worth the extra cost.

In my research on this question, I found a rootkit scanner that is new to me: GMER (www.gmer.net) which I have not yet tried, but have many recommendations. Other scanners: Root Kit Revealer (Microsoft SysInternals), Sophos, and McAfee, I have tried with indeterminate results. Most AV companies offer a free standalone scanner.

Q - Occasionally I receive duplicate copies of email messages. What causes this and how can I prevent it? I use the Macintosh Mail application on an EarthLink account using the POP3 protocol. The duplicates actually exist on the server where I can see the duplicate message when using webmail.

A - No one had a really definitive answer. One member suggested that the anti-

spam practice of "greylisting" might be the cause, but it would not explain the duplicates you see when you copy yourself as there would be no greylisting. It is very difficult to diagnose a problem that is intermittent and thus cannot be reliably reproduced. I suggested switching to the IMAP4 protocol, but while this is a good idea, it does not address the fact that you see the duplicates on the server. You could do some sleuthing when this happens again on an email you copied to yourself: contact the person to whom you sent the message and ask that person if she/he received it twice. If he did, it would point to the originating server (EarthLink) as the culprit. Richard offered to show how to turn on the detailed headers in Mac Mail at the next Apple SIG meeting.

[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!

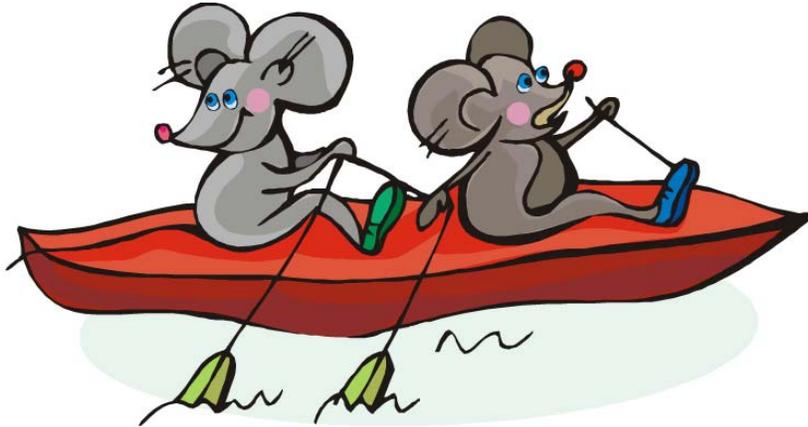
How to configure multiple media players to your order of preference

Over time you may come to prefer one media player over the others and would prefer to use that program when you open a media file. The first step in this procedure is to

1. Decide which media player is your favorite, 2nd favorite, 3rd, etc.
2. In Win7, open the Default Programs applet in Control Panel. Then click the link for "Set Default Programs."
3. In the list of program on the left, click your least favorite media player. (Which programs are the media players? Well you need to know that in step #1).
4. Click the link for "Set this program as default". This will set this program to handle every media type of which it is capable.
5. Click your next least favorite media play and set it as the default.
6. Do this for each player installed on your machine, so you set your most favorite media player as the default program last.

Now when you click on each media player in the list, you will see a message that the selected program has some number of its defaults set. On my machine I find that QuickTime has "57 out of 83 defaults" but when I click on Windows Media Player, I see "This program has all of its defaults."

There is no equivalent dialog in Windows XP, although the "Set Program Access and Defaults" might work (this is untested).



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



Voice
for
Joanie

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

Future Events:

November

Andy Woodruff and
Sean Henderson
Recording and
Editing Live Music

December

TBA

January

TBA

February

TBA