



Official Newsletter
SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

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The SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. (SEMCO) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), group dedicated to providing information, education and a forum to computer users (professional and amateur) and other interested individuals. Membership in SEMCO is open to all individuals 18 years or older. Persons under 18 years may become members through the sponsorship of a parent or guardian. Dues of \$30/year include monthly DATA BUS and free personal ads.

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION

The annual meeting of the members of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. will be held Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 1:30 pm at ArvinMeritor, 2135 West Maple Rd., Troy, Michigan. The election of Officers and Members-at-Large of the Board of Directors of the Corporation will take place at the annual meeting.



DEALS COLUMN

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

Here Is Some Fast Food Technology
Technology is fast catching up with vending machines according to an article I read in Information Week. Soft drink machines are everywhere you go, also vending machines for candy, coffee, and many other types of products, even machines that dispense ice cream bars and ice cream sandwiches. A technique has now been developed for an ice cream vending machine that does not need to be refrigerated full time. To quote from the article, "we pump the base mix, aerate it, flavor it, flash freeze it, scrape it up off a freezing surface, form it into a scoop and into the consumer's cup in 45 seconds." Also, no refrigeration is required for

NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS

Please take notice that under the Bylaws of the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc., nominations for officers will be taken at the general meeting to be held Sunday, December 10, 2006 at 1:30 p.m., with the election of officers to be held at the January general meeting.

The following offices will be open for nominations:

- 1) President
- 2) Vice President
- 3) Secretary
- 4) Treasurer
- 5) Two Members-at-Large of the Board of Directors

warehousing. You can read the article at <http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=193004764>, and it also mentions their use of Linux for the machine.

Have Your Medical Data With You!

Be medically prepared with all your medical records hanging around your neck (or in your possession) when you are away. Medistick makes a USB flash drive that is designed to hold up to five medical histories. It appears to be a self-extracting file that can also offer password protection. Medistick has a medical emergency logo on the sides. Capacities are available from 128 MB to 4 GB and costing \$57.00 for the 128 MB size, <http://www.medistick.ch>.

Information is collected and entered by you, or your doctor, if his staff will help in that regard, and the document automatically converts to a PDF file.

I doubt I would use the password protection because, what if you are incoherent and can't give medics the password to open the file for your medical information? On the other hand, since some folks write their password on the side of their computer, you could do that with the Medistick. <G> I am cramped for space here so be sure to check their Web site to get the best description of the product. It sure sounds great to me, and so is the deal. All your records are carried with you including all your doctors' names and phone numbers. If you see a new doctor, just give him or her your Medistick to get all your medical info. With my health, I will probably need the 4-Gig model. Just a thought, but this might make a great Christmas gift for the person who already has everything, and for that person who has a serious medical history.

Medistick has offered the DealsGuy readers this deal: "1 128 MB Medistick and software for 1 person for only \$49.00 with shipping included. (MSRP is normally \$57.00 plus \$3.50 shipping.) This deal is good until Jan. 31, 2007. Readers should click on <<http://www.medistick.ch/en/contact/>> and mention the DealsGuy column in the 'comments' area. They will then get an online invoice from Medistick through PayPal for \$49.00 as payment by credit card in advance."

Reminder About the Laptop Discount by Dave Whittle

Don't forget about Dave Whittle's discount offer on the Lenovo ThinkPad laptops that is still good. Simply call

Lenovo's user group inside sales rep, Isaac Williams, directly for help in configuring your system, or to get answers to your questions. Call 1-877-338-4465, Option 1, Extension 6322.

Below are some new products that I received announcements for. I have edited the announcements, so check their URLs for better information.

How About A Backup With Security!

SoftOptima LLC announces the release of Backup Premium 2.5 backup software. The specially designed protocols SFTP and FTP SSL/TLS provide a high degree of security for data transferred via the Internet. Backup Premium offers the capability to backup user data using SFTP and FTP SSL/TLS and allows substantial safety of the backup process.

You can backup all the important files from a Windows profile, Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express, and ICQ; running certain programs before or after backup sessions; and with the possibility to work with network drives under different accounts. It's easy to configure the backup process and adjust it to the particular needs of a single user, or a whole company. Backup Premium has an ergonomically correct user interface and a high-quality graphic solution that makes work with the program simple and yet pleasant.

A fully functional Backup Premium 2.5 trial version is available for a 30-day evaluation period. Registration costs \$39 for a single user license. Users group members receive a special 25% discount at <<http://www.backup-premium.com/special-order.shtml>> until February 2007.

Product Page: <<http://www.backup-premium.com>>.

Screenshots and graphics: <<http://www.backup-premium.com/screenshots.shtml>>.

Download: <<http://www.backup-premium.com/backuppremium25.exe>>.

This Product Helps You Work With Your Pictures

Almalence Incorporated announces PhotoAcute Studio 2.0. PhotoAcute Studio processes sets of images taken in continuous mode. It utilizes super resolution algorithms to convert a sequence of photos into a single high-resolution and low-noise picture that could only be taken with a much better camera. PhotoAcute Studio operates with various camera and image types from mobile cameras to DSLR cameras supporting RAW format and 16-bit color.

Spatial resolution is limited by a camera's matrix and lens, but this limit can be exceeded by means of super resolution that can be done by either acquiring more graphic information (e.g. taking and merging several images of the same object) or by reconstructing the details lost due to the faultiness of the optical system. Noise is the most undesirable factor that degrades image quality. PhotoAcute Studio combines several photos of the same scene, separating the useful signal and the noise, thus providing strong noise reduction without losing the image details. By merging several images taken at different exposures, PhotoAcute Studio expands the dynamic range of the resultant image, revealing the details usually clipped in the highlights and the shadows.

PhotoAcute Studio is a Windows based application. The Macintosh version will be released in 2007Q1. A detailed description of PhotoAcute Studio features, online help, and an

examples gallery are available at <<http://www.photoacute.com>>. You can download a free trial version. The price of the full version varies depending on supported camera types, ranging from \$19 for mobile phone cameras to \$119 for DSLR cameras with the support of RAW format and 16-bit color. Users group members get a 35% discount by going to the order page <http://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?items=13404-1&ss_coupon=DGY-8JQU>, which contains the discount code in the URL. The discount will be applied on the second page of the ordering procedure. This discount is good until January 31, 2007.

PhotoAcute Studio 2.0 can be downloaded at: <<http://www.photoacute.com/studio/download.html>>.

Product page URL: <<http://www.photoacute.com/studio>>.

Direct download link: <http://www.photoacute.com/files/PhotoAcuteStudio_setup.exe>.

Got A Pocket PC? Now You Can Translate Languages!

LingvoSoft has released LingvoSoft Translator 2007 for Pocket PC featuring the ability to translate between English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. It provides full-text translation of business correspondence, e-mails, letters, documentation, and even the words to your favorite song! If you choose the talking version, not only will you have the fastest translator available for Pocket PC but you'll also be able to use it to speak. With super fast and super smart search functions, a customizable interface, and three different ways to enter text, it will even translate the contents of your device's clipboard automatically upon launching the dictionary application.

<<http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Translators/?refid=16179>>.
<<http://www.lingvosoft.com>>.

Users Group members get a 25% discount on any LingvoSoft software title at <<http://www.lingvosoft.com/info/software/Translators/>>. Simply enter your personal gift certificate code “MY8UZPF7M4” in the “Add Gift” field of the shopping cart and click the “Add Gift” button. You should then see the discount deducted from your order’s total in the shopping cart. This offer is good until December 31, 2006.

That’s it for this month. I hope to post more new announcements without discounts on my Web site before long. 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>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.



Second Life— Virtual Metaverse By Warner Mach

I have been curious about “Second Life” <<http://secondlife.com>> since it has gotten a lot of press. Second Life is a virtual world, similar to some of the online games in visual effects, except this is not a game where you slay monsters or solve puzzles.

Second Life is, instead, a sort of commercial world where you can visit various sites and can purchase items, including real estate, and can visit with

“others.” The “others” that you meet are, like yourself, “avatars,” or little representatives of the users.

The sign-up procedure is fairly simple and straightforward. Some decisions that you have to make when you sign up: (1) The name of your avatar. You choose a last name from a list of drop-downs. (2) Whether to give them a credit card number. If you give a credit card number, so you can make future purchases, then you are awarded 250 Linden dollars. The exchange rate between Linden dollars and U.S. currency changes, but is on the order of between 200-to-1 up to 400-to-1. (3) Whether to stay a non-subscribing “basic” member or a “premium” member—which gets you a monthly “stipend” and land-ownership rights. (4) The password to use in conjunction with your avatar.

Once you are through with the preliminaries then you can download the required software and sign on to the system. Note that some kind of broadband connection is required.

When you sign on, you will find that your avatar arrives at a welcome area. Here you are given a chance to mold your avatar as either a male or female and to make certain changes to the face and body. You are also given some basic lessons in how to walk and how to fly. You will find that your avatar is a lively little representative for you. He/she will have animal characteristics and will peer out at the world like a happy puppy.

When you feel that you are ready for the big world you can press the “search” tab and the “places” tab. Choose an interesting place to go, from the list displayed, and hit the “teleport” button, and you will be transported there. Certainly “flying” and “teleporting” are

a couple of the more interesting features of this world.

You can “talk” to the other avatars wherever you are by typing in a phrase and hitting the “say” button. All the typing that is required to maintain a conversation tends to slow conversation down somewhat. You can tell when someone is about to say something because the avatar will be making typing motions with their hands and arms. You can match up the conversation with the avatar because the avatar name floats above the avatar body.

Second Life is undergoing exponential growth, and this sometimes leads to glitches in the servers, or sometimes avatar crashes, but you just log back on and you will be back where you left off.

According to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, companies, including IBM, are now buying real estate in Second Life, and setting up offices, in order to have staff meetings and to entertain client avatars. In the case of company meetings, the verbal portion of the meeting is handled by using conference calls, rather than typing messages. So, it is possible to have a worldwide meeting without airplane travel.

One thing that is a bit odd is the accounting of time: (1) Be aware that your avatar is on Pacific Standard Time, which is three hours behind Eastern Standard Time. This is because “Linden Labs” is located in California. I arrived at the Town Hall Meeting three hours early. (2) When you teleport and arrive at one location or another you may find yourself in daylight or in night. One of the avatars explained to me that this is set by the owner of that particular piece of property; truly a God-like power.

So, I would highly recommend taking some time to check out this amazing world. Spice up your real life with a little of the virtual alternative.

The book, “Second Life: The Official Guide” by Michael Rymaszewski, and others, can be ordered now from [<Amazon.com>](http://Amazon.com).



**SoftScan's PDF
Converter 4.0
(Software Review)
By Bill Agnew**

I recently purchased ScanSoft's PDF Converter 4.0 for \$49.99+tax as a CD from Nuance. It is also available as a download for the same price. I tried it out on a 24-page document in PDF as a conversion to Microsoft Word.

Nuance [<http://www.nuance.com/pdfconverter>](http://www.nuance.com/pdfconverter) says in their promotion that PDF Converter 4.0 is one-third the cost of alternatives. It turns non-editable PDF documents into pages that you can edit at will. It converts PDFs to “documents, spreadsheets, and forms that look exactly like the original complete with formatting and graphics...and includes page-range selection.” It works with Word, Excel, Outlook, WordPerfect, Windows Explorer, Windows 2000, XP, and Vista. They say it was developed in collaboration with Microsoft.

I tried it out on a 24-page PDF document at 700 KB. It converted it to a Microsoft Word document of 33 pages and 4.3 Meg; not a problem, but interesting. The process was very simple, a couple of clicks.

However, my experience belies the promotion. Although it turned the text of my PDF document into Word pages that I could edit for grammar,

punctuation, and spelling, it screwed up the formatting on a number of pages. It put extra space between paragraphs and put widowed lines on a new page that was otherwise all blank. It shifted numbers in a list, misplaced graphics, embedding them sometimes in the middle or on top of paragraphs, and sometimes, left headings on a page by themselves without the following text. Frames around text were displaced by half the supposed content. All-in-all it was a formatting disaster.

Yes, you can edit the text of PDF documents, but Nuance's promotion also needs editing.

I went to the Nuance Web site and submitted a "bug report." But they said bug reports are not responded to. So, I sent another message to customer service attaching my PDF and converted documents, so they could see the evidence, and I told them I might write reviews for my two computer clubs. They responded, saying I should contact technical support where I could report my problem for a \$9.95 fee. With that, I dropped the matter in disgust. But soon a phone call from technical support said they would look at the matter and see if they could convert the document with some other software. Soon the answer came back with a Word conversion made by Omnipage Pro 15, a \$500 product of the same company. It was just as bad as, or worse than, my original conversion. I wrote back that since they couldn't provide me with a product that met the advertised performance, why didn't they just refund the \$57.94 I had paid for the non-performing product. Louie responded, saying "Contact Technical Support." End of story.



My Registry Adventures

By Al Gruber

Suppose you try to delete a file on your Desktop, but instead the system starts to install a program. You furiously click cancel a dozen times, and it stops. So, you try the delete again, and it happens again, and again, even after rebooting. Evidently, some wires are crossed in your computer: the delete key is now assigned to installing a program called ScanSoft PDF Create. That's what made me delve into the registry.

By way of background, I've had problems with ScanSoft ever since their last upgrade, so I knew enough to demand that they remove their setup program, and hallelujah, that did give me back my delete key. But it made sense to me that this fixed only the symptom. Somewhere in there, the wires were still crossed. And that somewhere must be in the registry. Unfortunately, I didn't know enough about the registry—and though I know a little more now, I still haven't fixed the problem.

To start, I pulled down my copy of Windows XP Registry Guide, (Jerry Honeycutt), which I had always planned to read "one of these days." It's a good book, but at over 450 pages, my mind wandered to the registry-cleaning program (System Mechanic 6) I had recently bought from ZoneAlarm. Their general idea is that they scan your computer for errors and then fix them. Not being that trusting, I finally found out how to stop them from making the fixes before I could review and approve them. Then I ran the program. Surprise, they had no proposed fixes. My Registry was perfect!

But I knew that was wrong. As I was following the Honeycutt book and inspecting the registry, I had discovered many out-of-date entries involving the Start > All Programs menu, some for programs I had uninstalled and others perhaps caused by my habit of combining programs under suitable headings. For example, I have a heading called Graphics that holds 10 different graphics-related programs.

When I asked the System Mechanic techie why their program might not find known registry errors, he explained that they must be shared programs, which I could pin down by running System Mechanic in protected mode. I did, and now found a grand total of 1 error.

I now decided to try some other registry cleaners. Here's a partial list of the commercial offerings: Error Nuker, Free Registry Fix, PC On Point, RegCure, Registry Fix, RegistryHealer, Registry Mechanic, Registry Medic, System Mechanic.

Unfortunately, most of these programs give off a bad smell. These are inexpensive programs; most in the range of \$20 to \$30, but they all try to give the impression that they're free: e.g., "free download," "free scan," but to fix your registry, you must pay. The most egregious is "Free Registry Fix," which claims on its opening screen: "the world's only FREE registry cleaning software on the market today." Their price is \$29.95! Mind you, I understand their problem. Since I don't need registry cleanings very often, I might take my free cleaning without ever buying. But still, it's a shell game. And frankly, I am reluctant to give them my credit

card. (Actually, there are at least 4 genuinely free programs, but they are a bit harder to find: CCleaner, EasyCleaner, RegScrubXp, Eusing Free Registry Cleaner.)

Another point is that the commercial product information is more hard sell than information. "Statistics show that over 93.7% of pc's have corrupted registries;" "Don't compromise with second best;" "100% guaranteed." If there are product differences, and there clearly are, I couldn't find them in their literature. And of course, their documentation is weak. This was especially disappointing because I was hoping their documentation would give me a clue about my problem.

These programs all use about the same approach. They offer to scan your registry (Free! Free! Free!). These scans invariably find lots of "dangerous" errors. To fix these, you must register the program, which is when you find out that it isn't free after all. The programs do give you one or two free fixes. But since all of them find hundreds of errors, you invariably have too many for their free offer. Incidentally, the program that claims to be the only freebie in the universe does give you 50 free fixes, but I don't think you qualify if you have over 50 errors.

After the scan, these programs go automatically into their repair phase, unless you have figured out how to opt out, which again took me quite some time. (The problem here is that they never tell you if choosing "fix errors" will still let you back out.)

So, after System Mechanic had said I had an error-free registry, here's the number of errors I found in the various programs:

Errors Found	#
CCleaner (really free)	1000*
EasyCleaner (really free)	251
Error Nuker	267
Free Registry Cleaner (really free)	1651
Free Registry Fix	740
PC On Point	739
RegCure	2374
Registry Fix	714
Registry Mechanic	430
Registry Medic	1575
RegistryHealer	3777
RegScrubXp (really free)	339
System Mechanic	0
* Estimate, no total supplied.	

Now, I knew System Mechanic was wrong when they said I had no errors. But when Registry Healer says 3,777 there must be some grade-inflation going on. After all, my computer boots and runs ok. The ScanSoft problem is a suspicion at this point, not a blue screen emergency. So why should I let Registry Healer repair these errors. I suppose it would speed boot-up and shutdown. Would it actually run faster? The sales pitch says yes, but as I said, I'm not that trusting.

To give you a little more feel, here are the warnings from "Free Registry Fix":

- 274 high severity problems—apps won't run, system may crash.
- 121 medium severity—app errors or won't run.
- 345 low severity—computer will run slow.

This seems like a good time to tell what little I have found out about the registry. First, it is loaded into memory when the computer starts. The part we are interested in resembles a Rolodex, a list of programs and their addresses. Entries are added when you install a program, and removed when you uninstall.

Apparently, not all programs uninstall properly; some entries are not removed from the registry—outdated cards left in the Rolodex. This may create a junky registry, but should not automatically cause problems. Another factor is that programs often involve multiple parts, hence multiple entries in the registry. So, if each improperly uninstalled program had 10 parts, the amount of junk might be that much greater. But aside from the

wasted time riffling through left-behind cards, no real harm should ensue. Even if you call a contact whose number has been disconnected, all that happens is a no-answer, i.e., the program won't run because you uninstalled it.

Finally, there are other ways to cause registry junk. If you occasionally reorganize your Start button > All Programs menu, it turns out that old entries are not deleted from the registry. Example: I moved Word from its old category called MsWord to a new one called Microsoft. In terms of the Rolodex analogy, this is like adding a card when a contact changes her name. If she keeps her phone both cards are usable, but the old one becomes superfluous as you switch to using her new name.

Are we getting any closer to understanding how a group of registry cleaners can be so far apart in the number of errors they find? Hold on. Registry cleaners conduct their scans by problem categories that they describe with names that are suggestive but by no means clear. I think that the differences in their results are caused by which categories they pick, and perhaps how tight their rules are. (Though it seems

likely that System Mechanic contains some programming errors.) Here are my guesses as to what their categories mean:

Typical Registry Errors Categories

The first 5 items below are written into the registry at the time of program installation, but not always fully deleted at uninstallation. Many registry cleaners offer to delete the useless left-behind entries.

1. Software Locations: At installation, applications enter their location in the registry.

2. Controls/ActiveX files/Shared DLLs, Browser Helper Objects: Applications enter the location of their *.dll and *.ocx files in the registry.

3. Help Files: Some applications enter the location of their help files in the registry.

4. Installers/Add/Remove Programs: Applications enter the location of their install and uninstall programs files in the registry.

5. Start Menu and Startup (boot up) entries: At installation, applications enter the location of both of these items in the registry.

The following items are written into the registry at various other times. The cleaners check to see if they represent real addresses. If not, they are useless and can be deleted.

6. Windows Services: This tells the location of various Windows services.

7. Windows Fonts and Sounds: These sections tell the location of installed Windows font and sound files.

8. File Extensions: This lists file extensions (e.g.: *.txt) and tells which if any applications may open them. If an extension lists no programs, or

only nonexistent programs, the entry is useless.

9. History List: This section is scanned for invalid history files paths.

10. Invalid Paths and Folders: this section is scanned for any other non-existent files and folders.

11. Hardware Drivers

To summarize, I am guessing that looking for somewhat different errors causes cleaners to get different problem counts. This is only a guess because their product descriptions aren't that specific. Surprisingly, nobody claims to look for more problems than their competitors. I suppose, on these grounds, I should pick Registry Healer because it finds (and fixes) the most errors.

But then, I must face the question; should I let Registry Healer delete the "problems" it reports, so that my system won't crash (which it doesn't do anyway) and will run faster (which I suppose is possible)? I admit that part of my reluctance is fear. Whenever anybody mentions editing the registry, they first warn that you could cripple your computer for life, so back up first. And the registry cleaners themselves, of course, say that their software is not created for any useful legal purpose and that users cannot rely on them working.

Part of my problem is with the concept of backups. If my computer won't start after deleting the "problems," and if I had a backup, and, if I had a boot disk, and, if I could get into restore mode, I should be able to rescue the situation. But with my luck, the computer will start fine. Then three weeks later, some program I haven't run since the "cleanup" will not run. And three weeks is long enough (for someone with senior moments) that I probably won't connect

it with the cleanup. And if I did, would I want to lose whatever new stuff I had done since then? No!

This brings to the fore one missing feature of all the cleaner programs. My specific problem is a possible registry error involving ScanSoft. But the cleaner programs don't let me search for ScanSoft errors. They just report what they want to report, and on top of that, they all want to report something different.

Speaking of features, here are some of the differences I noticed between programs: As you know, the cleaners find and delete calls to missing programs. A couple however, also search for the missing programs, so they can correct the call if they find it. I don't know how successful this is, but it makes sense to me. Registry Healer is one of these. For the rest, when they say *repair*, they really mean *delete*.

Another feature I like, is the ability to send a list of the errors to disk or printer. This caters to my cautious nature; it lets me think about the "problems" before agreeing to delete them. Registry Healer and EasyCleaner both offer this.

Another feature I found useful is that one click takes you from the error to the actual registry entry. Again, this reflects the fact that I was trying to investigate a specific problem, rather than running a housecleaning operation. About half the programs, including Registry Healer, offer this feature.

Finally, most but not all have some form of online documentation, though most of it is pretty amateurish. Their general rule is to explain the obvious (click scan to do a scan) (click cancel scan to cancel scan) but gloss over the mysterious, such as the purpose and

implications of selecting certain registry categories.

Over the years, I have downloaded many trial versions of small-time programs, usually without knowing exactly what they are supposed to do, and why. If the documentation tells me why they made the program, that's a big plus in my purchase decision. And if it then explains logically and coherently how it works, I get confidence. If the documentation sounds smart, I believe the program is smart. By contrast, my problem with the registry cleaners is that they do lots of shouting but not much explaining.

Finally, as you know, I still have lots of questions. I am leaning toward Registry Healer, but haven't bought it yet. E-mail me if you have answers. Who knows, maybe we can do a sequel based on your expertise.

[<AlGruber@Comcast.net>](mailto:AlGruber@Comcast.net).



Look in your Windows folder and count how many folders you have that start with "\$NtUninstall." They are all related to various patches, updates, and service packs for XP. Those \$NtUninstall folders are created when you install a Microsoft Service Pack, a hot fix, or certain security updates. Some of these folders could date back almost to the day you first installed your computer.

Their names are in blue, and they are all marked as hidden and read only. If you don't see them in the Windows folder, open the Tools menu, and select Folder Options from the drop down menu. After the Folder Options dialog box appears, activate the View tab, then

left-click the Show hidden files and folders radio button. Click OK to close the dialog box, and the hidden folders should appear. If nothing happens, close down Windows Explorer and restart it. You don't need to restart your computer; simply open Windows Explorer again.

Why should you do this? If you're getting low on disk space, and the usual remedies haven't freed up enough space, these folders could be the culprits that are chewing up valuable storage area. If you have had Windows installed for more than a year, and you are conscientious about keeping your system up-to-date, these useless folders are probably tying up gigabytes of data. Enough of them can have the unfortunate side effect of noticeably slowing down virus and spyware scans. It also takes longer to defrag your disk drive. An accumulation of unnecessary or extraneous data on your system will eventually affect system performance and in extreme cases cause drive errors.

The files within the \$NtUninstall folder provide instructions on how your computer uninstalls a Windows update. Each folder has a specific name ending in the name of a particular Windows modification. If you were to go to add/remove programs and select a Windows update to uninstall, the information on how to run this process would come from the corresponding \$Ntuninstall folder.

You can safely delete all these folders if you have no plans to uninstall any of the related patches. As updates and patches accumulate, these types of folders will continue to grow and take more disk space.

One solution is to delete only those folders older than three months. Chances are, if you haven't uninstalled

a Windows update after three months, you won't ever do it.

Alternatively, once you've made a backup or disk image of any "\$NtUninstall" files, you can delete the files from the hard drive immediately, because you can always restore them from backups, if you need them.

One thing Microsoft should have done is tuck these folders away in a sub-folder someplace so you don't have to scroll through them every time you want to locate something in the Windows folder. I've seen machines with over one hundred of these folders. Then again, you could always mark them as hidden.

Vinny La Bash is a member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida and can be reached at <[vlabash\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:vlabash(at)comcast.net)> <<http://www.spcug.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.

NOTICE

We will be publishing a membership directory with the January DATA BUS. Only members who have given permission to release a phone number and/or e-mail address will be included. Make sure your phone numbers, e-mail address, and permissions are correct in the SEMCO database BEFORE December 20th. All database updates and inquiries should be directed to SEMCO Treasurer, Bette Gay.

Fooled You!—I Really Hope Not

By Chuck Davis

I am presenting the following illustrations to show that what you see isn't what you get! The first two purport to be secure links <https://> to paypal.com. However, when you hover your pointer over the links, you will see the true link.

https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_login-run



<https://mail.mongoldataatgal.mn/redirect/www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/us...>



Ignoring our request, for an extended period of time, may result in limitations or may result in eventual account closure.



If you have made recent changes to your account, you can safely open your browser and type in the PayPal URL, which is <<http://www.paypal.com>>.

The others eliminate the pretense by presenting a text link that is not the true link either.

as normal.

[Click here to update your PayPal account info](#)



<http://www.evregroup.com/paypal/index.htm>



https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_login-run



<https://mail.mongoldataatgal.mn/redirect/www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/us...>



Ignoring our request, for an extended period of time, may result in limitations or may result in eventual account closure.



At left is an image of the address bar when the PayPal URL is typed directly into it. Notice that the PayPal site has converted it to a secure page!

Another bumper contains 12 links—all to the same URL, which is different than what you see. What you see is free.music.mp3; what you get is as you see in the illustration. What you see is not what you get!



These spammers know of the popularity of PayPal and its parent eBay! They are here playing on the possibility of a dispute over payment regarding a transaction.

These links may cause you to lose all of the money in your bank account quickly.

There is another spam scam going around promoting “undervalued” stocks, touting the message that the stock should be bought now! They are trying to make you think that they are providing you with “insider” information so that you can make a killing! NOT! These are usually sent by third parties who are trying to manipulate the subject company’s stock, and the company may not even know what is going on. You lose the money in your bank account a little slower!



Of the hundreds that I have received over the past months, none have warned of the stock going down! The news that you don’t know as a potential investor is when the spammer started the promotion, and when the spammer is going to sell. Only the spammer knows. Short selling is much riskier!

If you are concerned about some of the spam you have received regarding stocks, this is an interesting site: <<http://www.spamnation.info/stocks/index.php>> If you would like to know about other spam, try their home page: <<http://www.spamnation.info/>>.

Here’s a good one. Subject: David has a secret about your Vegas Vacation. The spammer’s name and address is stated as: “Vegas Online Inc. - 4598 River Glen Dr, Las Vegas, NV 89103 USA.” There is a River Glen Dr. in Las Vegas, but not that number. The web site title is Toronto Pharmacy! The domain name rxsvintus.com in the link was registered through a Chinese company by a registrant giving a Fiji Island address. These liars want your business?

Domain Registrant: TOTALNIC-1:

Alex Rodrigez
Alex Rodrigez
PO box 109 WP 1432
Lappeenranta NA 53101
FI

Telephone: +358.207818027

Fax: +358.207818027

Current Registrar: CAPITAL NETWORKS PTY LTD

IP Address: 221.4.246.3 (ARIN & RIPE IP search)

IP Location: CN(CHINA)-GUANGDONG-GUANGDONG

Lock Status: ACTIVE

DMOZ: no listings

Y! Directory: [see listings](#)

Web Site Title: Toronto Pharmacy

Data as of: 14-Jun-2005



The “human engineering” involved in these messages reveals the nature of many of us. We tend to believe what we see and read without question. We are also a bit greedy. Enough of us fall for these come-ons to make it extremely profitable for the spammers.

None of the spammers want to help you! They have no interest in you! Their only interest is in your money! **Delete the messages and keep your money.** You will be ahead of the game...

Chuck Davis is Newsletter editor & webmaster for the Sun City Anthem Computer Club, Henderson, NV, and can be reached at <[Chas \(at\) anthemwebs.com](mailto:Chas(at)anthemwebs.com)> and <<http://www.myscacc.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.



Move Over IE— Firefox 2 Is Here By Ira Wilsker

I am a firm believer that good competition contributes to innovation. Now the Internet is virtually universal; possibly billions of people are using a web browser to surf the Internet to gather information and provide entertainment as well as education.

The World Wide Web (WWW) as we know it is only about 13 years old, but has gone through a dynamic and rapid evolution to what we have today. There has also been an evolution in web browsers, the utility used to view graphical data on the Internet. Following the lead of one of the early browsers, Mosaic, and implementing much of its

technology, Microsoft became a premier provider of browsers by introducing its Internet Explorer (IE). Internet Explorer has had competition since its inception by such browsers as Netscape, and later strong competitors such as Opera and Firefox. In this highly competitive technological arena, Microsoft recently released the latest iteration of its browser, IE 7. Not to be outdone, a feisty open-source competitor, Mozilla, recently released its answer to Internet Explorer, Firefox version 2, right on the heels of the release of IE 7.

By differing media accounts, Firefox has had great success competing against its giant and well-funded competitor from Microsoft, taking by some accounts, about 12% of the world market share for browsers. This is quite an accomplishment considering

the integration and inclusion of IE in all recent versions of Windows. Since its inception, there have been security concerns about Internet Explorer, as well as desirable features that many felt have been lacking. This has been a primary reason for the innovation of competition, epitomized by Mozilla and its browser Firefox. This tradition of innovative features and improved security continues with the new release of Firefox 2.

Firefox version 2 is feature rich. Since it is open-source, with its programming code publicly available, there has been much done in an attempt to provide the best WWW experience to the user. Identity theft in the premise of "Phishing," where spoofed Websites attempt to trick users into disclosing personal information, usernames, passwords, credit card and other account numbers, and other sensitive data, is endemic. Firefox 2 offers some of the strongest protection available against phishing. By default, phishing protection is turned on in Firefox 2. Firefox 2 checks Websites entered against an automatically updated list of known phishing Websites, as well as displays the real web address of the site visited, rather than the spoofed address, a give-away that the site is suspicious. Optionally, Firefox 2 can check web addresses against an external database of constantly updated known phishing sites, providing enhanced protection. If the user visits a suspected Website that is not on the list, Firefox 2 offers the opportunity to "Report Web Forgery," or to challenge that a site listed as a phishing site was listed in error, and is indeed legitimate.

Firefox offers tabbed browsing, where new Websites can be opened in

a tab in the same window as other open Websites. If a tab is accidentally closed, the history menu will allow for that tab to be quickly and easily reopened.

Sometimes even the best maintained computer can lockup, causing a loss of information. Firefox 2 offers "Session Restore," which will restore the previous session, including opening any tabs, and recovering any text typed into forms, in the event of a system lockup or crash.

Searching for information is a common Internet practice, and Firefox 2 eases the search effort by providing an integrated search box on the toolbar. Popular search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and others are included in the search selection by default, and countless other search utilities can be easily added. Shopping sites, such as Amazon and EBay can also be added to the search list. By opening a new tab, search terms stay resident in the search box allowing for a simultaneous search of different search engines, each appearing in a new tab if so desired.

Much rapidly evolving information is currently transmitted through a variety of web feeds, such as the popular RSS format. Firefox 2 offers "Live Bookmarks," which automatically tracks updates to Websites or news feeds. With this feature, news sites such as CNN or Foxnews can be automatically and continuously monitored, indicating when new content has been added. A similar service is also offered for Websites frequently visited by the users, and will indicate if there has been any content change in that Website. By clicking on "Latest Headlines" in the bookmark toolbar, a display of the latest headlines from the selected news sources will appear. By

clicking on the headline, the full news story is displayed.

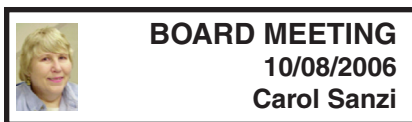
Many of us frequently fill out online forms and questionnaires. For those of us known to make typo errors or misspell words, Firefox 2 offers us an integral inline spell checker, without having to load an external application.

Many Websites utilize Java as a programming language; unless a late version of Java is installed, some Websites may not function properly. Firefox 2 resolves this issue by including and incorporating the recent Java 1.7 update.

Firefox 2 is written in much tighter code than IE7, with some pundits considering IE 7 as bloated. This is demonstrated by the different size of the downloads necessary to install each program. IE 7 for Windows XP is about 14 Megs in download size, while Firefox 2 for XP is only about 5 megabytes in size. Because the code is tighter, Firefox takes up less memory and system resources than IE 7. That may arguably promote improved system performance while Firefox 2 is loaded and running, compared to IE 7. There are some media reports that Firefox may also load many web pages slightly faster than IE.

There are many other reasons to consider Firefox 2, including thousands of available and free “add-ons” or “extensions” that can be selected for Firefox to improve the web surfing experience. By personal choice, I use a download manager, a PDF utility (offers the choice of downloading PDF files rather than opening them in a browser window), McAfee’s SiteAdvisor (a free utility that indicates the reliability and safety of Websites), an FTP utility

[Continued on page 21](#)



BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

President Gary DeNise, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairmen Tom Callow and Warner Mach, SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Carl Massie, Jr., and Member-at-Large Bob Clyne. Also present were Chuck Moery and Internet Committee Chairman Mike Bader. Arriving late was Vice-President Richard Jackson. The meeting was called to order at 12:07 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Bette Gay reported that there is \$7,493.09 in the treasury. The membership stands at 82.

Jim Vincent is October’s winner of a complimentary SEMCO membership on WJR’s “Internet Advisor” radio show. When contacted by Gary DeNise, he declined the membership. However, the board decided that the winner of this month and last month’s drawing would receive the monthly DATA BUS, even though they may not take advantage of attending the SEMCO meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

Mike Bader reported that the online SEMCO User Group’s membership stands at 23. He stated that the activity and interest is increasing.

Bob Clyne moved to authorize the two Members-at-Large board positions for 2007. Tom Callow seconded the motion, and it was carried.

Bob Clyne reported that he plans to include a membership directory and a ballot in the January DATA BUS.

[Continued on next page](#)

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach



SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Carl Massie, Jr.

December 10: Wireless Oakland:

Phillip R. Bertolini, Deputy County Executive/CIO of Oakland County will discuss Oakland County's initiative to provide free or low-cost wireless Internet Service to all of Oakland County's residents, businesses, and visitors, to provide PCs and technology training to those residents within Oakland County who generally don't have access to PCs and the Internet, and to help local governments plan for high-tech investments.

December 10: Novell SUSE Linux:

Paul F. McKeith, Technology Specialist/Data Center & Workgroup, will speak on Novell SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop, as well as the Microsoft/Novell Linux cooperation agreement, which was announced on November 2nd. For basic information on the agreement, the article at <http://www.linux-watch.com/news/NS2912974320.html> is recommended reading.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP **Rotating Volunteer Hosts**

December 10: Help Q & A:

Discussion directed by the audience.
No question is too simple!

Continued from previous page

If your personal information needs to be updated, please contact Bette Gay.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:41 p.m.



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

December 4, 2006: (First Monday), 6:45 p.m., 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.**

January 2007 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after meeting)

SEMCO Input and Members' Ads — Deadline: Sun., December 17, 11:59 p.m. Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use [Editor address on Page 2](#); e-mail address: clyne@lodden.com. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.

Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Contact the [Editor \(address Page 2\)](#).

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)

December 6, 7 p.m., (1st Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Range Rd., Marysville, Admin. Building. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Christmas party; call for information.

DCOM Computer Club

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

MacGroup- Detroit

December 17, 2:15 p.m.–5 p.m., (3rd Sunday): Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 313-571-9817. <<http://www.macgroup.org>>. Topic: Adobe Apps Gone Universal Binary: see the first Adobe apps to make the transition to the Intel Mac platform.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

December 16, 11:00 a.m., (3rd Saturday); (SIGs at 9:30); Ann Arbor Open School, 920 Miller Ave., Ann Arbor. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. Cassie at <cassiemac@yahoo.com> or 313-971-8743.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

December 9, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (2nd Saturday); MDLUG meetings will be at The Gaudior Academy located at 27100 Avondale Avenue in Inkster. Web: <<http://www.mdlug.org>>. Info: Raymond McLaughlin 248-960-1864.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group

December 14, 7:30 p.m., (2nd Thur.); General meeting; Fraternal Order of Eagles Hall in Clawson, 174 Bowers St. (one block North of 14-Mile and one block East of Main). Avi Drissman 248-232-7865. Web: <<http://www.themichiganapple.com>>.

Oak Park Computer Club

Every Fri., 10:15 a.m. at Oak Park Recreation Bldg, Oak Park Blvd. west of Coolidge.

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

December 5, 7:30 p.m., (1st Tuesday); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>>. Topic: How to Sell on EBay.

Wayne State University Mac User Group

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

Continued from page 18

to assist in uploading to a server, and several other free utilities.

Firefox is available as a free download for most popular operating systems, including all versions of Windows from 98 to XP (I have successfully used Firefox on a beta version of Vista), MAC OS X 10.2 or later, and later versions of Linux. Since it is not a major hog of system resources, it can run well on systems with a processor as slow as 233 MHz, and with as little as 64megs of memory.

I use Firefox extensively, and strongly recommend it. On my main computer I have IE 7, Firefox, Opera, and Netscape, all of which can happily coexist. By my own estimate, I probably use Firefox for 95% of my browsing activities. I can recommend it, and suggest that all users download it (it is free), and try it. Go to <<http://www.mozilla.com>> or <<http://www.getfirefox.com>> and give it a try.

WEBSITES:

<<http://www.mozilla.com>>

<<http://www.getfirefox.com>>

Ira Wilsker is an APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Program Director of Management Development at the Lamar Institute of Technology, Beaumont TX; and a radio & TV show host. Contact him at <iwilsker@apcug.net>.



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

Genealogy: Cook

IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Yuhasz

Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz

MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz

Security: Bader

MS Office for Windows: Callow

MS Word: Clyne

Networking: Callow

Novell Network: Yuhasz

Quicken: Clyne

Geocaching: Cook

Bader, Mike—586-573-7330, 9am–8pm..... mdbader@flash.net

Callow, Tom—248-642-5770 9am–5pm tcallow@monaghanpc.com

Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm clyne@lodden.com

Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime jerrycandotoo@juno.com

Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves..... scook48227@ameritech.net

Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm jvanders@myself.com

Yuhasz, Steve..... Help@yuhasz.org



**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

SEMCO CALENDAR—December/January

**ArvinMeritor Building
2135 West Maple Road
Troy, Michigan**

December 10—SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM 1:45 p.m. **Program: Wireless Oakland:** Phillip R. Bertolini, Deputy County Executive/CIO of Oakland County will discuss Oakland County's initiative to provide free or low-cost wireless Internet Service to all of Oakland County's residents, businesses and visitors, to provide PCs and technology training to those residents within Oakland County who generally don't have access to PCs and the Internet, and to help local governments plan for high-tech investments.

SOCIAL PERIOD 3:15 p.m. Refreshments! (Reminder: We must continue to maintain a neat environment.)

NOVICE-IBM GROUP 3:45 p.m. **Program: Help From An Expert With Discussion Directed By The Audience.**

SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45 p.m. **Program: Novell SUSE Linux:** Paul F. McKeith, Technology Specialist/Data Center & Workgroup, will speak on Novell SUSE Linux Enterprise Desktop, as well as the Microsoft/Novell Linux cooperation agreement, which was announced on November 2nd. For basic information on the agreement, the article at <<http://www.linux-watch.com/news/NS2912974320.html>> is recommended reading.

SIG-ADVANCED, December 4, 2006—MONDAY, 6:45 p.m., (First Monday), 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; library is west of Coolidge. Info: Franz Breidenich 248-398-3359. **TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing.**

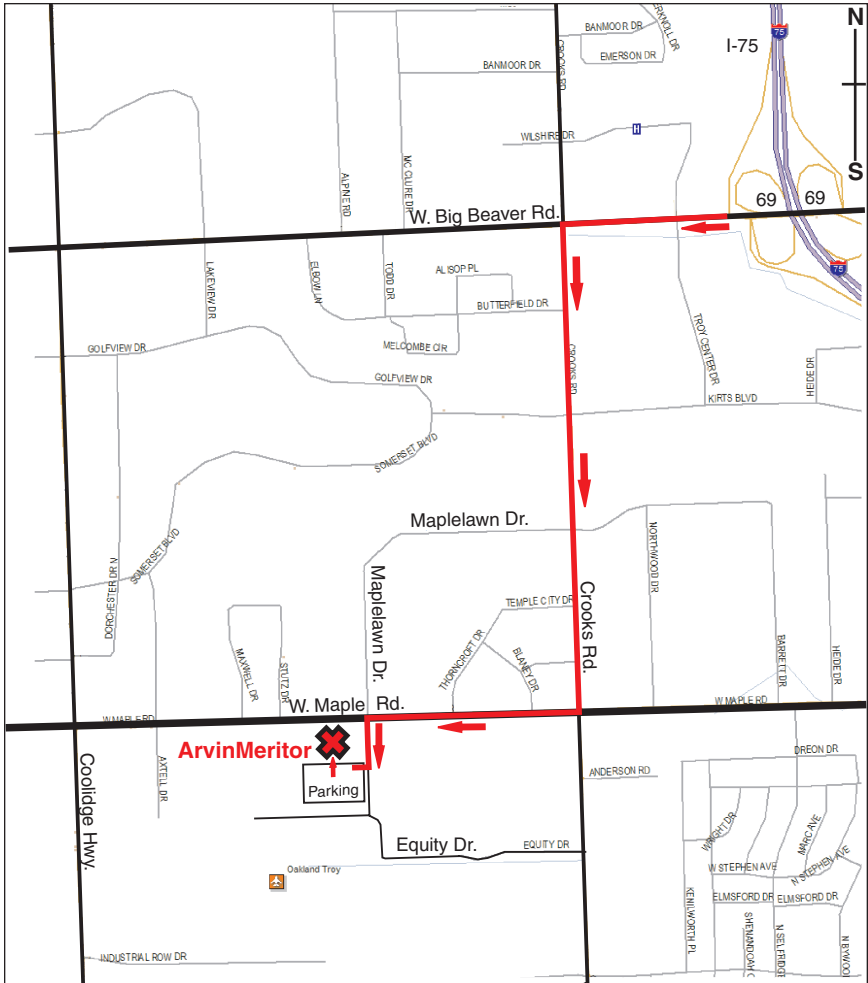
January 14—SEMCO SUNDAY

<http://www.semco.org>

PUBLIC INVITED

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

**SEMCO Meetings at [ArvinMeritor](#)
2135 West Maple Road, Troy, MI 48084**



DIRECTIONS

From I-75, take Exit 69 to westbound Big Beaver Rd. (16 Mile). Turn left (South) on Crooks Rd. Turn right (West) on Maple Rd. (15 Mile). Turn left (South) on Maplelawn Dr. Turn right into the parking lot at the rear of the ArvinMeritor building. The building is shaped like an X. Enter the building thru the South entrance at the center of the rear of the building. Follow the SEMCO signs.

SEMCO thanks the [ArvinMeritor](#) Corporation for their hospitality in providing their facility for our meetings.



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

SEMCO (future meetings)

December 10

January 14

**FIRST CLASS MAIL
Dated Material**

**SEMCO: A Community Organization
Helping People for the 21st Century**