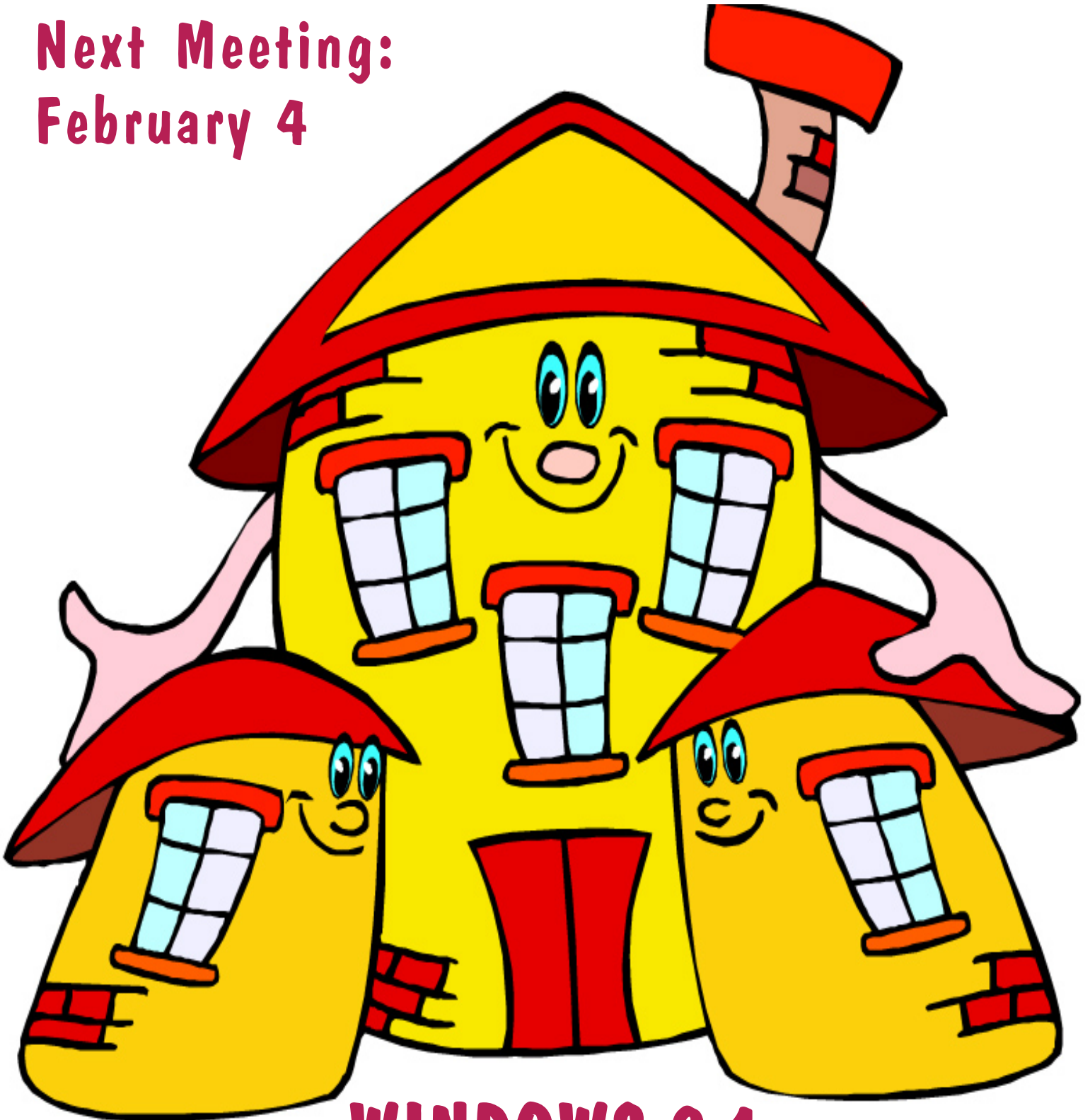


**Next Meeting:
February 4**



WINDOWS 8.1

A working system, or a work in progress?

Directors' Notes

A meeting of your board of directors was held on Wednesday, January 8, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 7:17 PM.

Attending were Richard Corzo, Jim Scheef, Lisa Leifels, Bert Goff, Dick Gingras, Dave Green, Richard Teasdale, Bruce Preston and Andy Woodruff.

The minutes of last meeting were accepted with revision.

Treasurer's Report December 2013

Balance on hand 12/1/13:	\$4,421.59
INCOME	
Dues:	\$489.15
Total Income:	\$489.15
EXPENSES	
APCUG Annual Membership Fee:	\$50.00
Resource Center Phone:	\$83.08
Renewal Letter Postage:	\$10.23
Newsletter Postage:	\$41.58
Newsletter Printing:	\$88.00
Treasurer Software:	\$77.62
Total Expenses:	\$350.51
Balance on hand 12/31/13:	\$4,560.23

Membership Report

Nov 5 - Hackerspace - Mike Kaltschnee
 Dec 3 - Facebook & Pinterest - Bill DeRosa
 Jan 7 - Apple Ecosystem - Richard Corzo

General Meeting

	NOV	DEC	JAN
Paying members	115	116	113
w/email address	109	111	108
new members	0	1	1
DACSDOC			
printed	75	75	75
number of pages	12	12	12
mailed	61	61	61
mailed-members	42	42	42
mailed-other	5	5	5
mailed-free libraries	14	14	14

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Old Business

1. General meetings

- January 7, 2014: Richard Corzo - Apple Ecosystem. Preview: Jeff Smith, Review: Frank Kromer

- February 4: Jay Ferron - Windows 8.1. Preview: Bruce Preston, Review: Joan Galligan - Meet the SIG component - Mobile Devices/Windows 8 SIG

- March 4 - TBD

- April - TBD

- May 6: John Patrick - Confirmed for his annual "State of the Internet". Preview: _____, Review: _____

- Possible future topics:

- We've started to do a "Meet the SIG" segment between the Ask DACS session and the featured presentation. We did the Linux SIG in November. We should do Mobile Devices in February. Others available for future months: Drupal, Web Design.

- "LifeStream" monitoring. Mike Kaltschnee mentioned FitBit (currently available at BestBuy) or other 'wearable electronics.' Andy will speak with Jeff Schlicht, professor of Health Promotion & Exercise at WestConn, about a possible presentation at DACS re wearable electronic devices that monitor exercise and/or body functions. Bill may have access to someone who has Google Glass, and perhaps other health-related wearable devices.

- Sean and Bruce have agreed to put together a Saturday session, perhaps in January, more likely in February, on building virtual machines. Participants would have to bring their own operating system. Bruce will talk to Sean now that we have passed the year end.

- Andy suggested a session on creating web sites of various types: blog, brochure, e-commerce site, etc.) - making use of such as products/services as site builder (online or on PC), turn-key sites, etc. Andy suggested that as a computer group we should do some sort of session that would answer the question: "I think I need a web site, what are my options?" This might involve a "high level" overview of the various approaches. Andy (and to some extent Bruce) wanted to talk about the entry level 'turn-key' systems where you must live within the constraints of the design, where Annette is more concerned about "What happens if it

Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 3

Membership Information

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The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Richard Teasdale (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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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

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

Forum

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

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 2

doesn't do what you want it to do?" Annette and Andy will discuss creating an outline that describes at a high-level what components might be a part of a web site and the repercussions they have upon the construction of the site.

° Lisa suggested a "decision tree" presentation - "What should I get?" - Windows or Mac, Desktop, All-in-One, Notebook, Tablet, or even SmartPhone - Android or iOS, etc. Lots of decisions - how to decide what meets your needs. We think this would be a 'tough' presentation to pull off but a lively session. Bruce will concentrate on desktops, Richard Corzo will concentrate on mobile devices, Jim and Charlie will work on defining the metrics.

° Video production - putting something up on YouTube. Vine, Instagram, etc. Approach WestConn or Naugatuck to see if a student might do it. Perhaps for a Senior project? Andy is currently working on a project, he says he might be able to do it in 6 months or so. Also "personal videos" that might be put on Twitter or Flickr.

° Google products? Android operating system, Chromebook, Google Plus, etc. Richard C. asked our previous Google speaker Millicent Branca but has not gotten a response. He found someone through Meetup who specializes in tech startups, but hasn't heard back after his initial reply. Richard will follow through on this lead as well as continue to search.

° Home theater systems. Jim is in the process of assembling one, might put together a program based upon his experiences. Richard will write an article on watching YouTube on TV. Andy will look for an independent home theater installations. Comparison of services such as Xfinity, CableVision, DirecTV etc. Carston Stereo might be a good prospect - Andy will talk to them.

° Digital cameras - higher end digital cameras. Explanation of what they have that you don't get in a phone, etc. What is RAW mode, HDR, etc., sensor size, what causes noise, etc. Andy says he could do this as early as March or April.

° 3D Printing - have not heard from Bill Saturno.

° Jim would like to see things like the Raspberry Pi, Arduino etc.

Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 11

Meeting Review

Apple Ecosystem - with Richard Corzo

by Frank Kromer

HOW APPROPRIATE the name for the January presentation. Apple Ecosystem, as presented by Richard Corzo, says it all.

Richard began with the Apple TV (\$99) and the Apple feature known as Airplay. This device, when connected to an HDTV, can share content through iTunes between

a computer and your HDTV. iTunes is available for both MACs and PCs running Windows. Through Airplay your Apple TV can also play content from an iPhone, iPad, or MacBook. In addition, it has built-in apps for playing content di-



rect from the internet, for example from Netflix. Recently iTunes radio was added to the Apple ecosystem. Richard provided a demo of iTunes radio in action. Apple TV also works for displaying games on your HDTV. If you have an iPhone, iPad, or iTunes on your computer, consider acquiring the Apple TV.

Apple's lineup of computers begins with the \$599 Mac mini and includes the Macbook air, Macbook pro, iMac 21", iMac 27", and the just-released Mac Pro. The Mac mini comes without a monitor, keyboard, or mouse. In all other respects it is a complete computer. MacBooks now come with retina displays. Richard commented that once you have the retina display, you won't go back to a standard display. The current lineup of Apple computers has eliminated optical drives and hard drives on its notebooks. On desktop computers, you can currently buy either a hard drive or the newer flash storage, or a combination of the two (Apple uses the term "fusion drive"). The Mac Pro is a very high end computer, starting at \$2,999. Unless you are in publishing or a very serious computer user, other Macs should meet your needs.

All Macs, iPhones, and iPads include many built-in apps, such as the iLife suite (iPhoto, iMovie, Garage Band). Richard talked about iPhoto as a great way to organize your photos by faces, places, or events, with the ability to tag photos. iWork (pages, numbers and keynote) apps are for

word processing, spreadsheet calculations, and creating presentations, such as the one Richard gave at the meeting. All in all, the App Store has 1 million apps available for the iPhone and 475,000 for the iPad. iBooks and Maps have been mainstays of iPhones and iPads, and they are now included on Apple's computers as

part of the latest operating system (Mavericks). iBooks uses the epub format, in contrast to the mobi format used by Amazon.

Richard referred to Time Machine as the "killer app" on Mac computers. Time Machine backs up the entire Mac computer to a backup drive such as a Time Capsule, and does it seamlessly. In talking about backups, Richard commented that the backup drive should normally be 2 or 3 times larger than the computer hard drive. He also talked about restoring from the backup drive using Time Machine. We all know how important it is to back up, but a straightforward method of restoring is equally important.

Mavericks became available in fall 2013. It is available at no charge from the

Mac App Store, and it includes all of the apps referred to herein, as well as the ability (among other things) to display multiple pages and prevent malware. If you want more information on Mavericks, the Apple web page is the place (www.apple.com/osx).

The latest versions of iPhone are 5s and 5c. The 5s is a 64-bit processor with touch ID for security. The 5c is basically the same as the version 5, but with several colors to choose from in selecting your model. The latest versions of iPad are the iPad Air (because it is significantly thinner than previous versions) and the iPad mini, with retina display. Both versions come with a 64-bit processor and up to 128 GB of storage.

iOS 7 is the latest operating system for iPhones and iPads. Richard talked about why Apple apps are the most customer oriented apps, and mentioned that apps are easier to make for Apple devices (than for Android).

iCloud was the final part of the Apple ecosystem in Richard's presentation for the evening. The Mac, iPhone, iPad, and Apple TV are all tied together through iCloud. iCloud syncs calendars, notes, reminders, email, bookmarks, and reading lists, and if you choose, will backup your iPhone and iPad (or you can back them up to your computer). Other features of iCloud are photo streaming, keychain, and Find My iPhone. Richard demonstrated the Find My iPhone app (which includes the iPod Touch).

Apple ecosystem - I think it was better understood as a result of Richard's presentation. I know it helped me.



Meeting Preview

Windows 8.1

By Bruce Preston

IN THE BEGINNING there was DOS and it was ‘good enough’ – if you were willing to deal with the nuances of the command line interface. There were various releases – 1.1 bumped diskette capacity from 320KB to 360KB; 2.0 introduced hard disks and folders; and 3 through 6 added stability, more memory support and performance enhancements, but never delivered the multitasking support that was always rumored to be ‘just over the horizon’.

Then there was Windows, a graphical user interface (GUI) that was placed over DOS. It took Microsoft a few releases to get it right, culminating in Windows for Workgroups 3.11, also known as WfW. This introduced networking - peer to peer, primarily for file and printer sharing, and if you worked at it, Internet access. Windows and applications were 16-bit and you had some multitasking capabilities.

The joint venture by Microsoft and IBM called OS/2 was ultimately a dead end. Microsoft decided to pull out of OS/2 and go with Windows NT – the first 32-bit Windows that was an operating system rather than an application supported by DOS. Since then we’ve seen a progression of Windows releases targeted for the consumer as opposed to purely enterprise business: 95, 98, 98SE, ME, XP, MCE (Media Center), CE for “pocket devices”, Vista, 7, 8, and now 8.1. Some of these have had both Home and Pro/Business versions, and releases that supported tablet computers (notebooks that had a stylus-aware screen— not to be confused with the pure touch-sensitive ‘tablet’ devices of today). There was also a parallel development of Windows NT (3.1, 3.5, 4, 2000) and many Windows Server releases that aren’t aimed at end users, either business or home. In Windows XP the enterprise and consumer products merged back into a single version, with only feature variations between business and consumer.

With Windows 8, Microsoft decided to converge the user interface of all of the end-user operating systems, be they desktops, notebooks, true tablet devices, or smart phones, into what appears to be a

single environment. To do this they have essentially reduced things to two releases, based upon which processor platform is being used. For Intel-based devices (traditional desktops, notebooks) you have Windows 8 (and now 8.1), and for ARM processors, as found in smart phones and simpler tablets, you have Windows RT. The RT version supports “apps” downloadable from the Windows Store, plus an implementation of Microsoft Office that



works with the ARM instruction set. For those who want a tablet device that also supports legacy Windows applications (x86 code), there are the Microsoft Surface Pro and similar devices from other manufacturers, with an Intel chip instead of the low-power ARM processor of the Surface RT.

The major change in Windows 8 was the introduction of the “start screen”, which was clearly implemented to accommodate the needs of mobile devices which utilize a touch screen. Initially known as the “Metro” interface, at release time the name was changed to be simply the “Modern” interface. Since mobile devices frequently have only a touch screen interface available (OK, the Surface has a keyboard, but MS still wants you to use the touch screen as much as possible), the standard GUI with mouse and keyboard of previous Windows was essentially abandoned or hidden. For desktops and notebooks this was a somewhat jarring experience – the START button and easy to use shortcuts first introduced in Windows 95 had disappeared. Instead you had a “start screen” full of ‘tiles’, each of which represented an ‘app’. Various screen gestures and hot spots near the corners or edges of the screen could be used to access features and capabilities, including the legacy ‘applications’ previously available from the start menu or the old ‘desktop’ screen. While Windows 8 was reasonably well received by the mobile user community, corporate users found that there was no compelling reason to upgrade existing machines, as there was no benefit if you didn’t have a touch screen.

Further, knowledge workers running word processing, spreadsheets, etc. really had no reason to make use of a touch screen. Many corporations decided to order machines with Windows 7 rather than 8 and many consumer users followed suit.

Microsoft responded somewhat ambiguously (“We listen to the user community”), but declined to reveal their plans until the announcement of Windows 8.1, a free upgrade to Windows 8.

Many DACS members will remember Jay Ferron as very active in APCUG and to have previously appeared here doing introductions of many Microsoft product releases. At our next General Meeting, Jay will guide us through the Windows 8.1 environment’s operation and requirements, so that you may decide if you want to upgrade your current platform, or perhaps even make the leap to a totally new machine and environment.

DACS meetings are held at Danbury Hospital auditorium. (Go to www.dacs.org to find directions and parking info). Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for registration and casual networking. Meetings start at 7:00 p.m. with a Q&A period (Ask DACS), followed by announcements and a short break. The featured presentation begins at 8:00 p.m. 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.

BRUCE PRESTON is a longtime member of DACS and former president of West Mountain Systems, a database consulting firm. He is now enjoying retirement but still dabbles with a household full of computers and applications.

Membership has its Privileges!

Become a member and support DACS. Each member has access to the Community Forum, where they can post questions, the online newsletter 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, go to <http://www.dacs.org/aboutdacs/joining.htm>.

Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: February 2014

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

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

Meets 2nd Monday, 7 p.m. at DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Feb 10

Digital Imaging. All about digital cameras, retouching, and printing using various programs.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 648-9747 (thedigitalwiz@gmail.com).
Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Spring 2014

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: Feb 13

Jobs. Networking and jobs search

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

Go to DACS Community Forum (<http://forum.dacs.org> for job listings).

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

Contact: Dave Mawdsley, linuxsig@dacs.org

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

Next Meeting: Feb 19

Mobile Devices. Focuses on smartphones, tablets, and e-readers of all makes and models.

Contact: Richard Corzo and Jim Scheef (Mobilesig@dacs.org)

Meets 4th Monday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center

Next Meeting: Feb 24

PC Maintenance. Review of PC hardware and OpSys maintenance and use.

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

Go to DACS Community Forum (<http://forum.dacs.org>).

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@telemarrksys.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: Feb 18

SIG News & Events

Apple. In January I was able to demo the Apple TV (<http://www.apple.com/appletv>) in the Resource Center as follow-up to my presentation on the Apple ecosystem at the general meeting. This little box connects to your high-definition TV and home Wi-Fi network to give you access to a couple of dozen “channels” or apps, such as Netflix, Hulu Plus, ESPN, and YouTube, as well as your own iTunes content. With a few exceptions, this does not give you access to live TV but instead to prerecorded movies, TV shows, and short videos. The Trailers app will show movie trailers, and can find show times in local theaters or availability for rental or purchase from iTunes.

For music you can try the new free iTunes Radio service, where you can choose from a selection of iTunes-created stations or create your own from an artist you like. You can also stream music and video from any computer on your network that’s turned on and running iTunes. If your computer is not turned on, you can still listen to music you have purchased from iTunes (by streaming from iTunes in the Cloud) or, if you subscribe

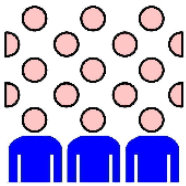
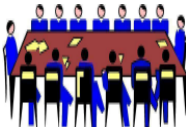






to the iTunes Match service (\$25 a year), music from any source that you have previously imported into iTunes on your computer. (When you subscribe, iTunes Match will upload to the cloud any of your music that it can’t match in its own library, so it’s accessible even when your computer is not.)

The killer feature with the Apple TV that puts it ahead of other similar media streaming boxes is AirPlay. You can play on your TV or Apple-TV-connected home theater receiver any audio or video that you can access on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch. Although it is quick and easy to maneuver through the on-screen menus with the minimalist remote that comes with the Apple TV, you will probably find it easier to locate and select content on your mobile Apple device. Swipe up on the screen of your iOS device to reveal the control center, and look for the AirPlay symbol (rectangle with a superimposed triangle). That allows you to select any nearby AirPlay-capable devices, such as the Apple TV or another company’s AirPlay-capable speakers, and play your selected content.

—Richard Corzo

February 2014

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																									
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9	 <p>Apple 7:00 PM Richard Corzo macsig@dacs.org</p>	11	12	 <p>Drupal 7:00 PM Jim Scheef 860-355-0034</p>	14	 <p>DACS.DOC Deadline</p>																																																																																																									
16	17	 <p>Web Design & DTP Annette van Ommeren 7:00 - 9:00 PM avanommeren@dacs.org</p>	 <p>Linux 7:30 - 9:30 PM Dave Mawdsley linuxsig@dacs.org</p>	20	21	22																																																																																																									
23	 <p>Mobile Devices 7:00 PM Jim Scheef & Richard Corzo mobilesig@dacs.org</p>	25	26	27	28																																																																																																										

XP: The End Is Near. What are you doing about it?

By Jim Schaefer

by Bruce Preston

AS OF APRIL 8TH, 2014, Microsoft will cease all support of the Windows XP operating system at the SP3 level, having discontinued support for SP2 some time ago. Microsoft is also discontinuing support for Office 2003. This means that there will no longer be “Critical Updates” published on “Patch Tuesday” (the 2nd Tuesday of each month) and any security vulnerabilities will go unchallenged by the operating system or Office applications. It is likely that the anti-virus vendors will also cease publishing updates for XP in the near future, just as they ceased support/updates for the Windows 9x, Me, and the NT family of enterprise desktop operating systems.

Windows XP was released to PC manufacturers in April 2001 and for retail in August 2001; it is thus more than 12 years old. In a press release dated January 15th, 2014, Microsoft says that 30% of operating Windows machines are still running XP.

A 2010 study of 22 million Windows computers found that 48% of them were infected by malware. Of these, 1.5 million had software that eavesdropped on financial transactions such as on-line banking. This study was conducted after Microsoft dropped support of Windows XP SP2. It is anticipated that there will be a similar surge of attacks once support for XP SP3 is dropped.

What should you do?

The answer depends upon how you use your Windows PC.

One course of action is to retire the physical computer and replace it with a machine running a current operating system. However this may not be economically feasible.

If you have other means of access to the internet you could continue using the XP machine with the Internet disabled. This may be done by changing the internet protocol stack, specifically by changing the DNS server settings from “Obtain automatically” to “Use the following DNS Servers” and **only** having the IP address of 127.0.0.1 which is also known as “localhost”. With this any request for an internet connection will fail as your XP machine won’t have

a way to convert a domain name address to an IP address.

[**Note:** *The machine may still participate in local networking, i.e. file and printer sharing – it just can’t see the internet.*]

If you do need internet access and your primary utilization is e-mail, word processing, spreadsheet etc., then the hardware may still be adequate for your needs but you will need a newer operating system. It is unlikely that you will get satisfactory performance if you try putting Windows 7 or 8 or 8.1 on an XP-era machine. The newer operating systems really require more RAM, a faster processor, and often a more capable video subsystem. Fortunately there are many Linux distributions that do not demand higher performance hardware. Perhaps the most popular general purpose Linux distribution is Ubuntu Desktop 12.04 LTS. LTS stands for Long Term Support; it will be supported until 2017. 13.04 has been released and is an interim release, 14.04 will be an LTS release and overlap 12.04’s life cycle. From the user’s point of view, migrating to the Ubuntu Desktop interface has an easy learning curve and it automatically includes LibreOffice, which is file format compatible with Microsoft Office. The user interface will be familiar to Office 2003 users, it does not have the ‘Ribbon’ introduced in Office 2007. LibreOffice provides word processing, spreadsheet, presentation and drawing capabilities. There is a huge library of application programs available for other purposes, too numerous to list here. Ubuntu installs the Firefox web browser, and you may do your e-mail either with a browser-based client (i.e. Firefox) or a mail client program such as Thunderbird, which provides much of Outlook’s functionality.

Linux distributions are free, as is LibreOffice. Most distributions consist of a “Live CD” (usually a DVD rather than a CD.) The “Live” designation means that you may boot from the CD and make use of the full operating system without installing it on your hard disk. Some actions such as booting and loading programs will be slower as the

optical drive is slower than a hard drive, but once a program is loaded it should be comparable to running from the hard disk. If you find that you like the Ubuntu environment, then boot from the CD again and select the Install option.

The installers do a great job of detecting hardware automatically and attaching the correct drivers. For example, it recognized my eBay no-name \$8 USB web camera with microphone, and it recognized and configured a USB 802.11n network adapter. I installed Skype and was operational with video just by clicking “Next” or “OK” several times. Once I gave it my Skype ID and password it loaded my contacts and I was in full operation.

Convert Your XP Machine to Ubuntu Workshop

On Saturday March 15th at 1:30PM, there will be a workshop at the DACS Resource Center in Danbury. Bruce Preston will lead the workshop, assisted by David Mawdsley, Jim Ritterbusch and Charlie Bovaird. The workshop will consist of

- a brief discussion of various system requirements, options and considerations
- a demonstration of running directly from the “Live CD”
- a demonstration of doing a full installation to an XP machine.

If you have a notebook computer running XP, bring it and try the run from a provided “Ubuntu 12.04 LTS Live CD”. Then if you wish convert it, you may do so while attending the workshop. It is probably impractical to lug a desktop computer, display, keyboard, and mouse to the Resource Center. We can not provide monitors, keyboards or mice. You are still welcome to come and may participate in the workshop as an observer.

Important Note: *If you are going to do the installation, it is highly recommended that before coming to the workshop you burn your data files to CD(s) or DVD(s) and/or save them to either an external hard drive or flash drive. It is important that you do not make use of a Windows software backup package to perform the backup unless you know that there is a corresponding package available for Linux. Saving as ZIP files is acceptable.*

It is expected that the workshop will last about two hours. While registration is not required, we do ask that you let us know that you are coming so that we may have enough Ubuntu 12.04 LTS Live CDs (DVDs) to distribute.

Home Entertainment

Windows Media Center Pictures, Videos and TV, too

by Phil Sorrentino

MICROSOFT GAVE US a gift when they included Media Center in Windows. Windows Media Center (WMC) is a media player (organize and show pictures, slideshows and videos) and a digital video recorder (view and record live TV). Pictures and videos are really no big deal. Windows Media Player, WinAmp and VLC all do a fine job. The real



gift is the ability to watch and record TV. It is possible to configure Media Center to handle up to 4 TV signals. Originally, WMC was a separate version of Windows XP (Windows XP Media Center Edition), but it was later included in Vista (Home Premium and Ultimate), and finally all versions of Windows 7 (except Starter). Unfortunately, it is not included in Windows 8, but is available for Windows 8 Pro as an add-on for \$9.99. (It was free for Windows 8 Pro early adopters up until January 31, 2013.)

WMC uses TV tuners to record and play back TV from a standard antenna, cable or satellite signal. Digital tuners support TV broadcasts in High Definition or Standard Definition. A TV tuner is a device you use to connect an analog or digital TV signal to your computer. TV tuners come in two basic model types: external TV tuners, which usually plug into a USB port on your computer (the only choice if you are using a laptop), and internal TV tuner cards, which you must install inside your computer. In order to watch and/or record TV using Media Center, you'll need to physically connect a TV signal to the TV tuner on your computer. This typically involves connecting one end of a coaxial cable to your tuner and the other end to your TV signal source (e.g. over-the-air antenna, cable TV jack in the wall, cable TV set-top box, or satellite TV set-top box).

WMC can record TV programs manually, on a One-Touch-Record basis, or it can schedule recordings using an included Program guide (that is customized to the lo-

cal TV broadcaster). Recordings can then be put onto a DVD or portable media player (given that there are no copy restrictions). While watching live TV, WMC buffers the program so that the user can rewind, fast-forward or pause the live show, allowing users to review a spectacular touch-down pass or simply skip the commercials.

The User Interface is a little different than what Windows users are used to. The menus are very large, making them suitable for viewing on a big screen TV from your most comfortable chair. With the addition of a Media Center Remote, the user can control the operation from his/her easy chair without having to go to the computer keyboard (a wireless keyboard also gives the desired result). As expected, the "Close", "Restore Down", and "Minimize" buttons are in the upper right of the display, and note that a "Back" button is a left facing arrow in the upper left side of the display. These buttons appear when the mouse is moved.

You can record a live (currently airing) TV show (the show is recorded from the moment you press the "Record" button). Obviously, if you're halfway through watching a show before you start recording, the first half won't be recorded. (Microsoft has not yet conquered time travel.) To start recording a show, Click the "Start" button, click "All Programs", and then click Windows Media Center.

On the Windows Media Center start screen, scroll to TV, and then click "Live TV". Move the mouse so that the playback controls appear, and then click "Record".

WMC provides a Guide that is customized to your own local provider and typically displays a schedule for the next 12 or 13 days. To schedule recordings using the Guide, scroll to TV and right-click the program that you want to record; then left-click "Record" to schedule the recording of that program. You can also search to find a TV show or movie that you want to record. On the WMC start screen, scroll to TV, and then click Search. Click the category that you want to search by (such as Title), and then follow the instructions to start the search. On the search results page, click the TV show that you want to record, and then click "Record" to schedule a recording of that program. In

order to record your favorite TV show every week, you can automate the process by scheduling the recording of an entire series. On the WMC start screen, scroll to TV, and then click Guide. Locate the TV series that you want to record, click it, and then click "Record Series".

Once you have recorded shows, they can easily be watched. From the WMC start screen, click TV and then click Recorded TV. This will display all the shows that have been recorded in order of "date-recorded", "title", or "original air date". This display is a horizontal scrolling list of thumbnails that represent each of the recorded shows. To move left or right, hover around the end of the list to illuminate the arrow for that direction, then click the arrow to move the list. Select a show to watch by clicking the thumbnail. This will display a summary of the show selected. To watch the show, click "Play", (or click "Delete" to remove the recorded show, or "cancel series" if you've changed your mind about the future recording of this show). When you click "Play", the show will start with playback controls in the lower right hand side of the show. These controls will disappear in time, but to get them back, just move the mouse. Click "Pause" to temporarily stop the program. Click "Play" to resume the show. Click "Rewind", to watch something again, or click "Fast Forward", to move ahead in the show. Click the "Volume Increase" button (the plus to the right of speaker) or the "Volume Decrease" button (the minus to the right of speaker) to increase or decrease the volume, or click the "Mute" button (the speaker) to turn the sound on or off. When you've finished watching the show, move the mouse, and then click "Stop".

WMC provides many additional features, many of which allow you more specific control of the recording process. You can set up Media Center to automatically record a specific channel at a specific time. And, you can set up Media Center to automatically record TV shows and movies based on keywords that are associated with a program such as actor's name, director's name, or even a word that appears in the title. (Then in the future, when a TV show or movie airs that matches keywords you specified, the program will automatically record.) But even without these extra features, WMC turns your computer into a very capable Digital Video Recorder that you can use to time-shift TV shows.

PHIL SORRENTINO is Past President, Sarasota PCUG, FL (www.spcug.org). He can be reached at philsorr@yahoo.com

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Ask DACS

January 2014

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 – *I have several email accounts set up in Microsoft Outlook. Is it possible to copy all of this configuration information from one copy of Outlook to another of the same version? Office 2003 actually provided a utility to backup and restore such configuration information, but newer versions do not. There is no procedure that is officially supported by Microsoft. A thorough search of the Registry finds none of the email account information.*

A – This was my own question, and it prompted much discussion. Several people suggested locations in the `C:\Users\\AppData` folder. There are three folders that contain configuration data: “LocalLow”, “Local” and “Roaming”. Outlook 2013 on Win8 places the email datafiles in `C:\Users\\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Outlook`, so it would seem logical for the Outlook configuration to be in there as well. But even adding an email account and then looking at the file dates failed to find this well-hidden configuration data. I did this using the Mail applet in Control Panel so Outlook itself was not running. This process created a new “.ost” data file where the mail will be stored when I run Outlook, but no other file in the Outlook appdata folder was changed. I've also searched on slipstick.com, an Outlook and Exchange support site, without success. This problem remains unresolved.

Q – *I heard that it may be possible to change how Outlook connects to an Exchange Server which may improve performance when downloading and synchronizing email messages. Is this true?*

A – The short answer is sometimes. Outlook versions prior to 2013 used RPC (remote procedure call) to

connect to an Exchange server. This works extremely well when both computers are on the same network. RPC is not a secure protocol and is blocked by firewalls, so in older Outlook versions (prior to 2003) a VPN (virtual private network) connection was required to allow a remote machine to securely retrieve email. As remote connections became a necessity, Outlook 2003 added a means to connect over HTTPS, allowing a secure connection (encrypted using SSL) over an untrusted network (the Internet) without the complexity of a VPN. In Outlook 2013 the HTTPS transport is now the default because more people are connecting over Wi-Fi in a business setting and the wireless connection may not always be secure. The easy cure is to always use the encrypted HTTPS to ensure privacy. In a local office, reverting to RPC may give a slight performance boost but the change will be very small. Network speed will be a much bigger factor in perceived performance. The setting is in the “More Settings...” dialog on the Connection tab.

Q – *I receive an email with attachments and when I send this message on to another person, the attachments are sometimes lost. Why is this?*

A – The standard behavior is to include attachments when forwarding but not in a reply or reply all. The logic here is that a reply is going back to the sender of the original message, and that person already has the attachment. If you want to see a history of the emails in a conversation, Outlook places your outgoing messages in the “Sent” folder. If you put all of the emails in a conversation (both sent and received)

in an Outlook folder, you can sort the messages by date and time to see the history of the discussion and this would include the attachments to each email message. A member added that newer Outlook versions offer an option to “Show as Conversations”. Checking this option (on the View tab in Outlook 2010), brings up a dialog to “Show messages in conversations” in all folders or in the current folder. Another member suggested the “People Pane” which normally displays below the Reading Pane. Further exploration of these features is left to the reader.

Q – *I just started using my new Windows 8.1 computer and I set up SkyDrive. How do I keep all my computers synchronized using SkyDrive?*

A – This is exactly what SkyDrive is designed to do. When you have set up SkyDrive on two or more computers using the same Microsoft account, all of the files within the SkyDrive folder will be copied to the SkyDrive server. SkyDrive is built in to Win8.1 and can be installed on Win8, Win7 and Vista. XP is not supported. You must log in to your Microsoft account for the synchronization to take place. There is a setting in SkyDrive setup to log in automatically each time you start Windows. Personally, I keep all of my current document files on SkyDrive (about 8GB of “stuff”). The Libraries feature of Win7 and Win8.x make it easy to create folders in SkyDrive for documents, photos, music, etc. If you are not sure what files are actually on your SkyDrive, open the SkyDrive website (skydrive.live.com) to view the files currently stored “in the cloud”. You can find the downloads and setup help information in the SkyDrive area of the Microsoft website (bit.ly/LDFrHd).

[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!]

Web Tools

Internet Alerts Can Keep You Informed

By Sandy Berger,

HOW WOULD YOU like to know every time your name is mentioned on the Web? Or when there is a breakthrough on a disease that you are following? Or when your favorite actor is starring in a new movie? This is all possible with automated Internet alerts. Read this to see how it works.

Internet alerts are available from many different Internet services. The Weather channel at www.weather.com has free alerts



Hear Ye . . . Hear Ye!

that will give you daily weather alerts as well as alerts for allergens like pollen and also alerts for severe weather. Other alerts will keep you informed of the weather on school days and give warnings for snow and rain. You can apply several customization options, such as the time of the alert and the severity that triggers the alert. You can get alerts sent by e-mail and/or text to a cell phone.

Many news stations also have alerts regarding news, sports, and weather. One of my local North Carolina stations, WRAL (www.wral.com) even has an app that uses GPS to alert you to severe weather no matter where you travel as long as you have your cell phone turned on. While most other alerts are free, WRAL charges \$8 a year for their GPS-based alerts. Check your local news stations for news alerts.

The granddaddy of all alerts, Google Alerts, is a very useful one that you should be aware of. This is one of Google's powerful tools that is completely free. You can use Google Alerts to keep track of anything on the Web. Just surf over to <http://www.google.com/alerts> and enter a search query. Then choose your options. You can control how often you get alerts (as it happens, once a day or once a week), the type of Web coverage that triggers an alert (news, blogs, video, discussions, books, or all of these), and you can also choose only the best results or all results. Enter your e-mail address and your alerts will start. You can change or remove an alert

at any time. Once you start using Google Alerts, you will be surprised at the results.

Most people start with creating an alert with their own name. My "Sandy Berger" alert tells me when any news article or blog mentions my name. Of course, it also gives me results for the other Sandy Berger. You know — that guy from the Clinton administration who stuffed documents from the National Archives into his pants. Unless you have a very unusual name, you can expect to get news of others with the same name. That's not all bad. In fact, it can be very interesting.

The Google Alerts can be wonderful if you are following the news about a certain item. For instance, they are wonderful if you are interested in following a certain disease, medical condition or treatment. You can use Google Alerts to follow any current event or any specific public figure, actor, or personality.

If you are a transplant and want to follow the news from your old hometown, this is a perfect way to do it. Just enter the name of your old city and state in the search terms. If you want to be more specific, you can just enter the zip code. This will give you results directly from your old neighborhood.

When you set up a Google Alert, you may want to limit the results to just the best results and once a day. If you let Google give you all the results as they happen, I can assure you that you will be inundated with email.

You are sure to find many different ways to use Google Alerts. In fact, it is good to play with the Alerts a little to get to just what you want. Like any Google search, you can enter as many search terms as you like to narrow the results. You can put names in quotes to get exact matches.

Be creative with your alerts. You can have Google search for coupons for your favorite restaurant. You can use it to follow a company whose stock you may be interested in purchasing. You can use it to follow an item that you want to purchase.

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.

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 3

° Andy suggested an overview of the "app development" process. Discussion followed as to how it might be made interesting to general populace.

1. Opening/filled positions

We are looking for an "evangelist" or someone to promote DACS on Facebook beyond what we are doing now (just posting our meeting announcements). We asked for volunteers at the general meeting and Tom Carruthers expressed some interest at the end of the meeting. Richard Corzo will follow up with Tom.

2. Bob Green has become very frustrated with trying to use CiviCRM to maintain our membership data and then generating his sign-in sheets for members and visitors to the general meeting. Jim has been having trouble integrating Drupal and CiviCRM. We discussed using Google DOCS or Zoho. A quick check of Zoho indicates that it may support our needs so that we can get out of maintaining a home-brew Drupal and CiviCRM installation.

3. Dave Green has received a letter from our insurance carrier Zurich North America notifying us that the company providing us with small business insurance, Maryland Casualty Company will be replaced with a new one, Foremost Insurance Company. Bert offered to look into options. Jim reported that he had investigated with an agency where he has a contact, and our carrier at that time was the only one offering coverage appropriate to our needs. Is there anything further we need to do? No, other than getting the address updated.

4. Bill DeRosa gave us some feedback on our Facebook page. Richard C. needs to talk to Tom as reported above before we go further with this.

5. RC Phone circuit - Dick was going to look into alternatives for the phone line, which also supports the buzz-in, DSL, and the security system. In the meantime Richard C. called the phone company and we found we can drop the monthly long distance service charge for a savings of \$10 a month.

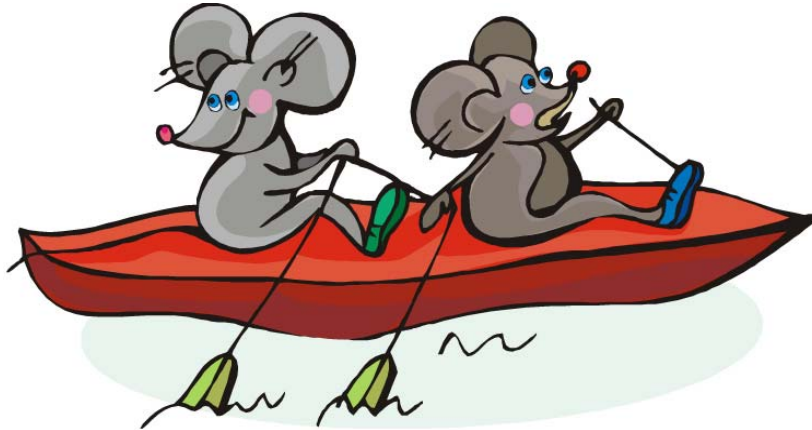
6. Richard Corzo confirmed the hospital auditorium for the 2014 general meetings.

New Business

No new business.

Adjourned 9:20

Bruce Preston



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



Voice
for
Joanie

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

Future Events:

February

Jay Ferron-
Windows 8.1

March

TBA
Special Event: XP
to Linux Workshop

April

TBA

May

John Patrick
State of the Internet