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Computer Organization, Inc.

# DATA BUS

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## SEMCO MEETINGS

Sunday,  
October 10, 2004

Board Meeting	12:00pm
General Meeting	1:30pm
SIG-IBM Meeting	1:45pm
Social Period	3:15pm
IBM Novice Group	3:45pm
SIG-IBM Intermediate	3:45pm

### DEALS COLUMN

from the DealsGuy  
Greater Orlando Computer UG  
by Bob "The Cheap skate" Click



Central Florida experienced Hurricane Charlie, as you may know. Charlie was originally predicted to cross just north of us, and we would only get the edge. Don't we wish; the worst of it ended up passing directly over us because it unexpectedly turned ashore further south than originally predicted. Our wind gust expectations would change to in excess of 80 mph instead of 50 mph. Actual wind gusts of 105 mph were recorded at the airport. Since we have no interior rooms, we sat in the living room waiting it out. Many times our patio doors would start rattling, and we saw the glass actually warp in and out, along with the same action for our front windows and their sliders, but surprisingly, no breakage. Then the whole house would shudder, and I hoped the place would hold together. If the roof had come off and we got sucked out, we would have no choice but to wish each other a good trip; and I forgot to keep my camera handy so I could take pictures as I left.

In the end though, our house suffered little damage. There's only one

large tree that fell near our house, while many other houses had more. One house on our block had two large trees fall on it, but the damage wasn't bad. Charlie blew some soffit from under the eaves on one side of the house and blew one screen out of our back porch. While most homes on our block suffered the loss of many, if not all, of their shingles, we only had one broken shingle. Only one house on our block was unhurt, but others had considerable roof and tree damage. We had no power for five days, but many areas went without power for much longer. At this writing some are still without power.

When we were trying to find a restaurant (very scarce here for several days), it was an experience, because with the power out in much of the eastern Orlando area, most traffic lights were inoperative, and few people were courteous at intersections. Gas was scarce, but we had filled up before the storm. A station with gas and power to pump it usually had very, very long lines. It was impossible to find ice in stores, although a few places were set up, not near us, where volunteers passed out free ice, drinking water and Deet insect repellent. Grocery stores open for business were scarce, and if you found one, it was without milk and other necessities. Also, no lamp oil, wicks, batteries or plain telephones. I needed a new wick.

Our street had many downed tree branches, but many streets were even impassible for a few days until people and crews cleared them out. Some areas had no water, and where sewer lift stations had no power, there were problems with sewer backups, although not in our area. Our subdivision has underground utilities, but our wellbeing

depends on the feeder lines coming in on poles. I saw pictures of streets where an entire line of wires and poles were broken off, laying on the street. Progress Energy said that much of the grid had to be rebuilt.

There were several sad stories about people who died more or less as a result of the storm. I was unaware that a storm could affect people's pacemakers, which was the problem for one, as well as his lack of oxygen. Trimming trees is also a dangerous job, which resulted in a couple of deaths. It was an experience I hope not to have again for a while. However, many neighborhoods certainly helped each other out with food when somebody had power and others didn't. Some also shared generators. The paper and TV were full of stories both sad and good for days. I'm glad we didn't live on the Gulf side of the state where the storm came ashore with much more power and devastation.

### **Costly Celebration!**

My wife and I worked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Home Depot stores <<http://www.homedepot.com>>. It was held at five different elegant hotels and the Orange County Convention Center. We worked at the Gaylord Palms <<http://www.gaylordhotels.com/gaylordpalms/>>. The name of the game was party, and that is what nearly 6,000 attendees did. A large well-decorated hall with pool tables, other games, and a bar was set up, and Universal Studios Park was rented for one day. Attendees were flown in from all over, even from China, and all at Home Depot's expense. I'm told the cost for this celebration was over \$25 million. One manager told me they would make that back in a short time. Perhaps, but I wonder if the shareholders approve of that expense!

We also worked two days at the same hotel for the Sybase <<http://www.sybase.com>> (TechWave 2004) show that took place only a couple days after hurricane Charlie. In spite of Charlie, the attendance was about 1,300, including 300 employees, which surprised management under the circumstances. They promoted PowerBuilder 10, as well as their other products, and put on a great production.

While working that show, we certainly noticed that many Progress Energy workers, along with many utility workers that came in from out of state, were headquartered at the Gaylord Palms Resort. Their parking lot had many utility trucks, and there was an inventory of poles, power transformers, wire, and other important parts. The hotel prepared some great meals for those hard working folks; however, I'm not sure who paid for that and the rooms. Power line damage was very severe in that area.

### **Correction**

Last month one of my items was PopFile, a product to filter spam. I misunderstood Paul Witheridge's comments and said it was also an antivirus, which was incorrect. What he had meant was that with training, it could filter out spam with a virus in it, which means it might substitute for an antivirus. Sorry for that misconception on my part.

### **Fundraiser**

This vendor might help raise funds for your treasury. They call themselves "The \$2.95 Guys" and can offer you T-shirts at good prices. They can package or compress them in all sorts of unique shapes. The quantity you need to order to get that \$2.95 price is rather high, and I'm not sure how competitive

their prices are with lower quantities. However, it won't hurt to take a look, if you are looking for shirts. For the compressed shirt packaging, the price is more. The sample they sent me was a Hanes, which I consider a quality name. They are at <<http://www.295guys.com>>, or call them at 1-800-536-5959. The person I originally talked to was Tom Hardy, but to my surprise, he has not returned my calls for a confirmation after three days of trying, so good luck if you order. I can't change this item because the column has already been sent to my "early editors." No special deal for the column, but I thought of it as a possible fundraiser.

#### **Another Fundraiser**

This might be something a bit unique, but when I heard about it I thought it would help make money for an individual, or a group. The name is CafePress and their URL is <<http://www.cafepress.com>>. You can make money with absolutely no investment. All you have to do is come up with your own individual design of some sort, or a logo that you like. They offer a number of products to carry your design or logo, which can even be a statement or question. I counted at least 70 products offered on their Web site to carry your creation. A friend designed a shirt with "Ask me where I bought this!" that he is selling.

After making your choice, set your price, which should be over their base price in order to make money for you. They handle all the ordering, sales, and shipping, then send you a check when you have accumulated enough. Hopefully, their accounting is accurate. Not a bad deal, considering you have nothing invested except your time and creation. Be careful you don't infringe

on something copyrighted, especially phrases and sayings.

*That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month, if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheap skate) Click <[bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>> for interesting articles from user group newsletters. I also posted some interesting Web site pages for your viewing. They contain new product announcements that I received over a period of time in 2003. More will be forthcoming when I get the ambition.*

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## **Windows XP Service Pack 2 Install it Or Not? By Ira Wilsker**

### **Why You Should**

Microsoft has recently released the much ballyhooed major upgrade to Windows XP, referred to as Service Pack 2. Currently available as a huge download, possibly in excess of 200 MB, or available on CD, this update does much to enhance the security of Windows XP. While there are several necessary improvements to XP that should be installed by all XP users, there may also be a slew of problems that occur on some computers after the upgrade.

Several new features are added to XP with Service Pack 2. Among them

is a new “Security Center,” intended to enhance PC security, that lists the status of the firewall, antivirus software, and Windows updates. If a problem is detected, the Security Center will provide recommendations to resolve the problems. The Security Center will appear as an icon in the system tray near the clock, and will change colors as updates become available, or other security problems are identified. Since many users still have computers vulnerable to unauthorized network access or internet intruders, the integral XP firewall, upgraded with SP2, will be turned on by default. While this is generally a good idea, it may both be unnecessary if a third party firewall is installed and loaded, and may also be a source of problems in terms of software compatibility, where it may block some features of some popular programs and games. With a firewall implemented, even the weak one included in XP, the computer will have some protection from worms such as Sasser, Blaster, and Nimda that have wreaked havoc in the past. It should be noted here that most third party firewalls, such as Zone Alarm, Outpost, EZArmor, and those from McAfee and Symantec provide significantly more protection from intruders than XP’s integral firewall. If these third party firewalls are installed and running, the XP firewall becomes uselessly redundant.

Many spyware programs and other nefarious utilities may take control of Internet Explorer, and be used for illicit purposes, changing the startup page, stealing personal information, and other such problems. SP2 adds a utility to “Manage Add-ons” that allows the user to protect Internet Explorer, and control what add-ons are running while using

IE, with the simplicity of an “Enable” and “Disable” button.

Another system enhancement, which has already been met with mixed emotions, is the feature that by default turns off the viewing of images in Outlook Express. The reason for this is that many worms and viruses that may be transmitted by e-mail are now disguised as an image file, which could run as the pseudo-image is viewed in Outlook Express. The viewing of images in OE can also utilize a controversial item known as “web bugs,” which may possibly be used to compile personal information. Web bugs will now be blocked by default. HTML viewing will also be turned off by default in order to make it more difficult for illicit content to be executed in OE, but can be selectively turned on to view selected e-mails. OE will also have a new “Attachments Manager,” which will help control unsafe attachments, such as those falsely labeled as a “txt” or graphics file, which are really executable files typically containing a worm, virus, or Trojan.

While Microsoft has for years urged that Windows users turn on the auto-update feature, such that critical patches will be automatically downloaded and installed, users will now be forced to choose “on” or “off” when installing the service pack.

Some “invisible” security features that will be installed with SP2 are intended to harden the computer from some forms of Trojans that historically have taken control of the “communications protocols” used by windows in a networking or online environment. This substantially closes the “buffer-overflow” vulnerability that

many Trojans have utilized to jeopardize countless computers.

Internet Explorer will also have some security enhancements, but still retain its “version 6” moniker. One obvious change in IE will be the new “information bar” that will appear near the top of the window. This new bar will show items that have been blocked, such as scripts, automated downloads, and blocked pop-ups. The bar will also display a variety of security warnings if the software determines that the level of IE security is inadequate for the pages being viewed. Another security improvement is the additional information provided by IE if a Web site attempts to load an ActiveX program, enabling the user to better determine if the ActiveX is a legitimate utility, or something being loaded that may be dangerous. IE will also be hardened against “phishing,” where illicit websites commonly used for identity theft conceal their true internet address, but instead make the address appear to be a legitimate bank, retailer, or financial service company. Another useful feature will make it more difficult for those script files, often pornographic, that infinitely open new browser windows that can not be easily stopped or closed without shutting down the computer.

### **Problems and Concerns**

Even though there will be heavy media promotion encouraging all XP users to install SP2 immediately, there still are some concerns about SP2, and some already identified problems and conflicts.

Microsoft recently released a lengthy list of programs that will not properly run after SP2 is installed. One bulletin, “Microsoft Knowledge Base Article – 875357” explains that the new

firewall can create some problems with some software, and explains how to enable those programs. “Microsoft Knowledge Base Article – 842242” lists dozens of programs, many of which are popular, that may not run properly with SP2 installed, citing possible conflicts with the new SP2 firewall. These programs include multi-player games played online, and files exchanged through instant messaging programs such as AOL Instant Messenger, ICQ, Microsoft Messenger, or Yahoo Messenger. Also many FTP clients, typically used to upload and download files from an internet server, will have difficulties or conflicts with the Microsoft firewall. Other problems listed, where formerly functioning programs may cease to function, include multimedia streaming software (such as streaming audio and video; RealPlayer was explicitly mentioned in one published article), and the new mail notification functions of some e-mail programs. According to Microsoft, some of these programs may function if the new SP2 firewall is appropriately configured when a dialog box appears saying that the program has been blocked. According to Microsoft, “First, in the Security Alert dialog box, click Unblock this program, and then Click OK.”

Some of the better known and popular programs listed by Microsoft in bulletin 842242 that may have problems after SP2 is installed include:

Symantec AntiVirus Corporate Edition versions 8.0 and 9.0; Smarterterm Office 10 and Smarterterm 11; Cute FTP 5.0 XP; AutoCAD versions 2000, 2002, and 2004; Backup Exec 9.1; Xerox Windows Scanner and Camera Wizard; McAfee NetShield 4.5; and Computer Associates eTrust 7.0.

Some popular multi-player games that may not function properly after SP2 is installed include:

Chess Advantage III; Lego Chess; Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2; Atari Unreal Tournament 2003; Atari Unreal Tournament Game of the Year Edition; Midnight Outlaw; Illegal Street Drag 1.0; Atari Scrabble 3; and Star Trek StarFleet Command III 1.0.

According to Microsoft, the publishers of these titles are aware of the problems and may either provide a patch or upgrade to enable these programs to run on computers which have had SP2 installed. Symantec, the publisher of Norton AntiVirus, has already posted a patch on its Web site, and is encouraging its users to download and install the patch prior to the installation of SP2. Other antivirus programs, not listed on the Microsoft list, that recently posted SP2 compatibility patches include F-Secure (F-Prot), and Trend Micro (PCcillin). Zone Alarm, one of the most popular firewalls, recently posted an upgrade on its website that is compatible with SP2 and which will properly interact with the new SP2 "Security Center."

There have also been several published reports that some (many?) computers will fail to boot after SP2 is installed, despite the notice that the upgrade was successful. Other reports have stated that the upgrade was more difficult to install than expected, and recommended downloading individual patches from the Microsoft website [windowsupdate.microsoft.com](http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com) rather than installing the complete package. For these reasons, as well as many other reasons, it is absolutely imperative that a full backup of the hard drive must be created prior to the installation of SP2.

With a full backup, if the upgrade to SP2 fails, the computer can be restored to its pre-SP2 functionality.

In other cases, some computers cannot connect to a VPN (Virtual Private Network) due to a "loopback" problem acknowledged by Microsoft in Knowledge Base article 884020, where a "hot fix" is also provided.

Despite its recent release, a variety of sources have already identified real and potential security flaws in computers patched with SP2. With millions of lines of code, it is nearly impossible to have a perfectly secure operating system, and as often happens, some security holes are newly discovered, and as one hole is closed, other vulnerabilities appear. Immediately after the release of SP2, the first new vulnerabilities were identified by security specialists and hackers. One of the first is referred to as a "drag and drop" vulnerability. The vulnerability in Internet Explorer allows a malevolent Web site to insert a program into the user's startup folder, where the program would load and run the next time the computer is booted.

Some users may have problems loading some legitimate Web sites in the newly patched Internet Explorer due to its enhanced default security settings. These new default settings restrict ActiveX, reduce popup windows (many popup windows are legitimate and not unwanted advertisements), restrict downloaded files, and may stop Microsoft Java Virtual Machine (MSJVM) from executing. There is not much users can do to resolve these problems, other than lowering the security settings in IE (not recommended) or switching to an alternative browser such as the excellent

Firefox or Opera browsers. To help the webmasters modify their web pages to be compatible with the SP2 upgrades to IE, Microsoft has posted a guide on its website, “How to Make Your Web Site Work with Windows XP Service Pack 2.”

Despite all of the potential problems, in order to have the security enhancements, I will install SP2 when I get a copy on CD—but first I will make a full backup of my system, just in case. Murphy is alive and well, and his laws apply now even more than before.

### **Spyware/Adware and XP SP2**

Microsoft recently published a warning informing Windows XP users that they need to be sure that there is no spyware on their computers before installing the much ballyhooed XP Service Pack 2 on their computers.

Microsoft Group Product Manager Barry Goff warned that some spyware could cause computers to freeze up upon installation of the update. Spyware is software installed on the computer, often unknown to the user, by Web sites, other software programs, viruses, Trojans, or other means. Spyware can gather and disseminate personal information about you and your computer usage to persons unknown for a variety of purposes, ranging from targeted advertising and popups to identity theft and financial crimes.

Contrary to popular belief, most spyware, and its sister product commonly referred to as “adware” (software unknowingly installed that generates popup ads, or hijacks the user’s browser and redirects it to affiliated client websites) are not detected nor stopped by most popular antivirus programs, and are free to infiltrate most computers. Since many of the widespread spyware programs

utilize legitimate Windows functions and ports (points of access) in the same way that legitimate programs access those ports, much of the spyware breezes through most firewalls.

Fortunately for the computing public, there are several good programs available that can detect and kill almost all types of spyware. Some of these programs are available for free download or available for purchase either online or from local retailers, including electronics, office supply, mass merchandising, and discount stores.

Microsoft’s Jerry Honeycutt, in one of his columns available at Microsoft’s security site, <[www.microsoft.com/security](http://www.microsoft.com/security)>, recommends Lavasoft’s Ad-Aware. Available in both “free for noncommercial use” and paid commercial versions, Ad-Aware is available for download at <[www.lavasoftusa.com](http://www.lavasoftusa.com)>. Arguably the most widely used anti-spyware program, Ad-Aware claims that over 65 million copies have been downloaded in the past year, and that there are currently over 80 million users worldwide. Lavasoft recently released the free version of Ad-Aware SE, an update of its previous Ad-Aware version 6. Excellent at detecting and deleting a variety of spyware, Ad-Aware is a good choice for almost all users. Lavasoft announced that new versions of Norman Antivirus, a popular European antivirus program, are now integrating Ad-Aware into their antivirus products, combining both important functions. The Ad-Aware program includes a utility that will check for updates, which are typically issued every few days. These updates insure that Ad-Aware can detect and neutralize the newest spyware in circulation.

Another free spyware catcher, and often top-rated by many computer publications, is “Spybot Search and Destroy,” available for download at [www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html](http://www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html)>. The latest version of Spybot includes an “Immunize” function that prevents many common forms of spyware and adware from infecting the computer, and a “Tea Timer” that protects the computer’s registry (a complex data file that tracks what is on the computer) from unauthorized access by spyware. Spybot is totally free, but solicits donations from users on its Web site. An update feature allows Spybot to download and install any new “detections,” as Spybot calls its update files. As with all spyware detectors, it is necessary to check for updates prior to running, in order to be sure that recently created spyware can be detected and deleted.

There are also several excellent commercial spyware utilities available. One of the most popular is PestPatrol, possibly the most comprehensive anti-spyware product. Available in a variety of versions from home to corporate systems, PestPatrol is available for purchase from many of the specialty computer stores, as well as from its Web site at [www.pestpatrol.com](http://www.pestpatrol.com)>. A free online “Pest Scan” is available on the Pest Patrol Web site, but this will only detect, but not remove, spyware. Recently the publisher of PestPatrol was bought out by Computer Associates, one of the major computer security companies. They will include PestPatrol in some of their future security suites.

Spy Sweeper, from Webroot Software, [www.webroot.com](http://www.webroot.com)>, recently received the coveted “PC

Magazine Editors’ Choice Award.” It is available for purchase either as a download or in its trademarked lime green boxes from local office supply and electronics stores. Spy Sweeper is an excellent choice as a comprehensive utility to detect and kill the spyware and adware that is likely infesting your computer, unless you have recently cleaned it of spyware. As do the other major anti-spyware products, Spy Sweeper provides updates to keep up with the newer varieties of spyware being created. A free trial version of Spy Sweeper is available for download from Webroot’s Web site.

Aluria’s Spyware Eliminator is another popular and well ranked commercial spyware detecting and removal product, recommended in articles in the New York Times and by Tech TV. Available in both home and office versions, Spyware Eliminator is available for purchase and download from its Web site at [www.aluriasoftware.com](http://www.aluriasoftware.com)>, as well as some retailers. Aluria’s Spyware Eliminator was selected by AOL to protect its users from spyware, and claims that its products now protect 35 million end-users from spyware. A free spyware scan is available on the Aluria Web site.

I fully concur with Microsoft’s warning about spyware, but emphasize that it is not just those that are upgrading to XP SP2 that need to protect from spyware. All computer users need that protection.

***Ira Wilsker is the APCUG Representative & Bylaws Chair for the Golden Triangle PC Club, a columnist for the Examiner in Beaumont, Texas, and has two radio shows. He can be reached at [iwilsker@ih2000.net](mailto:iwilsker@ih2000.net).***

## XP SP2 Issues

### By Siles Bazerman

It has become obvious that the rumor of Microsoft allowing any computer running Windows XP to install SP2 were just that, rumors. Microsoft has decided that it is more important to prevent upgrades to “pirated” versions of XP than to prevent the spread of viruses, Trojans, and spyware. Not only will the new Windows update v5 not recognize these CD keys, but it also blocks out a number of perfectly legitimately purchased CD keys, or more accurately Product Identification keys. Most of these are on Dell computers. This assumes that the original pirated Windows XP was a Dell volume license edition, and presumably the other CD keys came from the same source.

However, it did my heart good to see that one of Usenet’s self-proclaimed experts, whose answer to almost any Windows XP problem involving patches or upgrades is to accuse the poster of having a pirated copy of Windows XP and telling them to buy a legitimate copy, had the exact problem on one of his three computers.

Microsoft is working on the solution, but I am sure that the hackers out there will have the solution first.

Microsoft announced that the full released-to-manufacture (RTM or Gold) product would be available in August. The download will be installable over SP2 RC2 according to sources within Microsoft. If you do want to uninstall RC2, be sure that the Show Upgrades box is checked in Add or Remove Programs.

I have already heard comments about waiting six months after RTM to install SP2, but most of these have come

from people running sans SP1. SP2 is mostly about security, but also includes the following Revised sections: Data execution prevention; DCOM Security Enhancements; Filter for Add or Remove Programs; Setup; Download; Attachment; and Authenticode enhancements; Internet Explorer File Download Prompt; Outlook Express E-mail Attachment Prompt; Add-on Install Prompt; Group Policy Internet Explorer Settings; Script repositioning of Internet Explorer windows; Zone Evaluation Blocks.

Of course, it still will not protect users who insist on downloading everything they see offered for free, or insist on clicking yes on pop-ups without reading. Build an idiot-proof program and nature will build a better idiot.

Are there any problems with this service pack? Yes, a few, but most seem to be system or individual program-specific. Outside of the PID problem, the biggest complaint is that third party software is not using the built-in hooks in this pack. Most software developers will not release patches for this until RTM is firm. They fear last minute changes will negate all their work, so they wait. Remember, this happened with Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows 98SE, and Windows ME.

*Siles Bazerman is a member of the Orange County IBM PC Users’ Group. Contact him at <[siles@orcopug.org](mailto:siles@orcopug.org)>.*

*There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.*

# Backing Up

## By Gene Barlow

Backing up your hard drive is the most important thing you should do to protect your computer system. Yet, I am constantly surprised to find that as few as 10% of my smart user group audiences have a good backup procedure in place. Hard drive crashes are quite common, and it is very painful to rebuild a computer system after a hard drive crash. Anti-virus software may offer some protection, but fast moving viruses can get through this protection and crash your hard drive. It may take you days or weeks to recover from a hard drive failure, and your important data files are gone forever. So, protect your computer by backing up your hard drive on a regular basis and avoid the pain of a hard drive failure.

For the past few years I have recommended a sophisticated backup process that would adequately backup all aspects of your computer system. Using a file backup utility, I suggested you back up your important data files at the end of each day. Then, to protect your full system, I suggested you should backup your entire hard drive using a full system backup utility each month.

I also suggested that you separate out your data files into a different partition on your hard drive to further protect these important files. This approach is outlined in an article that I wrote titled, "Backing Up your Hard Drive." You can read it on my web site at <[www.ugr.com/nl0102.html](http://www.ugr.com/nl0102.html)>.

While many of you followed my suggestions on backing up your hard drive, many of you are still not doing anything to protect your hard drive from failure. Perhaps my backup approach

was too complex to understand or too difficult to follow. Fortunately for you, technology has made some dramatic advances in the past couple of years, and now there is a better and easier way of doing your backups. This article will show you the best way to back up your hard drive and tell you what hardware and software products to use to follow this approach. It is so easy that everybody should start to back up their hard drive. All you have to know is the secret of how to do it, and your computer can be safe and secure.

### **Backup Hardware**

The first step to having a successful backup procedure is choosing the right backup hardware to use to save your backups to. For years, users have been burning CDs for their backups. This approach was full of frustrations and problems. No wonder folks hated to do backups. First, it seems that creating a backup and then burning it to many CDs could overtax many computer systems. If anything went wrong, the entire backup process could cancel, leaving you with several burnt CDs, but not the complete backup you needed. Worst than that, the backup might appear to be complete, but the CDs were corrupt and would not restore properly. Thank goodness, CDs have been replaced with much more reliable backup media.

A couple of years ago, external hard drives entered the computer marketplace in large numbers. Today, an external hard drive is the ideal backup medium to use. Instead of sitting by your computer for hours to feed it another blank CD, all you need to do is to attach your external hard drive and forget about it. Your backup will be done automatically without your being

involved. No more drudgery of making backups to CDs.

Why are external hard drives the ideal backup media? First, they are large enough to back up your main hard drive on one device. You do not need to back up to multiple CDs, so the whole process can be done without your involvement. Second, backing up to an external hard drive is many times faster than burning CDs. An external hard drive is almost as fast as the internal hard drives on your computer. Third, external hard drives are much more reliable at saving your important files. CDs can easily become scratched or flawed and not protect your important backups. Finally, external hard drives are relatively inexpensive to buy and use. You may actually save money over the cost of burning a lot of CDs.

What should you look for when buying an external hard drive for backup purposes? External hard drives come in two basic flavors—USB2 and FireWire. One is just as fast as the other, and both will do an excellent job of backing up your main hard drive. You will need to attach the external hard drive to your computer using either a USB2 port or a FireWire port on your computer. Most computers today come with a USB port on them, so these are the more popular type of external hard drives. Just be sure your computer doesn't have one of the older USB1 ports on it instead of the faster USB2 ports. If you have an older USB1 port, you can still attach and run your USB2 external hard drive, but it will run at the slower USB1 speed. In this situation, you can add a USB2 port to your computer for a small additional price.

The external hard drives come in a couple of sizes—miniature and standard

drives. The miniature external hard drives have a 2.5 inch laptop computer hard drive inside a small case. These drives are small enough to fit in your pocket and are very light to carry. They do have a couple of disadvantages to them that you should be aware of. First, they only hold 20GB, 40GB, or 80GB of backup files. This may not be big enough to back up your 300GB main hard drive. Second, you will pay quite a bit for the small size of these miniature drives. The 20GB drives cost about \$160, the 40GB drives are about \$200, and the 80GB drives are over \$300. You end up paying a lot for the small size.

If you don't mind having a slightly larger external hard drive, you can get one with much more capacity, and for less money. These larger external hard drives contain standard 3.5 inch hard drives inside the case and are available in capacities starting at about 80GB and go up to 300GB and larger. An 80GB or 120GB external hard drive is an excellent size for most backup needs. If you watch for sales on these drives, you may find an 80GB hard drive for under \$100. I have seen them as low as \$69. The 120GB external hard drives will be more expensive, but can be found for as low as \$99. So, check the ads in your local paper, and you may find a great deal on external USB2 hard drives.

### **Backup Software**

The second part of having the perfect backup approach is using the right backup software product. There are two basic types of backup software available—file backup utilities and full system image backup utilities. Older file backup utilities would backup individual files. These utilities were slow, since they had to use the operating system to find and retrieve each file separately. We

have hundreds of thousands of files on our hard drives, and so working on individual files, one at a time, is very slow.

A better backup utility will back up your entire hard drive (a partition at a time) and does this at the hard drive sector level. These types of backup utilities create backup images of your hard drive that you can save to your external hard drive. To conserve space, these images are compressed to about half their normal size, which permits you to keep many backup images on your external hard drive. So, the first thing to look for in your backup software is the ability to create compressed images of your entire hard drive.

While an image backup utility is a major step in the right direction, it is not the ultimate solution. With full backup images, you still end up backing up your entire hard drive each time, even if only a small portion of the drive has changed since the last backup. So, the images contain a lot of unchanged files that do not need to be backed up again. So, the secret is to find an image backup utility that can do incremental backup images. With the incremental backup image approach, only the changed sectors on a hard drive are backed up and not those parts of the hard drive that have not changed since the last backup. Incremental backup images are much smaller in size and complete much quicker than a full backup image.

A little calculation at this point may help you understand another reason why the incremental backup image feature is so important. Let's say you have a 120GB main hard drive that is a third full. That means it has about 40GB of files on it. A full condensed image of

this hard drive would be about 20GB in size (with a compression of about 50%). That means that you could store four separate full backup images on an 80GB external hard drive. Using the incremental backup image approach, you may be able to store 30 or 40 separate backups on the same 80GB external hard drive. Because you can keep more incremental images on your external hard drive, you can make your backups more frequently than if you were limited to only four full backups.

Hence, your backups would be more current with the incremental image approach versus the full backup approach. This means fewer lost files since the last backup. This is of major importance when considering a backup approach.

So, the secret to choosing the best backup software is to look for a full system backup utility that can do incremental backup images. There have been a couple of expensive enterprise software products that offer the incremental backup image feature (for example, Symantec's V2i Protector Desktop Edition v2), but there is only one consumer backup utility that I am aware of that offers the incremental backup image feature and that is the Acronis True Image 8.0 product. This excellent backup utility was awarded PC Magazine's Editors Choice award as the best backup imaging utility on the market. PC World calls True Image the leader in the field of incremental backup images. Using this excellent backup utility with an external hard drive will provide you with the most perfect backup approach available today.

### **How to Backup your Hard Drive**

To complete this article, let me suggest how you would do your backups using

an external hard drive and an incremental backup image utility. I would suggest that you set up a regular schedule to make your backup images. For the average user, I would make a full backup of your hard drive at the beginning of the month and then an incremental backup image at the end of each week that follows. So, you would have one full backup image and 3-4 much smaller incremental backup images each month. At the beginning of the next month, make another full backup image and follow this again with weekly incremental images. Save all of these images on your external hard drive and don't delete any of the older images until you start to run out of space on the drive. If you have a very active computer system, you could make a full backup at the beginning of the week and incremental backup images at the end of each day. Most users will not need to do the backups this frequently, but some may want the extra protection of more frequent backups. Either way, the approach is the same, just the frequency is changed. With True Image 8.0 you can set up the software to make these backups automatically. So, set it up and forget it. Your backups will occur as scheduled.

If at any time, you need to restore one or a few of your files, you can simply copy these files out of your compressed image files using a facility in True Image. If you need to restore your full hard drive, you can do this also, even if the main hard drive is empty and not bootable. True Image will boot from a special CD to permit you to quickly restore the entire hard drive from the image files. So, you can quickly restore a few files or your entire hard drive using Acronis True Image 8.0.

Finally, you may be wondering why I recommend keeping all of your full and incremental backup images on your external hard drive and not deleting them after you make a new image. You need to understand that the full image you make at the beginning of the month and the incremental images that follow it each week go together in a set. True Image needs all of them to restore your hard drive to the way it was when you made the last incremental image.

During the restore, it will combine the beginning full image with each of the incremental images to recreate the hard drive. It does this very quickly whether you are retrieving a few individual files from the image set or recreating the entire hard drive. Now, let's suppose that a stealth virus got on your hard drive and was captured in the last incremental image you made. You certainly do not want to restore your hard drive with this virus on it. So, instead, you indicate to True Image to restore your hard drive from the incremental image you made just before the image containing the stealth virus. That restores your system to a point in the past when it was still free of the virus.

Over time, you will build up a collection of backup images on your external hard drive that will let you see what files were on the drive at any point of time in the past few months. If you deleted a file some months ago and now want to get it back, you can indicate to True Image to look in a backup image before you deleted the file, and you can copy it back to your hard drive from the image files. Having a history of all of the files that have been on your hard drive is a very powerful and useful function. Only with an incremental backup image software product could

you afford to keep all of this history on a modest external hard drive. Acronis True Image 8.0 with an external hard drive is the perfect way to backup your main hard drive.

### **To Order Acronis True Image 8.0**

Acronis is offering this excellent product to user group members and their friends at a special discount price of just \$34. To take advantage of this special price, you need to go to <http://www.usergroupstore.com> and click on any of the yellow “Buy Now” buttons. This will take you to the secure web order form where you can order your copy of Acronis True Image 8.0 at the user group discount. Complete the form including the special order code of UGNL0804 and submit the form. Your product will be processed in a few hours and will be delivered in 2-3 days.

*If you have any questions about this article, or if you would like to know more about how to backup your hard drive, please contact me at [barlow@ugr.com](mailto:barlow@ugr.com).*

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## **Troubleshooting in “Safe Mode” By Jim Jeup**

### **When/Why You Need a Safe Mode Boot**

Windows is versatile and powerful, but there are times when it can be frustrating. Frustration is particularly evident when installing software or drivers for new hardware. Without warning, the computer may crash or

lock up. Troubleshooting the issues, or uninstalling the software through Safe Mode will allow Windows to work properly again.

Safe Mode is a special way for Windows to load itself in a somewhat normal way when there is a system critical problem. Safe Mode allows you to troubleshoot Windows and try to determine what is causing the problem. Once you have corrected the problem, reboot, and Windows will attempt to load normally.

### **What Happens in Safe Mode?**

Several things happen when Windows boots in Safe Mode:

Most device drivers are not loaded. A device driver is the software that Windows uses to interact with a piece of hardware, such as a printer or scanner.

Instead of the normal graphics device driver, Safe Mode uses standard VGA graphics mode. This mode is supported by all Windows compatible video cards.

The Windows desktop loads up compatible colors and resolution with the words Safe Mode in each corner.

### **If Your Computer Boots to Safe Mode on its Own**

First, try to determine what has changed on your system that could have caused the normal Windows boot to fail. If you have added new hardware, go to the Control Panel and uninstall the software drivers (if installed) through Add and Remove Programs for that device. Shut down the computer and remove the hardware.

Second, attempt a boot up. If Windows boots properly, you can be reasonably certain that there was a conflict with the device. Try to resolve it by contacting the vendor of the hardware/software.

Use this same method if you have recently loaded a new game or application. Go to the Control Panel, click Add/Remove Programs and remove the software.

Reboot, and hopefully you will get a normal Windows boot.

If the problem continues, consider contacting a professional to troubleshoot the issue.

**Here is How to Boot into Safe Mode**  
Depending on your Windows version, here are the steps you follow to boot into Safe Mode.

**Windows 98/ME:**

As the computer boots, tap the F8 key continuously (once per half second or so) until you get to the Windows98/ME Startup Menu.

If done properly you will get into the Startup Menu. In this menu choose Option 3 by pressing the 3 key, or use the Down Arrow key until Safe Mode is highlighted; then press Enter.

**Windows 2000/XP:**

As the computer boots tap the F8 key continuously (once per half second or so) until you get to the Windows 2000/XP Windows Advanced Options Menu.

Use your arrow keys to move to Safe Mode and press your Enter key.

Trouble Getting 2000/XP Safe Mode? If after several attempts you are unable to get into Safe Mode, wait until the computer is booting to Windows and turn off your computer. When the computer is turned on the next time Windows should notice that the computer did not successfully boot and give you the Safe Mode screen.

**Ending Safe Mode**

From Windows Safe Mode click Start/Shutdown and restart the computer. The computer should boot normally.

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**Beginners Internet  
By Aubrey Stewart  
President of the Tri-City  
Computer Club, California  
Internet Service Providers**

**Free**

Juno <[juno.com](http://juno.com)>, NetZero , HotMail, Yahoo <[yahoo.com](http://yahoo.com)>, ZDNet Mail <[zdnetmail.com](http://zdnetmail.com)>; <[pocketmail.com](http://pocketmail.com)>, <[e-mail.com](mailto:e-mail.com)>

**Paid**

AOL, Compuserve, NC Times, NetHere, AT&T WorldNet, NetZero, Juno, Earthlink, A-1 Internet Service Provider, TNS, CWNNet Hosting, SBCGlobal.

**Internet Access**

**Phone Line**

The theoretical maximum speed is 56,000 bits per second or 56 Kbps (small b is for bits, and large B is for Bytes; eight bits equal 1 Byte, and one text character equals 1 Byte). The practical speed attained is actually around 30 to 44 Kbps with a slow speed of around 20 to 24 Kbps during peak usage times (i.e. when the kids get home from school). A connection Icon shows up in your Task Bar area when the computer is online. Placing the cursor over this Icon opens a Box that shows the number of bytes sent and received plus the current speed. Costs can vary widely from \$6.95 a month to \$40.00+ a month.

### **DSL—Digital Subscriber Line**

The uploading speed is usually 128 Kbps; downloading speed is usually 1500 Kbps (1.5 Mbps). Speeds will vary according to peak usage times. A DSL line allows the computer to use the phone line, but does not tie it up while the computer is online. CAUTION—You need to remember that your computer is ALWAYS connected online as soon as it is powered on. That is, of course, as long as the DSL modem is powered on. Turning it off will close the online connection. A Firewall is a must for DSL. Typical cost for DSL can be around \$50 to \$65 a month. Currently SBC Yahoo DSL has a special offer for a one year commitment for \$26.95 a month when you do online signup. Beware—they charge \$200.00 if you do an early cancellation. After the first year the monthly charge becomes \$49.95.

### **Cable**

The uploading speed is usually 256 Kbps, and downloading speed is usually around 3000 Kbps (3.0 Mbps). Again, speeds will vary according to peak usage times. This service is provided by the local cable TV companies. Special pricing usually applies when you subscribe to more than just the Internet access, and typical costs can be around \$29.95 a month up to around \$45 a month. SAVE yourself rental fees of usually \$10.00 a month on the cable modem by purchasing one of your own. Check pricing at [www.pricewatch.com](http://www.pricewatch.com) or go to [www.pricegrabber.com](http://www.pricegrabber.com).

### **Satellite**

Dish TV Network, Direct TV. Usually uses phone line access for uploading and satellite downloading. Check your local telephone book for the number of local providers that also do installation

and compare prices. Speed of downloading is usually very fast, but phone line uploading is quite slow. Pricing varies widely. This is also an always on connection.

### **Wireless**

There are many wireless Internet providers all around the U.S. You must be located within their Radio Signal Footprint for service. Uploading and downloading speeds at various rates are available with pricing determined by the speed. Usually the maximum will be around 1.5 Mbps. This is also an always on connection. Check the local telephone pages for the number of a local provider.

### **World Wide Web**

The Internet consists of millions of computers inter-connected around the world. There are a number of Internet browsers available for viewing the Web with Windows PC operating systems. Popular ones include Internet Explorer, Netscape, Opera, and Mozilla. The purpose of a browser is to convert the HTML language of Web site programming into the graphical presentation you see and interact with on your monitor. Surfing the Web means you are going from one Web site location to another, or several others. The Homepage is the initial screen page you see at a Web site. Your computer has a History folder where a listing of all Web sites you ever visited will be stored (unless you set your History folder to delete the Web site information after a certain number of days). There is also a Favorites (or Bookmarks) folder where you can store Web site addresses for future visits; it provides a quick return process. Every computer connected to the Internet has an IP address. Sometimes it will remain

the same number, and then there are ISPs that issue a different IP address number every time you get on the Internet. This is why a Firewall is an absolute must with always on access.

### **Cookies**

These are a tools used by some Web sites to store information on your hard drive without you knowing it. They are used to keep track of the Web pages that you visit on a particular Web site. With this information, the owners of the Web site can then target you for specific forms of marketing. Many people consider them an invasion of their privacy. You have the choice to set your Security Options to accept, disable, or require your approval before a cookie can be stored on your computer. Your Web Browser will usually offer this configuration control. Refusal to accept the cookies will, however, more than likely keep you from being able to view many of the Web site locations.

### **Web Utility Programs**

There are several types of utility programs that are designed to clean out some of the folders in your computer when they become stuffed with various items of information from the Web sites you have visited. A Cookie removal program is a very popular utility program. There also is a folder called Temporary Internet Files on your computer. Many Web sites will put some form of data there as well, again, without your knowledge. Not to worry, there are utility programs that will clean out this area also.

### **Web Site Addresses**

There are two types of addresses for every Web site. One is called the URL (an acronym for Universal Resource Locator), such as <www.sears.com>,

and the other is the associated IP address (Internet Protocol), such as 255.36.245.15. The address box of a Web browser will find the Web site using either of these addressing formats.

### **Network Security**

Never (repeat) NEVER give out your Social Security Number over the Internet. It is just too risky to do this on a form at a Web site or in an e-mail message you might send. Theft of your identity could very well result from this mistake. It has actually happened to many people.

### **Keep The Bad Guys Out**

A Firewall program (software) will allow you to completely shut off access into your computer over the Internet. What access do I speak of? Did you know that your computer has exactly 65,535 revolving doorways that are just waiting for someone to slip in without your awareness? This is how a computer Hacker can gain access into your computer, and you will usually not know that it is happening. These revolving doorways are referred to as Ports. Anytime your computer is active on the Internet, it is sitting with all of these pathways available to anyone who knows how to utilize the entry method. There are lists available that include all of these Ports and show their common (legal) usage and their abnormal (illegal) usage by Hackers. These "Back Door" entries will allow someone to gain full access to any and all data you have stored anywhere on your hard drive. That includes every folder and file you have on the drive. Ever order anything on the Web and type out a credit card number for payment? That is something a Hacker can track down and view whenever he wants to. Full remote control of your

computer is even a possibility for the smarter Hackers lurking on the Internet. They can also track your every keystroke, entry of passwords, or anything else you type in. You should use extreme care when you put personal data into the PC, and then have that computer connected to the Internet.

Ever hear the old saying “Two Heads are Better Than One?” Well, with today’s lowered costs of buying a very capable basic computer, it just might well be a consideration to have two computers for your home computing experiences. Keep one for personal data and document preparations, etc, and never use it to access the Internet.

### **Free Firewall**

Software is available on the Internet: [www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com). Stop the hackers from invading your computer looking for personal information.

### **Infestations**

A computer infestation is any unwanted program that is transmitted to a computer without the knowledge of the user or owner, and is designed to do varying degrees of damage to data and software. There are four main forms of infestations that exist today: Viruses, Trojan Horses, Worms, and Logic Bombs.

### **Viruses**

Viruses are the most common of the four. A virus is a program written to potentially do harm to someone’s computer. They normally do not do physical damage to the computer. Usually the worst scenario is that the Boot Sector of the hard disk will be corrupted by the virus, and the computer will be unable to be used at all. A new hard drive may have to be installed to replace the defective one.

It is of utmost importance that all users of a computer install and maintain anti-virus software. These are designed to discover and remove viruses.

There are several forms of viruses: Boot Sector, File, Multipartite, Polymorphic, Encrypting, and Stealth. Anti-virus software attempts to detect a known virus by looking for their distinguishing pattern that is called the Virus Signature. Virtually every day, more new viruses are uploaded to the Internet. The anti-virus companies find them and dissect them to discover their signature. Then they publish the update to their pattern file on their Web site, and this is available for the owners of that anti-virus software to download into their anti-virus folder. Then the updated program can be on full alert to detect any of the newest viruses running around the Internet. So, every day do your update! These anti-virus companies usually include one full year of updates with the initial sale. Be sure and do a renewal of your subscription for updates.

The main route for a virus into a computer is with an e-mail attachment. Another method is on a Floppy Disk someone gives you that you then open from the diskette drive onto your Hard Disk. Always do a virus scan of all disks you place into your floppy drive before installing or opening anything onto the Hard Drive.

### **Virus Scanning**

Virus Scanning software takes a look at all of the e-mail coming into and going out of your computer, to see if it detects a virus. Often e-mail viruses hide inside an attachment. Never open an e-mail attachment until the anti-virus program has inspected the e-mail; and even so, it is still not a good idea to

open any attachments. They could have a brand new virus that has not yet been included in the latest updated Pattern File you installed earlier in the day.

People can send out an e-mail with a virus in their attachment and never know they sent it. It is very, very risky to open any e-mail attachments.

Set a pattern for yourself where you do the update check for your anti-virus program first thing every morning. Then go ahead and download your e-mail.

### **Real Or Hoax**

To find out if a virus notice you just received is real or a hoax, there are Web sites you can check to become properly informed. Here are just a few:  
<[www.hoaxbusters.ciac.org](http://www.hoaxbusters.ciac.org)>  
<[www.hoaxinfo.com](http://www.hoaxinfo.com)>  
<[www.hoaxkill.com](http://www.hoaxkill.com)>  
<[www.viruslist.com](http://www.viruslist.com)>  
<[www.vmyths.com](http://www.vmyths.com)>

### **Online Free Virus Scanners**

There are several anti-virus software companies that provide free online virus scanning. Here are just a few:

<[www.housecall.antivirus.com](http://www.housecall.antivirus.com)>  
(Trend Micro)  
<[www.ravantivirus.com.scan](http://www.ravantivirus.com.scan)>  
(RAV Antivirus)  
<[www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com)> (AVG Antivirus)  
<[www.pandasoftware.com/activescan](http://www.pandasoftware.com/activescan)>  
(Panda Software)

*If you have any questions or inquiries, please contact me at my Web site:<[www.ez4ucomputerclasses.com](http://www.ez4ucomputerclasses.com)>.*

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## **CAN YOU BUY SOFTWARE AT ROCK BOTTOM PRICES ONLINE?**

**By Linda Gonse  
Editor of Nibbles & Bits  
Orange County IBM PC  
Users' Group, California**

Probably you, and millions of others, have received e-mail offers with subject lines similar to these:

“Unbeatable software deals.”

“Amazing prices on software.”

“Take 95% discounts on Adobe, Microsoft, Corel Products.”

“Receive discount ticket on Corel, Adobe, Microsoft software.”

“Get software at rock bottom prices.”

What’s more you may have seriously considered purchasing the programs described in the e-mails at prices that you’ve only seen in your dreams. Here’s an example in one message:

“Looking for inexpensive high-quality software? We might have just what you need. Windows XP Professional 2002 at \$50; Adobe Photoshop 7.9 at \$60; Microsoft Office XP Professional 2002 at \$60; Corel Draw Graphics Suite 11 at \$60.”

These amazing prices are not legitimate. They represent the work of software pirates who are trolling for customers, or illegal sales. Do not take the offers at face value. Stop and ask yourself how it is possible for programs that sell for hundred of dollars to be discounted to a fraction of their usual retail cost? Certainly, these products are not even selling for these unbelievable prices at wholesale, much less at retail. And, if the companies did

offer programs at these prices, you would be reading or hearing about it in your newspaper, on television, or radio, or in your user group.

A Washington Post article said, "The U.S. software industry loses at least \$13 billion a year to piracy, according to the Business Software Alliance (BSA) estimates. This group, which represents some of the world's largest software companies, including Microsoft, Adobe, and Autodesk, does not know how much money the industry has really lost to online piracy."

Still, user confusion about piracy prevails. Microsoft, attempting to educate software buyers, has posted a document that points out warning signs of counterfeit or illegal software. (Unfortunately, most of the warning signs apply to software already purchased.)

Microsoft's warning signs of counterfeit or illegal software:

1. Prices that are "too good to be true."

2. Products that are missing key elements such as user manuals, Certificates of Authenticity, or end-user license agreements. Pirates often sell only the CD-ROM and jewel case without retail packaging. You should look for the Certificate of Authenticity on the retail box. On all new machines, with the release of Windows 2000, the COA label is found on the tower of the computer. If you acquire a new computer, and it doesn't have the COA label on the tower, you should question whether the software loaded on the machine is genuine.

3. Software or components that appear to be of poor quality including:

Back-up disks or CD-ROMs with handwritten labels.

Poor imitations of security features such as an edge-to-edge hologram etched into Windows 2000 and Office 2000 (first service release) CDs, or poor imitations of the hologram found on the hub of the Windows 98 CD that shows the word "genuine" when tilted in the light.

Low quality print, letters that aren't evenly spaced, etc.

4. Products marked with phrases that do not describe the transaction, including:

"For distribution with a new PC only."

"CD for licensed customers only."

"Not for retail or OEM distribution."

"Academic price—not for use in a commercial environment."

Note that counterfeiters often use these types of phrases to fool consumers into believing that they are getting a genuine product that was over-stocked or otherwise deserves to be discounted.

Consumers dealing with software vendors over the Internet should also beware of:

- a. Companies or individuals unwilling to verify their identity or full business name or provide a physical street address and telephone number for follow-up after the transaction has occurred.

- b. Online distributors unwilling or unable to provide adequate or satisfactory descriptions of their return, service, or warranty policies.

- c. Online distributors that offer unusual inventory explanations (e.g., special deals with the software publisher, liquidated inventories, or acquisition through bankruptcy sales).

- d. Vendors offering software products at prices and in packaging inconsistent with offerings through legitimate retail channels.

e. For Microsoft software, software components being sold solely as a CD housed in a jewel case or as a loose or individual end-user license agreement, because these items are not distributed in this form through legitimate channels.

Save your money and your time when you receive “rock bottom” software offers. There are no unbelievable “deals” out there on name-brand software.

Let this be your guiding mantra: If it sounds too good to be true—on this you can rely—just walk away and say no, you can’t buy!

*Linda Gonse can be contacted at <[editor@orcopug.org](mailto:editor@orcopug.org)> , or visit her user group’s Web site at <<http://www.orcopug.org>>*

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## Online and In Person

### By Billy Mabray

### Oklahoma City PC Users Group

In the early days of the Internet, a common fear was that people would spend too much time online, creating a world of isolated loners. Computer users would stop spending time in the real world, preferring to type instead of talk. While this may be true for some people, many others are finding the Web has enhanced their social life, not hurt it. The proliferation of e-mail, instant

messaging, and chat rooms are evidence that people are connecting more now than ever before.

What about real life social interaction? People still like to meet in person, and there are many Web-based services to help people do just that. These services are blurring the lines between virtual and real communities. People are finding friends online and getting together in real life. Others are using the Internet to keep in touch with their real-life acquaintances. Internet users are finding they can connect with other people better than they ever have before.

A common example of virtual communities creating real-life friendships is PC user groups. People typically learn about their local group through that group’s Web site. Much of the group’s communication is done online. For these groups, though, the real point of using the Internet is to facilitate real-world get-togethers. Meetings, presentations, and study groups bring people together who have similar interests, but would have otherwise not found each other. Web sites and mailing lists allow for efficient communication, while group activities create opportunities for learning new things and meeting new people.

[Meetup.com](http://Meetup.com) offers a similar service, but for a broader range of topics. Meetup.com arranges monthly get-togethers in cities around the world on a vast array of topics. For example, the third Tuesday of every month is International Poker Meetup Day. If you are interested in meeting poker players in your area, visit the Web site, type in your zip code, and join the poker meetup nearest you. Members vote on where to meet each month, and they RSVP

through the Web site. If enough people RSVP, the get-together will take place. Meetup.com offers many features for communicating with other members, planning agendas, and more. There are literally thousands of topics, with new ones being added all the time, so you are bound to find something you are interested in.

For those who are interested in communicating and spending time with friends they already have, there are online services to help with that too. Yahoo Groups, for example, lets you set up your own personal portal. A Yahoo Group includes a mailing list, photo gallery, polls, online chat, and more. You can set up a group for your family and invite all your relatives to join. Then the whole family can upload photos, plan the next reunion, or talk about what's been going on in their lives. Similarly, sites like [Classmates.com](http://Classmates.com), or [Reunion.com](http://Reunion.com), allow old classmates and military personnel to reconnect with each other. These services are a great way for people who don't get to see each other very often to stay in touch.

Along the same lines is a wave of new services known as social networking applications. There has been an explosion of these sites in the past year: Friendster, LinkedIn, Orkut. The idea here is to map relationships—someone invites you to join, and you in turn invite all your other friends to join. The Web site shows you people who are directly connected to you (friends), as well as those who are connected to you through other people (friends of friends). You can then use the service to keep in touch with your friends, and to meet new people through friends you already have.

So, are these virtual or real communities? The line is blurring, and the distinction between the two will most likely disappear in a few years. Technology continues to improve the way we interact. Rather than turning us into loners, the Internet is helping us to make new friends, and to keep in touch with old ones.

*Billy Mabray and his wife, Angela, own Smart Goat, a local software development and Web design business. They are members of the OKCPCUG. Comments or questions on the article are welcome and can be addressed to: <[billy@smartgoat.com](mailto:billy@smartgoat.com)>.*

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## **Don't Be a Victim of Health Scare Stories**

### **By Alicia King Padgett**

Health scare artists are utilizing the Internet as a medium for terrorizing the public, and unfortunately many adults are taking the stories seriously. These tall tales are often written citing evidence and research that sounds legitimate. Frequently an e-mail is sent to you from a reliable friend who had received it from another acquaintance who had “personal knowledge or personal experience” with the alleged dangerous item. The health scare messages are always the same—

whatever it is will make you sick or even cause death.

If you try to research accurate health information about the topic sent, you may literally become caught in the Web, where health hoaxes and urban medical myths run rampant. Many of these Web sites appear to have valid researched data.

Before you decide to believe or, worse, forward e-mail with serious health claims, do a little checking. Start on the Web at <[www.urbanlegends.com](http://www.urbanlegends.com)> or <[www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)> that catalogue the more persistent rumors. These two sites also detail persistent legends on other topics in addition to health scare stories.

Then go to reliable health sites, like: <[www.mayohealth.org](http://www.mayohealth.org)> for general health,

<[www.medhelp.org](http://www.medhelp.org)> especially good for cardiology,

<[www.oncolink.org](http://www.oncolink.org)> for cancer,

<[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)> for cancer,

<[www.navigator.tufts.edu](http://www.navigator.tufts.edu)> for nutrition,

<[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)> for latest updates on food/drugs as well as extensive archives.

So keep yourself informed and don't become one of the individuals caught in a web of confusion by believing the stories and passing them on to others.

Many of us have been victims of health-related frauds, myths, and fallacies. We have to make many decisions about our health and care, and want to make them well informed. The following site will keep you up-to-date on the latest findings on health care frauds:

Quack Watch is an informative site that deals with such issues like growth hormone scams, coral calcium, and acupuncture. It has a section on allergies

and alternative medicine. You might want to start with "Tips for Navigating our Web Sites." In the "Quackery" section you will find the following sections: Seven Warning Signs of Bogus Science, Ten Ways to Avoid Being Quacked, Signs of a "Quacky" Web site.

Always seek a second opinion, but please also be sure to peruse <<http://www.quackwatch.org>>

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## Computers Expanding The Use of Robots

### By Jim Hinwood Monterey Bay Users Group

So many articles I've seen lately have been about robotics—it's the newest hot topic. Last month's Technology Review and this month's Wired magazine have articles on robotics. When I see the Roomba vacuuming a house automatically on TV it reminds me of The Jetsons cartoon series where the home of the future is all automated and housework is a thing of the past. Many of the cartoons I remember as a kid were about automated houses that went crazy and started to attack the cat or the dog; its robots would come out and start sweeping or vacuuming at the slightest indication of dirt. As computers become more powerful, who

knows what timesaving devices may be invented?

In the Technology Review article, the author makes a prediction that robotics will take off the way computers took off ten years ago. The more powerful computers we have today will be the brains for this new class of servants. These robots may not look like the anthropomorphic types we see in movies and TV. Many may just be simple-looking, box-shaped machines (like the Roomba) with one specific job. But some will certainly be more complex with a multitude of functions and a human-like shape. Honda has recently been advertising a robot that is complex and can do many things.

Robots have been used in manufacturing for quite a while now. One of the reasons we Americans fell behind the Japanese in the auto industry is because they had the largest number of automobile plant robots in the world. Part of the future mechanization of our manufacturing plants will be heavily dependent on robots. The computing power of the latest CPU chips is in the trillions of operations per second. In ten years we will no doubt have plenty of chip-powered intelligence to drive robots to unprecedented capabilities.

Isaac Asimov wrote *I, Robot* in the 1950s, and there is a current film with the same name. With these stories always comes the fear of artificial intelligence and whether it may someday be able to take control from humans.

This is a recurrent theme in everything from *2001: A Space Odyssey* with the computer Hal, to the current *I, Robot*. This fear of our inventions taking over may not be as important as how we feel about the egos of those who use the technology.

I recently read about some robotic legs which could give the wearer the ability to carry a much larger load in battle, similar to a pair of bionic legs from *The Six-Million Dollar Man* TV show. How long will it be before robots fight it out as seen in the movie *The Terminator*? There are probably many battlefield applications for robots and many are already in the making.

The real problem is not the artificial intelligence but the human intelligence behind it, directing robots to do good or evil. I hope that, like the computer, robots will become powerful tools for the benefit of all mankind.

My first thought after reading many of these articles is that this would be a great time to invest in this fledgling science. In the movie *Frequency*, Dennis Quaid plays a character who goes back in time to change his past. While he is there he mentions one word to his friend. When he gets back to the present, he runs into this friend who remembered the word and is now rich and has the word, Yahoo, on the license plate of his Mercedes. How many of us would like to know what the next big investment is going to be?

Maybe in the future, one of us will be driving that Mercedes around with "robots" written on our license plate!

**Jim Hinwood can be reached at [<ehinwood@msn.com>](mailto:ehinwood@msn.com) or at his user group [<http://www.mbug.org>](http://www.mbug.org)**

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# Computer Rodents

## By Tom Zinneman

Can you remember the days when we didn't have a mouse sitting beside the keyboard, back when DOS was the primary operating system for the PC user? Then, along came Windows, with its point-and-click system, and suddenly the mouse became a standard accessory on home and office computers.

Like its namesake, the computer mouse has proliferated. There are one-, two-, three-, and five-button models. Some use a light beam rather than a ball; some have a scroll wheel; and some are wireless, working off radio frequencies. There are even models that vibrate, providing tactile feedback.

Let's review a little history, basic mouse technology, and some features of the latest models.

The mouse is an input device used to move the pointer (cursor) on your monitor's screen. It is the most popular of the four major pointing devices: mouse, trackball, pointing stick, and touch pad. It was invented by Douglas Engelbart of the Stanford Research Center in 1963 and used by Xerox in the 1970s. It was called a mouse because it resembled one, with the cord being its tail.

The mouse uses a combination of hardware and software to produce and control the movement of the cursor on the monitor's screen. A software device driver generates the cursor and controls its position. As the mouse is moved around, hardware signals are generated and transmitted to the device driver, which moves the cursor in a similar manner. By positioning the cursor over a graphic symbol on the screen and activating one of the buttons on the

mouse, one can select (click or double-click) and manipulate (drag) options in the application program instead of using the keyboard.

The most common type of mouse is the mechanical type. It has a rubber ball on its underside that can roll in all directions. The ball is nudged up against a pair of perpendicular roller bars that move when the ball moves. The roller bars generate positive or negative pulses, depending on the direction of travel. These pulses are transmitted to the computer's mouse driver software, where the signals are converted to cursor position on the screen. Mouse movement as little as 1/400<sup>th</sup> of an inch can be detected.

In the optical mouse, the old-fashioned mouse ball has been replaced with an optical sensor that tracks mouse movement. The optical sensor is sealed to keep out dirt and lint that can cause the traditional mouse to skip or jam. Early versions of the optical mouse required a special mat with a grid so that the optical mechanism had a fixed frame of reference. However, modern versions require no special pad; motion can be detected on hundreds of surfaces, including wood, plastic, or even your pant leg.

A recent addition to the mouse is the scrolling wheel. This is a small wheel that has been inserted between the left and right mouse buttons. Turning the wheel with your finger causes programs, such as web browsers, to scroll up and down. Pressing the wheel down may also provide access to other functions, depending on what the manufacturer has programmed into the driver.

If you do not like having your mouse tethered to a cable, you can use

a cordless (“wireless”) mouse. This mouse has two components, the mouse itself (without a tail) and a radio receiver. The receiver has the cord and is attached to the computer. The receiver can be located somewhere out of the way. The mouse, either mechanical or optical, can be used normally without the nuisance of a cable. The mouse signals are transmitted via a radio frequency to the receiver, where they are relayed to the computer by cable. I’ve been using a cordless mouse for several months and have been quite pleased with it. One disadvantage is that a pair of batteries is needed to power the mouse.

One of the latest additions to the mouse world is the vibrating mouse. A small motor spins inside the mouse, varying speed and duration in response to a stimulus. Some models are programmed to vibrate when the cursor moves over icons, menus, hyperlinks, and bookmarks. Other models vibrate in response to PC-generated sounds.

Four types of mouse interfaces are common: serial, PS/2, USB, and bus mice. The first three types are straightforward. The mouse cable is terminated with a serial connector, PS/2 connector, or a USB connector that plugs into the appropriate port on the computer. In those cases where one of the above ports is not available, one can use a bus mouse. This type of mouse uses a stand-alone controller board that is inserted into one of the computer’s expansion slots. The mouse cable then plugs into a connector on the board.

There is a little-known feature of Windows (95, 98, Me, and XP), called MouseKeys, that allows one to use the numeric keypad to move the cursor around the screen, click, double-click,

and drag. This feature is useful if you’re caught without a mouse. Go to Control Panel and double-click on the Accessibility icon and select the Mouse tab. You can enable or disable MouseKeys by checking or clearing the check box. Use the eight outer keys of the numeric keypad to move the cursor. To left click, press the 5 key. Pressing the minus key puts you in the right click mode; use the 5 key again. To switch back to the left click, use the slash key. To drag, press the Insert key at the bottom of the keypad. To release it, press the slash key.

A number of companies have Web sites that provide descriptive information on their line of mouse products, as well as other pointing devices. These include IBM Corp <[www.pc.ibm.com/us/accessories/access](http://www.pc.ibm.com/us/accessories/access)>, Kensington Corp <[www.kensington.com](http://www.kensington.com)>, Logitech Corp <[www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)>, and Microsoft Corp <[www.microsoft.com/products/hardware/mouse](http://www.microsoft.com/products/hardware/mouse)>.

*Tom Zinneman is a member of Charlotte County Computer Group in Port Chatlotte, FL. If you have any questions or comments, please send them to <[tzinneman@home.com](mailto:tzinneman@home.com)>.*

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## **The Music Wars By Wayne Steen**

The music industry is at war with itself and its fans. Who ever thought that a rock and roll band would sue its own fans? Talk about the ultimate in corporate greed. The music industry is full of corporate greed.

However, fear not; help is on the way. Steve Jobs of Apple, Bill Gates of Microsoft, and Wal-Mart are coming to our rescue. I feel better already.

Apple has already introduced iTunes and the iPod. Soon, Microsoft and Wal-Mart will come out with their own online music services.

Roxio has brought Napster back from the dead. Napster was once the largest illegal file-sharing service on the Internet. Roxio has now brought it back as a good file-sharing service that pays the record companies and artists for their music.

Real Networks has their own online music service, and Music Match has their own service. My head is spinning round, round, round.

### **Apple**

Steve Jobs and Apple are the first ones out of the gate in the online music services race. However, remember back in the 1980s when Apple was the top dog in the computer box wars? They eventually lost out to Bill Gates. Will history repeat itself, or has Steve learned from his past mistakes?

iTunes is currently the world's largest online music services company. They have recently added the muscle of over 25,000,000 AOL customers to their arsenal. iTunes works on both Apple and Windows computers, but your PC must have Windows 2000 or Windows XP in order to use iTunes.

The download is simple and without a hassle. All you have to do is go to <http://www.apple.com> and click on the iTunes link. Then you enter your e-mail address and download the iTunes software.

iTunes does not charge a monthly fee that all the other online music services charge. However, you can only listen to a 30-second clip from the song that you are interested in. To listen to the whole song you must buy the song for 99 cents.

You can buy as many songs as you want through the Apple Music store. You will have to enter your credit card with Apple music store in order to download music from iTunes.

You can burn songs onto an unlimited number of CDs for your personal use. You can listen to your songs on an unlimited number of iPods. (I will talk about iPods in a minute.) You can play your songs on up to three Macintosh computers or Windows PCs.

You can also set up an account for your children. Kids now have a legal way to download their favorite songs with music allowance accounts. You set up the account using your credit card and then set up a monthly allotment of how many songs your kids can buy. Once they reach the monthly limit (and they will reach that monthly limit), they cannot download any more songs.

Another nice new feature from iTunes is that you can now purchase audio books. At the time of this writing, Harry Potter books were not available from iTunes.

### **Napster**

Napster is a monthly service in which you pay \$9.95 a month for downloading songs. You can download as many songs as you want to your computer. However, if you want to burn the songs to a CD or digital device such as the Dell Music Jukebox, then you must pay 99 cents a song.

### **Real Networks and Music Match**

These services also use the Napster model. I like having the ability to download as many songs as I like (or how many songs my hard drive will handle) without having to pay 99 cents per song.

On the other hand, if you want to burn the songs to a CD or a portable

digital device, then the Apple model may be more to your liking.

### **Players**

iTunes will only burn to CDs and Apple's own iPod. The iPod is a 15 GB device that sells for \$299 and will carry almost 7,000 songs. Let me see, 7,000 times 99 cents equals about \$7,000. This is a very good moneymaker for Apple.

The Dell Digital Jukebox Music Player is very similar to the Apple iPod and costs \$249.00. The math is the same, about \$7,000 for 7,000 songs.

The problem is that iPod and Dell do not play nice with each other. If you use iTunes, then you are going to want to buy the iPod. If you use Real Network, Music Match, or Napster then you are going to want to use the Dell Digital Jukebox Music Player.

### **A Problem**

The biggest problem is that not all famous artists are available for download with one online service provider. Therefore, you may only be able to listen to a favorite artist of yours on iTunes, and another favorite artist of yours may only be available on Napster.

Once again, the consumer is on the short end of the stick, with all of the big boys wanting to use their own standards. They are telling us, it is their ball, and you are going to play the game by their rules. We have danced to this song before!

### **Conclusion**

Who will win the music wars? Let's do some calculations.

I remember being able to buy KISS records on sale at Music Land for \$3.99. Twelve songs on a typical album divided into \$3.99 equals 33 cents. Today we pay 99 cents for a song or \$9.95 for the whole album.

However, that is far better than the \$18.99 suggested retail price of CDs that are currently on sale in stores. Let me see, \$18.99 divided by 12 equals \$1.58 a song. Ouch!

I do not know who will win the music wars, but I do know who has lost. The music store retailers and the consumers have lost. I am against illegal file sharing, but I am also against record companies suing 12-year-old girls.

*Wayne Steen is contributing editor of QBITS, Quad-Cities Computer Society, Bettendorf, Iowa. Contact him at <[Pythagoras78@hotmail.com](mailto:Pythagoras78@hotmail.com)>.*

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## **Browser Power By Vinny La Bash**

Imagine a gigantic library, thousands of times larger than any other library in existence. Imagine enormous shelves filling this library in every direction as far as the eye can see, so high you have difficulty seeing the tops of the shelves. The shelves are filled with books of various sizes. Some books are as small as one page. Others are hundreds of thousands of pages thick. The books are randomly distributed throughout the library.

Patrons of the library enter and leave at the rate of thousands every second. They examine books, sometimes copying portions or all of their contents. On the floor of the library are dozens of

independent groups of workers cataloging, indexing, and classifying the library's contents.

The library building is the structure of the Internet. All of the hardware, connectors, switches, routers, cabling, and other assorted apparatus and paraphernalia that make up the Internet are found in this cyberspace library. The shelves represent the World Wide Web. They are the containers that house information stored on Web sites. The books stand for the Web sites. Some are small, like most personal web sites. Many are huge corporate Web sites, which can run into hundreds of thousands of pages. Millions of other Web sites fall between these extremes.

Patrons of the library are people like you and me using it for data, entertainment, doing research, and many other things, traditional and unorthodox. The independent groups of workers are developing search engines and further methods to help us find what we want.

If you can imagine this scenario, you have a good grasp of how the Internet actually works. It is the most magnificent assortment of information that has ever existed, with a really lousy card catalog.

Where does your browser fit? It's the tool that allows you to access information stored on Web sites. Information can be text that you can read; information can be in the form of photographs, drawings, and other kinds of graphic images. Your browser's versatility lets you listen to sound files and view video clips. In most cases you can transfer any of this information from a Web site to your PC for your personal use without having to learn any sophisticated computer "tricks." All that

is necessary is for you to understand a few essentials about how your browser works.

Begin by opening your browser after starting your PC (we'll assume it is Internet Explorer for purposes of this article). You can do this from a menu option, or click an icon on your desktop, but you probably already know that.

You are undoubtedly familiar with the Explorer's standard tool bar and the basic browser internet navigation functions. Let's look at some tasks not covered by the toolbar.

To do more than the basics with the Internet, you need access to the latest Internet news, software updates, tips, and tricks for using your browser. Microsoft devotes a portion of its Web site to this function, and they call it "Microsoft at Home." While some of the content is advertising for its products, the site does contain a lot of useful information. Here's how to add it to your Favorites list:

1. On the File menu of your browser's Menu bar, click Open.
2. Type <<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/default.aspx>>.
3. Click OK.
4. From the Favorites menu, click Add to Favorites.
5. Select a folder if you like, and then click OK.

Before you leave the "Microsoft at Home" page, select Print Preview from the File menu. Notice that the material selected for printing is "truncated," cut off at the edge of the right margin. Microsoft didn't program that portion of its site with printing in mind. There isn't a lot you can do about it, because you can't change Microsoft's code. We bring it to your attention because you shouldn't drive yourself crazy trying to

fit the information on the page. This is not unique to Microsoft. Most Internet pages are not concerned with printing material, but with displaying it properly while accommodating the eccentricities of different browsers.

Open the File menu again and move your mouse pointer over the Send option. The submenu allows you to e-mail the whole page or e-mail only the URL (recommended), which saves a lot of space on your e-mail note. You can also create a shortcut to the site on your desktop.

If you see a picture you like on a Web site, move your mouse pointer over the image. If the pointer changes into a hand icon, right-click on the image. The popup menu will show that you can e-mail the image, copy it to your PC, set it as background on your desktop, or print it. Imagine that!

After performing a search, the browser brings you to a Web site, and suppose the word or phrase you searched on is nowhere in sight. Rather than scrolling through the site searching for it manually, hold down the Ctrl key and tap the F key (Ctrl+F). This brings up a Find dialog box where you can type in the search phrase in the text area, and your browser will find it for you. You can also access this handy tool from the Edit menu.

The View menu has a lot to offer. This is where you turn your toolbars on and off. If you are missing a toolbar, look here first.

Open the Privacy Report on the View menu and check if Explorer is restricting or blocking any cookies from the site. The Privacy Report dialog box also allows you to override cookie handling from any individual Web site. Click on the Settings button and then

the Edit button. You can specify which Web sites are always, or never, allowed to use cookies, regardless of the site's stated privacy policy.

Open the Tools menu and select Internet Options. On the General tab, look at the Home Page section. Select the Web site you wish to have as your home page. Change it as often as you like.

The History section lets you decide how long you want your wanderings on the Internet to be stored on your computer. Select the number of days you feel comfortable about or delete the history altogether. The choice is yours.

Click on the Accessibility button. In the Accessibility dialog box, check the box that says "Ignore font sizes specified on Web pages." This allows you to adjust text size on Web sites. You can do this from the View menu, or hold down the Ctrl button and rotate the wheel on your mouse button.

There's a lot more you can do with your browser than you might suspect, and this article hardly covers it all. However, you should now have a good idea of the power residing in your browser and be encouraged to explore its capabilities on your own.

*Vinny La Bash is a member of the Sarasota PC Users Group <<http://www.spcug.org>> and a columnist for the Sarasota PC Monitor. Contact him at <[labash@spcug.org](mailto:labash@spcug.org)>.*

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## ***Letter From The Editor***

The Taxpayer Network compares the 50 states in a number of different features. See it at <<http://www.taxpayersnetwork.org>>. Here are just a few of the results for Michigan (higher amounts rank nearer 1):

<b><u>Subject</u></b>	<b><u>State Rank</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
Per Cent Households With Computers	22	58.3%
Per Cent Households With Internet Access	23	51.2%
Casino Gambling Revenue	11	
Per Capita Spending on Parks & Recreation	38	
Overall Health	28	
Welfare Recipients, % of Population	13	2.01%
Median Family Income	17	\$54,054
Per Cent of Employees in Unions	4	23.1%
Federal Spending Per Capita	44	\$5,563
Federal Pork Per Capita	44	\$14.70
Total State And Local Tax	12	
Retirees Tax Burden	46	
Auto Insurance Premiums	13	
Electricity Prices	18	
Natural Gas Prices	50	\$5.29
State Gasoline Tax, cents/gal	12	27.2
Net Farm Income Per Operation	47	
Principal Commodities: Dairy, Greenhouse, Soybeans, Corn		59%
Total Value of State Products Exported	5	
Patents Issued in 2002	4	4235
Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Capita	30	10,078
Daily Traffic Per Lane	14	7287
Freeway & Arterial Roughness (smooth = 1)	41	
Highway Expenditure Per Capita	44	\$324
Incarceration Rate	10	
Per Cent Live Births To Unmarried Mothers	24	34%
Whites	22	25%
Hispanics	30	42%
Blacks	11	74%
Salary of Public School Teachers	4	\$53,798
Public High School Graduation Rate	45	57.5%
K-12 Student/Teacher Ratio (lower = 1)	43	17.1
Charter Schools Enrollment	4	60,236

# How And When To Enable Windows XP's Firewall

By Linda Gonse  
Orange County IBM Users' Group, California

Most users are aware of a need for an antivirus program and a firewall in order to be protected from regular, daily Internet threats.

What some may not know is that Windows XP has a built-in firewall. While it lacks the bells and whistles of a full version firewall, such as Norton or Zone Alarm, it is still useful.

You can enable it by going to Control Panel and clicking on the Network Connection icon. In the Connections window, right click on the name of your connection and click on Properties in the drop-down menu. Click on the Advanced tab. Check the box next to "Protect my computer and network by limiting or preventing access to this computer from the Internet." Then, click OK.

Follow these steps each time you wish to enable the firewall for other Internet connections on your computer.

But, before enabling XP's firewall, you should be aware of these points:

1. It must not be used through software or hardware routers [except perhaps if SP2 is installed.—Ed.]
2. It only works on incoming Internet traffic, not outgoing traffic from spyware, Trojan viruses, or hacker tools.
3. On local area networks (LANs) with other computers, it may block File and Printer Sharing.
4. It can be turned on or off for each of your dial-ups, LAN, or high-speed Internet connections.

Linda Gonse can be contacted at [<editor@orcopug.org>](mailto:editor@orcopug.org).

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## Board Members Present:

President Gary DeNise, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Roger Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Warner Mach representing SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier, Publications Committee Chairman Bill Agnew, and Members at Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m.

## Old Business:

Treasurer Roger Gay reported that the balance on hand is \$4854.45 with \$180 not deposited. Jehana Jalil and Richard Levitsky failed to renew their memberships in July. Anita MacSorley failed to renew her membership in August. The membership stands at 81.

## New Business:

Roger Gay is looking into the possibility of relocating our meetings to Cranbrook Institute should SEMCO lose the Oakland University site. Bob Clyne will discuss our options with Oakland University as renewal time approaches.

[Continued on page 35](#)

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



**SIG-IBM**  
**Tom Callow**  
**Warner Mach**



**SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE**  
**Jack Vander-Schrier**

**October 10: SIG-IBM: Scanners: Now That I Have One, How Does It Work?** SIG-IBM Co-chairman Tom Callow will discuss and demonstrate how to make your scanner work with your programs to capture documents and pictures and to use them in your computer.

### **September Meeting Attendance: 30** **[Board , Continued from page 34](#)**

Richard Jackson led a discussion of money saving options. He introduced the possibility of the DATA BUS going electronic. No action was taken.

SEMCO has made available a CD copy of Service Pack 2 for Windows XP. Nine members requested to have it mailed to them, and 8 members requested to pick up the CD at the meeting.

In sending out the e-mail notices announcing the Service Pack 2 offer, Bob Clyne became aware of several incorrect e-mail addresses. Should your address change, please notify Roger Gay.

Roger Gay moved to adjourn. Bob Clyne seconded the motion, and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

**October 10: Fun And Games:** SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will demonstrate a number of different computer games you can buy and play or download from the Internet.

### **NOVICE-IBM GROUP** **Rotating Volunteer Hosts**

**October 10: Help And Q & A:** Discussion directed by the audience.



**SIG-ADVANCED**  
**Franz Breidenich**

**November 1:**(first Monday), 6:45 pm, at the Oak Park Library. The library is located at 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480.

**Topic: Wide ranging discussion of computers and computing.**

### **November 2004 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)**

#### **SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., October 17, 11:59 p.m.**

Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use [Editor address on Page 2](#); e-mail address: [<agnew@bignet.net>](mailto:agnew@bignet.net). PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.

**Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly.** Mail **unfolded** camera-ready copy; payment in full made out to SEMCO, to the [Editor \(address Page 2\)](#).

**AAICI (American Association of Individual Investors, Computerized Investors)**

Oct. 23–Saturday, 10am (4th Saturday); W. Bloomfield Twp. Library, 4600 Walnut Lake Rd., 1 mile west of Orchard Lk Rd. Jack Lockman at [thunder@tir.com](mailto:thunder@tir.com) or 313-341-8855.

**COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)**

Oct. 6–Wednesday, 7pm (1st Wednesday); Rm 201, Clara E. Mackenzie Library-Science Bldg, St. Clair Community College, 323 Erie St., Port Huron. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187. Web: <http://www.bwcomp.org>. Topic: Computer Upgrading.

**DCOM Computer Club**

Oct. 8–Friday, 6:30–8:30pm (2nd Friday); Henry Ford C.C., Patterson Tech Bldg, Ford Rd/Evergreen, Rm T143, Parking Lot C. Info: Doug Piazza 313-582-2602.

**DPUG (Detroit Palm Users Group)**

Oct. 14–Thursday, 7pm (2nd Thursday); Kelly Services Bldg, 999 West Big Beaver, corner Crooks & Big Beaver, Troy. <http://www.dpug.org>.

**FACE (Flint Area Computer Enthusiasts)**

Oct. 12–Tuesday, 6:30pm (2nd Tuesday); Kettering Univ. Academic Bldg. Rm I-817 (enter Security Door, back of building by parking lot). <http://www.gfn/FACE/index.html>.

**MacGroup Detroit**

Oct. 17–Sunday, 3pm–5pm (3rd or 4th Sunday); Bloomfield Twp. Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd. (at Telegraph Rd.). Info: Terry White, [terry@macgroup.org](mailto:terry@macgroup.org) or 313-571-9817. <http://www.macgroup.org>. Topic: FileMaker Pro 7, Jonathan Stars.

**MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)**

Oct. 16–Saturday, (3rd Saturday); 11:00am main meeting (SIGs at 9:30); Ann Arbor Open School, 920 Miller Ave., Ann Arbor. <http://www.mactechnics.org>. Cassie at [cassiemac@yahoo.com](mailto:cassiemac@yahoo.com) or 313-971-8743. Topic: FileMaker Pro 7.

**Michigan Apple Computer User Group**

Oct. 14–(2nd Thur), MAC SIG; Oct. 14–(2nd Thur), Golden Masters SIG; Oct. 21–(3rd Thur), Green Apple SIG; Eagles Hall in Clawson, 174 Bowers St (one block North of 14-Mile and one block East of Main). Carl Pendracki 248-647-8871 [carlpen@aol.com](mailto:carlpen@aol.com). Web: <http://www.themichiganapple.com>. Topic: MacWorld Paris (New iMac G5).

**Oak Park Computer Club**

Meets every Friday, 10:15am at Oak Park Recreation Bldg, Oak Park Blvd. west of Coolidge.

**SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)**

Nov. 2–Tuesday 7:30pm, (1st Tuesday), Carpathia Club, 38000 Utica Rd, Sterling Heights. Pres. Don VanSyckel at [Don@VanSyckel.net](mailto:Don@VanSyckel.net), 586-731-9232; Web: <http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>.

**SVCA (Saginaw Valley Computer Assoc.)**

Oct. 14–Thursday, 6:30–9:00pm, (2nd Thursday); Zael Library, Shattuck & Center Rds., Saginaw. Web: <http://www.svca.org>.

**Wayne State U. Mac User Group**

Oct. 9–Saturday, 10:00am–Noon (2nd Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Info: Lorn/JoAnn Olsen 248/478-4300 or Denny McLampy 248-477-0190.

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**SEPTEMBER  
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Warner Mach, Coordinator  
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Your **SEMCO** membership card is good for a **\$1 discount** (not valid with any other offer) on admission to **A1-Super Computer Sales** shows. See [www.a1-supercomputersales.com](http://www.a1-supercomputersales.com) or [www.alscs.com](http://www.alscs.com) for show schedule.

**COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE**

This is a list of members willing to be resources for other members to call when they have hardware or software questions.

Are you willing to help members learn?

Which software programs are you familiar enough with?

It is not necessary to be an expert, but just have some familiarity with the program and be willing to help someone starting to learn it. Please give this some thought and volunteer at the next group meeting.

**Almost Anything:** Vander-Schrier

**AutoCAD:** Comptois, Gay

**Genealogy:** Cook

**IBM PC Hardware Issues:** Clyne, Gay, Yuhasz

**Operating Systems:** Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz

**MAC Hardware and OS Issues:** Yuhasz

**MS Office for Windows:** Callow

**MS Word:** Clyne

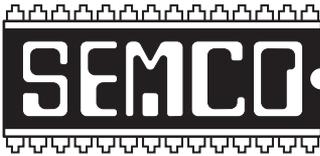
**Networking:** Callow

**Novell Netware:** Yuhasz

**Quicken:** Clyne, Gay

**Geocaching:** Cook

- Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm ..... [clyne@lodden.com](mailto:clyne@lodden.com)
- Callow, Tom—248-642-1920 9am–5pm ..... [tcallow@vmdllaw.com](mailto:tcallow@vmdllaw.com)
- Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime ..... [jerrycandotoo@juno.com](mailto:jerrycandotoo@juno.com)
- Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves ..... [scook48227@ameritech.net](mailto:scook48227@ameritech.net)
- Gay, Roger—248-641-7799, 9am–10pm ..... [rgay@voyager.net](mailto:rgay@voyager.net)
- Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm ..... [jvanders@myself.com](mailto:jvanders@myself.com)
- Yuhasz, Steve ..... [Help@yuhasz.org](mailto:Help@yuhasz.org)



SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN  
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.

## SEMCO CALENDAR—October/November

ELLIOTT HALL, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY  
ROCHESTER, MICHIGAN

### October 10–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

**SEMCO Board** Meeting at 12:00 noon, **Room 235**. For Officers and SIG Chairpersons. Other members are invited to attend.

**SEMCO General** Meeting at 1:30 pm, **Room 235**.

### Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

**SIG-IBM** 1:45 pm, **Room 235**. **Program: SIG-IBM: Scanners: Now That I Have One, How Does It Work?** SIG-IBM Co-chairman Tom Callow will discuss and demonstrate how to make your scanner work with your programs to capture documents and pictures and to use them in your computer.

**SOCIAL PERIOD** 3:15 pm, **Room 209, Student Lounge**. Refreshments! (Reminder: We must maintain a neat environment.)

**NOVICE-IBM GROUP** 3:45 pm, **Room 208 or 210**. **Program: Help And Q&A Discussion Directed By The Audience**.

**SIG-IBM Intermediate** 3:45 pm, **Room 235**. **Program: Fun And Games:** SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Jack Vander-Schrier will demonstrate a number of different computer games you can buy and play or download from the Internet.

**SIG-ADVANCED**, **November 1–MONDAY, 6:45 pm**, Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Phone: (248) 691-7480. Directions: Oak Park Blvd. is 9 1/2 mile Road, located west of Coolidge. Best route from freeway: take I-696 to the Coolidge exit. Head south on Coolidge for 1/2 mile to Oak Park Blvd. and turn right. Info: Franz Breidenich 248-398-3359.  
**TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing.**

**November 14–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)**. **SEMCO**, 1:30 pm. **Topics: To Be Announced.**

<http://www.semco.org>

**PUBLIC INVITED**

(Please copy this and the next page to post on your bulletin board)



**SouthEastern Michigan  
Computer Organization, Inc.  
P.O. Box 707  
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707**

**SEMCO (future meetings)**

**October 10**

**November 14**

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