

Official Newsletter
SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS



Volume 32

October 2007

Number 10

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

Feedback

I heard from several readers who said they have been successfully traveling with only a "special" flash drive for some time. I hadn't seen a review on this, or read about it as a meeting presentation last year if they were available, I read a lot, especially the UG newsletters I get. I only learned about the USB U3 drives last spring when I purchased a SanDisk Flash Drive that I thought was a bargain. When I plugged it into the USB port just to take a look, I thought it was installing something on my HD. I was upset and wanted to know what was going on without my permission. Then I read the enclosed folder about the software preinstalled on that "U3" drive, and other software available on their Web site for it. I was confused and tried unsuccessfully to learn more about it. Around the first of the year was the first I read a review, but without understanding it, I was still confused. Last month I included the article about that topic because I know I'm not the only person behind on new technology knowledge.

Lets Look At The Pluses!

I reviewed Microsoft Money a few years ago and started actually using it when my favorite money program, "Managing Your Money," turned to providing software for banks. I have differences with some Microsoft policies, such as Genuine Advantage, and their product activation process, but when it comes to MS Money; that tech support is the best in the business. Each version I have used came with three years of support via an

800 number. They try hard to answer your questions and do not speak broken English. So far, I've talked to tech support in Newfoundland three times, and they have resolved my questions, followed by an e-mail thanking me for using MS Money and saying that if the issue was still not resolved, they are there to clear it up. The phone waiting time has never been long. What a great value for a product that costs so little. There are things I would like to see improved; such as when I back it up before closing the program, it doesn't limit the number of backups on my external USB flash drive, but that's a minor problem.

Emergency ID And Medical Information

What if you were traveling and became involved in an accident leaving you incapacitated? How would an ambulance medic and ER facility know how to correctly treat you if your medical condition was special, or you had preferences? In my case, I'm diabetic and now take Coumadin (blood thinner) so it would be important for the medic to know that. Identification Devices L.L.C. offers a compact USB Flash drive to hold vital information that could help a medic make the right decisions. Wear it around your neck, or even put it on your key chain so a medic can see it (the Medical logo is on one side) when examining you, and can then plug it into the USB port on their laptop. Instantly, it gives the default choice to open your information screen. That instantly brings to their computer screen a form with your necessary medical and other information, along with your picture. You simply type in all the necessary information yourself, no complicated

instructions to follow, just fill in the labeled blanks.

The company sent me one to try and I was impressed with how easy it was to use and type in the necessary data. The data includes your personal information with emergency phone numbers for whomever you designate, and your doctors, drugs, important medical warnings (if necessary), your insurance companies and also your attorney information. There is a spot for your picture in the upper corner, and even a way to load PDF files for important documents such as a living will, power of attorney, your own personal instructions and other important documents if you want them there. I was impressed that most of the blanks in the form could be expanded to a larger space by double-clicking them to insert additional information, such as additional doctors, medications and other vital information. It can be password protected if you desire, but I wouldn't want that. The MSRP is \$24.95 + \$4.95 S & H.

They are offering DealsGuy readers a \$2.50 discount, but only if you call 1-866-955-0535 to order and mention the DealsGuy column. Larger orders can get a better discount. Ignoring the discount, you can order it on their Web site <<http://www.identificationdevices.net>> using your credit card. I think this product is a great value.

Be Aware

If you are interested in either of the products below, be sure to do your homework and check their Web site for further information because I edited a lot of information out of them to make them fit. I have not tried either product.

Hope My Wife Doesn't Use This Remote Control Stuff On Me!

Anyplace Control Software released version 4.0 of Anyplace Control, an acknowledged remote monitoring solution. The new version extends the frontiers of remote control and now can bypass routers and firewalls, as well as support PCs with dynamic IPs.

Anyplace Control displays the desktop of the remote computer, letting you use your own keyboard and mouse to control it remotely. At any point in time, and to any place in the world that has Internet connection, you can monitor your PC and get data transferred to or from it. The program can be used in a LAN, and it doesn't need a Web connection. Anyplace Control can connect to multiple computers at a time. With Anyplace Control, you will get the smoothest remote connection experience along with full control over the system without an external static IP address. Another good thing is that the program can automatically bypass routers and firewalls that lie between the remote computer and your machine.

You no longer need to spend time sending files via e-mail because it's easier to transfer them directly. The program can transfer any kind of data, and you can be sure that the information you send will be delivered immediately with no response delay. Home users can use the program to get access to their office computers and work from home, or check their own PC while away from home.

Anyplace Control runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows and costs \$22 (USD) for a single-user license. Licensed customers are entitled to free technical support and upgrades. More information on Anyplace Control,

as well as a free trial copy, is available free of charge from <<http://www.anyplace-control.com>>.

"I'd like to offer your group a 10% discount. Please contact me at <info@anyplace-control.com> and name your group to get the discount." [DealsGuy comment: take a close look at their refund policy and the discount!].

Regards,

Goncharuk Yuriy

Chief Executive Officer

<yura@anyplace-control.com>

Direct download link: <<http://www.anyplace-control.com/anyplace-control/data/AnyplaceControlInstall.exe>> (2.7 MB)

A Freebie For Managing Your Downloads

FreeDownloadManager.org announced the release of a new version of their Free Download Manager. The list of FDM features includes accelerating downloads up to 600%, resuming broken downloads, simultaneous downloading from several mirrors, http/https/ftp/bittorrent support, flash video downloads support, video conversion and more. FDM 2.5 is released under the GPL license and is now open-source software.

The new version of Free Download Manager stands out due to its expanded possibilities. Now, FDM works as an upload manager as well, making it easy to share files with other people. FDM now allows downloading files using Bittorrent protocol, as well as downloading video from video sites, such as YouTube, Google Video, MySpace videos, etc. The video can be saved in native .flv format or converted to one of the more popular video formats. The FDM Team has also added more flexibility to the software

providing an opportunity to control FDM remotely, via the Internet. Another new feature, portable mode, will be especially appreciated by users who want to always have the program close at hand. They can easily create FDM portable version and enjoy the software on every computer without another installation.

For more information on FDM, visit the product web site: <<http://www.freedownloadmanager.org>>

Download link: <<http://www.freedownloadmanager.org/fdminst.exe>>

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my Web site (most not offering a discount). 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 Cheapskate) Click <[bobclick at bellsouth dot net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net)>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.

Bob Click is a member of the Greater Orlando Computer Users Group.

Computer History

1993: IBM announces OS/2 for Windows..



**Online Weather
Resources May Be
Lifesavers
By Ira Wilsker**

We just learned a valuable lesson from the hit we took recently from Hurricane Humberto. At 8am on a Wednesday, a local TV weatherman was saying that the clouds in the Gulf would not amount to anything. At 10am, the National Hurricane Center <<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>> announced that it was Tropical Depression 9, and we were put under a tropical storm warning. At 1pm, the National Hurricane Center announced that it was Tropical Storm Humberto. When it came ashore here in the wee hours of Thursday morning, it was a hurricane. According to Senior Hurricane Specialist James Franklin, of the National Hurricane Center,

“To put this development in perspective — no tropical cyclone in the historical record has ever reached this intensity at a faster rate near landfall. It would be nice to know, someday, why this happened.”

Whether a tropical storm, hurricane, tornado, severe thunderstorm, or other major weather event, we need to be informed about what natural events may be threatening us. If we are kept informed, we may be better able to keep our families safe, and prepare for the potential event.

Now that we are in the most active part of the hurricane season, and living on a coastal plain near the Gulf of Mexico, tropical weather is a major concern to me and others so situated. Arguably one of the best resources to keep track of tropical weather is the website of the National Hurricane Center at <<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>>.

This site has what may be the most comprehensive information on tropical weather available. Its maps of projected storm tracks and wind fields are widely used by both the print and electronic media to show where the storms are likely to be going. A wealth of other information is freely available as well, including hurricane safety, radar and satellite images, free public news feeds available via RSS, and e-mail alerts. Public advisories are posted in English and Spanish, and forecast advisories and discussions are posted as well. Data and graphics on this site are frequently updated, with typically a six hour schedule; when storms threaten land, updates are more frequent, typically on a three hour cycle. This excellent service, along with its poignant graphics of current storm locations and projected storm tracks, has rendered the archaic paper hurricane tracking charts which required manual updating obsolete.

The “granddaddy” of weather sites is the National Weather Service at <<http://www.weather.gov>>. The heart of the site is an interactive weather map where clicking on the map will open up a localized web page displaying the desired information. Tabs on the top of the map will display other maps showing warnings and forecasts, graphical forecasts, a traditional national weather map, radar images, detailed water and flood information, air quality, satellite images, and climate information. By entering a city and state in the search box on the page, detailed local weather information will be displayed including a “7-Day” forecast, and other comprehensive information.

There are many fine commercial weather sites online from a variety of sources, such as the Weather

Underground, and the Weather Channel. The Weather Channel obtained the valuable domain name <<http://www.weather.com>> where it posts detailed weather information. Hyperlinked topics available include weather news, travel weather, driving and traffic reports, healthy living, home and family, sports and recreation, and information about the Weather Channel. At the top of the page, comprehensive local weather can be displayed by entering a city or zipcode. The local page shows the current temperature and heat index (or wind chill), weather videos, and a 36-hour forecast. Links lead to hourly weather forecasts, a 10-day forecast, and an air quality forecast.

In March of 1994, while the Internet was in its infancy, there was no comprehensive local weather information for this Gulf region, so I created my own non-commercial weather page, the Golden Triangle Weather Page at <<http://www.beaumontweather.com>>. During most of the year it displays local weather information, current satellite and radar images of the area, and regional and national weather maps. Without a lot of current interest in weather topics, it only gets a few hundred hits per day. During hurricane season however, the number of hits on the site skyrocket, getting as many as 60,000 hits per day. I created a template where I can quickly add contemporary tropical storm and hurricane information to the site utilizing public domain resources. The template includes the latest tracks and predictions from the National Hurricane Center, textual reports and predictions, wind charts, and two other features not commonly found on tropical weather pages. One of the unusual items on

my weather site during hurricane season, and only displayed when there is tropical activity, is a highly detailed tracking and prediction chart from the U.S. Navy's Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Center in Norfolk, Virginia. This Navy chart differs from others because of its detail, and includes a display of the projected width of storm winds, as well as charts predicting wind speed and times, and "CPA" (closest point of approach) showing how close the center of the storm will pass from selected cities. Another unusual feature included on my page when storms are active is what is known in meteorology circles as a "spaghetti map," which shows the individual and often different predicted storm tracks using 15 different prediction models. This is what the media refers to when they talk about the models showing projected storm paths.

Some people would like real-time weather alerts if storms threaten, and would like to see current local weather radar such that they can better plan their day. Yahoo! offers thousands of free "widgets" which are computer desktop graphical displays that are frequently updated. Some widgets simply display current local weather conditions in a variety of formats. Others only display weather alerts and bulletins for selected cities or zipcodes. One that I have on my desktop full time is the "Texas Doppler" radar widget <<http://widgets.yahoo.com/gallery/view.php?widget=39762>> which can selectively display the weather radar from dozens of Texas TV stations. I have the weather radar from one of my local TV stations displayed, which automatically updates every few minutes. There is also an option to animate the radar display to show the



movement of storms. Similar displays are available for other states and countries as well.

Weather is something that we all must deal with. The Internet is a great way to keep up with it and try to keep our families safe.

WEBSITES:

<<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>>. National Hurricane Center

<<http://www.weather.gov>> National Weather Service

<<http://www.weather.com>>. Weather Channel

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

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How To Answer the Question? By Mike Kerwin

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OK, I'm not being mysterious but addressing an issue that most Geeks encounter often. I suspect that most of you have been asked The Question many times by friends, relatives, and acquaintances. I refer to the expectant "What do you recommend as the best _____?" (Fill in the blank for PC, notebook, PDA, digital camera, camcorder, DVR.) Folks who know me and my penchant for gadgets and gizmos frequently ask me this. Lately the most popular subject is notebook computers. Now I do get a bit of a

stroke that I am asked for my opinion about things digital, and I do understand the seemingly overwhelming number of choices being marketed, but I also get frustrated when my response elicits blank stares.

My thinking is that people ask this due to despair at the multitude of choices currently available and the wide range of pricing options. And, of course, the options lead to even more confusion. A few years ago the world seemed to be simpler when the number of manufacturers of notebook PCs diminished to just a handful. Today, despite the consolidation, the remaining firms now offer several complete "lines" of notebooks along this continuum: superlight, ultralight, mobile performance, entertainment, general purpose, budget, desktop replacement... You could probably suggest even more categories. Now too we have designer notebooks in a range of case colors and branded logos (Ferrari, LiveStrong, Hello Kitty). Then there is screen size and the directly linked weight factor; since LCD screens use glass front panels and glass is rather heavy, the larger the screen the heavier the device is to lug about.

Answer a Question with a Question

So what do I have to offer in the way of advice? I've learned to follow the experts on my reply: from the online Buying Guides back to Socrates, the recommendation is to answer with a question. (I don't think Socrates knew about decision trees, but that's what we have here.) Specifically I first ask, "Do you have a price point in mind?" followed by "Do you have a brand preference?" These two questions narrow the choices considerably. I know some individuals and organizations are

strictly wedded to one brand, such as Dell, and that becomes a major factor in deciding on what is the “best” in that environment. Price is also a great divider of the pack with budget machines being advertised under \$500 and high-end performance units listed for prices around \$3K—a very wide range.

The next question along this tree is, “What do you intend to do with the computer?” The answer will be very different for a Road Warrior backed by a corporation which can deduct business expenses versus a student heading off to college, or someone who just wants to use it for e-mail at home without being tied to a cable. For example, the weight of a notebook can be a major consideration if you travel frequently, as everything gets heavier at the end of a long flight or stressful day of sales calls. For travelers the features needed can also be important considerations as some of the lightest notebooks don’t have built-in optical drives (see Dell) but use optional peripherals which can add to weight, bulk, and extra parts to keep track of (recommendation is to have as few pieces as possible for simplicity’s sake).

The Fine Print

Speaking of weight, you must read the fine print of the specifications, as I learned this week looking at the new Toshiba Protégé line of notebooks. This company is making great claims for this “superlight” line. Digging a little further one soon discovers that the quoted weight is for the main clamshell case and internal parts. This is really light at under 2 lbs and is possible through the use of solid state memory in place of a traditional spinning disk HD. But, it won’t do much without a battery, which adds at least 0.6 lbs additional for the

limited capacity, standard battery; an optional, long-life battery weighs more. And then there is the transformer (aka brick) which weighs in at 0.5 lbs. Then one might look at whether the 68 GB of HD equivalent would be sufficient running Vista which reportedly takes nearly 10 GB just for the OS and then allocates an additional 15% of the HD for Restore points. These can take up lots of the internal HD and then one would have to consider carrying an external drive for storing data, presentations, pictures, etc which could add additional weight. And for all of this one would pay nearly \$3K.

At the other end of the price scale are the budget models which barely have enough onboard memory (or capacity) to run the old WinXP. As more Vista applications become available over the next couple of years, these machines may be left in the dust, unable to accommodate current versions of software. This could lead to early replacement before the expected lifespan of 3–5 years.

Then there are optional/necessary features you might want in a notebook. One feature is an optical drive which most, but not all, units have as a standard feature. Then there are different flavors of CD/DVD readability and writability. Virtually all of these units will read and write CDs and DVDs, but perhaps not all three formats of DVD, plus the capability for dual layer data storage and, in some cases, LightScribe technology to burn labels on the back side of special disks. Unfortunately the industry has not settled on a standard technology for a new generation of disks to store HD movies (and eventually data), so if this feature is important to you, you might

plan to add the capability externally sometime in the future.

Another common feature is WiFi. This technology has advanced from A to B to G and now to N, but not all notebooks support all of the types so again you have to read the fine print.

For a notebook to be sent off to college, you might look for a built-in webcam to keep in touch and help ward off homesickness by the young adults. You'll also want to look at anti-theft features such as locking adaptors and "phone-home" software. Some of the new anti-theft features are biometric password-type locks such as fingerprint scanners and wireless proximity alarms (if the PC goes one way and the owner with the alarm gets too far away then the alarm sounds).

Another consideration is the warranty provided. Notebook PCs are very compact so popping the top to add or replace defective parts is not something to be undertaken lightly. I recommend checking to see how long any unit is under warranty and what is covered, such as what is the turnaround for repairs and where are they done (and who is responsible for getting it there).

In the end, I think the process is straightforward, though it may require several decision branches to arrive at the "Best" recommendation for a specific individual. These details always seem nagging pests when searching for instant gratification, but the old adage of "Buy in Haste, Repent at Leisure" can be avoided by taking just a little time up front to make a good choice. I hope this approach might be of use to some of you.

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Is There a Laptop in Your Future?

By Sandy Berger

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Want to get a laptop so you can surf the Web from your lawn chair this summer? Or perhaps you just want to be able to share your Internet connection between your computer and your wife's computer?

In either case, a wireless network is essential, but sometimes interference makes wireless problematic. Let me shed some light on the subject.

The main component of a wireless network is a wireless router (or a wired router and wireless access point). I talked about routers in my previous *A Router Can Protect your Computer* article, so I won't go into the details about routers except to say that a wireless router is simply a router that works on radio wave frequencies to connect computer and other equipment without hard-wiring. A wireless access point works in the same manner.

If you are technically inclined, you might want to try to set the router up yourself. The setup is not too difficult, but adding the necessary security can be problematic for a technophobe. So if you are in that category, hire someone to set up the wireless network for you. If you try it yourself and can't get the security

in place you will also want to consider hiring someone to secure your network. An unsecured wireless network leaves your computer vulnerable to infiltration by others and can cause numerous problems including identity theft. Once you add the security to your router, you are safe from having others jump on your network. The software for the security is included with your router.

For the most part, wireless networks work very well, but I have seen many cases where interference can cause problems. The most popular wireless networks right now are 802.11b and 802.11g. Both of these popular wireless connections work on the 2.4 GHz frequency that is already crowded with wireless telephones, microwave ovens, garage door openers, wireless mice, remote controls, and baby monitors.

So if you are thrown off your wireless network when your garage door opens or the wireless telephone rings, you will want to assume that you have two or more gadgets interfering with each other. When trouble-shooting wireless interference problems remember that the proximity of the items makes a big difference. If your wireless telephones work on the 2.4 GHz frequency and cause interference with your “b” or “g” router, you can, of course, go out and purchase phones that work on a different frequency to eliminate the interference. But you may not have to do that. Simply moving your telephone away from the router may do the trick.

While the 2.4GHz frequency is quite crowded, it does have 11 different channels to choose from. So look in the documentation that came with the phones and/or the documentation that came with the router to learn how to change the channel. Once you know

how to do that you simply need to make sure that the router and the other piece of equipment are on different frequencies so they don’t interfere with each other. Choose channel 1, 6, or 11 for your router to give it the best chance at a frequency that does not overlap with any other frequencies.

If you still have interference problems, you can consider purchasing an 802.11n router. These are the newest wireless routers. They work on the much less crowded 5.8 GHz frequency. The “n” routers have greater speed and range than the “b” or “g” routers. I put one in my home where other routers had trouble transmitting the signal far enough and it works like a charm. I can even put my 5.8 GHz wireless phone right by the router without any interference. There is currently one caveat in choosing an “n” router. The “n specification has not yet been completely finalized. That means that there could be some minor changes in the technology before it is completely standardized. So you will be purchasing a router that is what they call a draft or interim model.

To the average user, this means that if the final standard is changed drastically it could possibly be incompatible with the “interim” “n” router you have purchased. That possibility is remote, and even if it happens, your system will still work. You might, however, not be compatible with other “n” systems. That is not likely to happen and, if the standard is changed when it is finalized, most router manufacturers will be able to send you a firmware update to make your router compatible.

I love my wireless “n” router, and while others have chided me for being on the “bleeding edge,” I don’t think

I am taking much of a chance, and it provided a solution to my problem.

As more and more computers are being purchased for the home, wireless networking is becoming more and more popular. While we haven't yet actually freed ourselves from our piles of wires, sitting on the patio, in the kitchen, or in the bedroom surfing the Internet without any tethers can be a very freeing experience.

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**Malware Rootkit
Detection and Removal
By Ira Wilsker**

According to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, a rootkit is, "...a set of software tools intended to conceal running processes, files or system data from the operating system. Rootkits have their origin in benign applications, but in recent years have been used increasingly by malware to help intruders maintain access to systems while avoiding detection. Rootkits exist for a variety of operating systems, such as Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X, Linux and Solaris. Rootkits often modify parts of the operating system or install themselves as drivers or kernel modules." In simpler terms, the contemporary rootkits are a type of malware that can install a virus or spyware in a way that is designed to

avoid detection by traditional antivirus and anti-spyware software. Rootkits sometimes are buried deep inside the operating system or registry in such a way as to avoid detection by traditional means while they carry out their nefarious purposes.

Most of the popular security software installed on our computers offer little or no protection from rootkits, and may be incapable of stopping the malware from engaging in its dangerous behaviors. In recent months some of the major and lesser security software publishers have released a variety of utilities to detect and remove rootkits. Some of these publishers, including some of the best known commercial software publishers, have generously released their anti-rootkit products as free software, sometimes with an indication that the anti-rootkit product will be included in the next major release of their integrated security suites.

One of the first rootkit detection utilities released was F-Secure Blacklight <<http://www.f-secure.com/blacklight>>, which will be free at least until October 1, 2007. Blacklight can detect and remove rootkits that are undetectable by antivirus software, and is already integrated in its F-Secure Internet Security 2007. Blacklight has been proven to be a reliable rootkit detector, and has earned a faithful following, as well as kudos from the technical press. Blacklight would be a worthwhile "first choice" for those who want to detect and remove rootkits.

Popular security software publisher McAfee has released its Rootkit Detective, available for free download at <<http://vil.nai.com/vil/stinger/rkstinger.aspx>>. Rootkit Detective is a powerful and full featured rootkit

remover, so powerful and thorough that McAfee actually issues a warning about using it on its website, “McAfee Rootkit Detective should only be used by knowledgeable individuals at the direction of, and with the support of, a representative from McAfee Avert Labs or McAfee Technical Support. Improper usage of this tool could result in damage to your applications or operating system.” Rootkit Detective is so powerful that it also detects legitimate files that may be hidden in the operating system, such as legitimate security software. Users of McAfee Rootkit Detective should completely read and understand the provisos on the web page before using it.

Trend Micro has released its RootkitBuster for free download <<http://www.trendmicro.com/download/rbuster.asp>>. According to Trend Micro, “Trend Micro RootkitBuster is a rootkit scanner that offers ability to scan for hidden files, registry entries, processes, drivers and hooked system service. It also includes the cleaning capability for hidden files and registry entries. I have personally used RootkitBuster and found it very easy to use.

Microsoft, always trying to be a one-stop resource for all software needs, recently released an updated and free version of its RootkitRevealer. This product was originally released as freeware by its creator, SysInternals, which was subsequently bought out by Microsoft. RootkitRevealer is easy to use, and can detect all known rootkits listed at <<http://www.rootkit.com>>. Now being a Microsoft product, RootkitRevealer is sure to earn a large following.

Another very popular anti-rootkit product is available for free from Grisoft,

known as AVG Anti Rootkit Free. It is available for download at <<http://www.grisoft.com/doc/download-free-anti-rootkit>>. According to Grisoft, “Rootkits are used to hide the presence of a malicious object like trojans or keyloggers on your computer. If a threat uses rootkit technology to hide itself it is very hard to find the malware on your PC.” I also have personally used AVG Anti Rootkit Free and found it very easy to use with an intuitive interface. I also found it, in my limited experience, one of the fastest rootkit scanners that I tried. It would be a very good choice for anyone who wants to detect and remove rootkits from his system.

Rootkits have lately become a method of choice for miscreants and other criminals to take control of your computer without your knowledge. Since rootkits are almost undetectable using conventional security software they pose a substantial threat to our computing safety. Rootkits have recently been cited as a common tool used by identity thieves to hide keyloggers on our computers that can evade detection. Keyloggers are an especially dangerous type of spyware that can capture usernames, passwords, credit card numbers, and other sensitive personal information, and send that information to criminal elements. While most keyloggers can be detected and cleaned by anti-spyware software, keyloggers that are also rootkits may be undetectable unless explicitly detected by anti-rootkit software such as the titles listed above.

While not as well known as its better known cousins, viruses, trojans, and spyware, rootkits are becoming a more common threat that may slip through our defenses. I strongly recommend

that everyone download and install one or two of the free products above and periodically scans his computer for rootkit threats.

WEBSITES:

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rootkit>>.

<<http://www.f-secure.com/blacklight>>.

<<http://vil.nai.com/vil/stinger/rkstinger.aspx>>. (McAfee).

<<http://www.trendmicro.com/download/rbuster.asp>>.

<<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/sysinternals/Security/RootkitRevealer.msp>>.

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

<<http://www.grisoft.com/doc/download-free-anti-rootkit>>.

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

Hard Drives and Partitions **By Gene Barlow**

Lots has happened in hard drives in the past 8-10 years that I have been giving presentations on partitioning and backing them up. Ten years ago, the largest hard drives were only a few hundred MB. We had not yet seen the 300GB hard drives that are common today. Also, the price of hard drives was much higher then than it is today. So, conserving hard drive space was a bigger issue then.

Today, most of us have more hard drive space that we know what to do with and we see new 250GB drives

selling for under \$50. Things have really changed.

In light of this new environment of cheap and plentiful hard drive space, I no longer push keeping FAT32 partitions down under 16GB in order not to waste more than 10% of the drive space. Most users are now using NTFS which also has cluster problems, but these are not nearly as big as the FAT and FAT32 cluster problems.

The cluster problem was that each file needed to be stored on an even number of clusters. So, the wasted space was equal to half the size of a cluster times the number of files stored. The worst case, was when you had lots of little files stored in large partitions with large cluster sizes. So, a 256KB Shortcut in Windows would take up 32MB of space when stored on the hard drive. Hence the large wasted space. But a few very large files stored in one large partition would not waste as much space as lots of little files stored in that same partition. Backup image files are about the biggest files you will find in Windows. Some of these are 30-40GB each. So, you may only have a few dozen image files stored on your external hard drive before you fill it up. So, even a large cluster space with very few large image files will waste very little hard drive space. Hence, even if we were still worried about wasted space on hard drives, backup image files would be an exception and having large partitions would be much easier to manage than many partitions that may waste more space because you could not fit large files in a partially full partition. Hence the recommendation to just use folders to store image files on one very large partition. Most users do not have a partitioning utility to adjust

the size of the partitions as the drive gets full of large image files. Folders work better in this case and do not require a partitioning utility.

Another change in my recommendations over what they were 10 years ago is that I now no longer recommend a separate Application partition from the Operating System partition and the Data partition. Today, I recommend that you store your application programs in the same partition as your operating system. I do this for several reasons. First, applications want to install in the operating system partition by default. You have to direct them to a separate application partition if you want to keep them separate. This makes installing applications slightly more complicated than letting them install where they want to install naturally.

Hard drive space and wasted space is no longer a big issue, so a larger c: drive is not a problem. In running multiple operating systems, you could share the same applications between two operating systems if you did it correctly. That required a separate APPS partition and then you would install the same application twice into that partition. Once from one operating system and the other time from the other operating system. You had to do this to keep the registry entries on both operating systems correct. Keeping two operating systems in synch with one application partition was a challenge for even the more advanced user, so today, I recommend keeping the application with each operating system, even if it means having that operating system installed twice on your computer.

So, today, I recommend three partitions should be used. One for

the operating system and application programs. One for all of the data files. And one on an external hard drive for backing up the other two partitions. This is the best way to go today with our large inexpensive hard drives on our PCs.

I hope this helps you understand why I have changed my recommendations.

Used with permission.

User Group Relations is Gene and Linda Barlow's company which represents selected software manufacturers to user groups.

User Group Relations is at <<http://www.ugr.com>>. E-mail to <[gene\(at\)ugr.com](mailto:gene(at)ugr.com)>..



**Open Office 2.3—Popular
FREE Office Suite
By Ira Wilsker**

Every school day I work with college students who have a need for a full featured office suite on their computers, but who also lack the fiscal resources it takes to purchase the ubiquitous market leader, Microsoft Office. I also have first hand knowledge of local small business owners who have a similar need for a comprehensive office suite, but lack the budgetary capacity to put a licensed version of Microsoft office on each of their computers. I have worked with low income single parents, struggling to properly educate their kids, who have a need for a quality office program, but simply cannot afford to purchase Microsoft office from one of the local “big box” stores. These people, and many others, have a valid need for a full featured office suite, and can either not afford to purchase one, or desire to use a “freeware” product instead of the monopolistic market leader. Fortunately

for these people, and everyone else for that matter, there is a free alternative: Open Office.

Open Office version 2.3 was recently released. Open Office is a free, comprehensive suite of office software that is feature rich, compatible with the market leader (Microsoft Office), and uses a similar interface requiring a near zero learning curve for those already familiar with office software products.

Open Office consists of six integrated modules that allow the user to easily accomplish virtually any traditional office task. The modules are the word processor "Writer"; an equation and formula writing utility "Math"; a powerful graphics package "Draw"; a full featured spreadsheet "Calc"; a comprehensive database utility "Base"; and a presentation utility "Impress."

Arguably, the most widely utilized office software utility is a word processor, and Open Office provides a great one with Writer. Writer is not just a full featured word processor that is a direct competitor of Microsoft's popular Word, it also incorporates many of the desktop publishing capabilities competitive with Publisher. Many common tasks are automated by the use of a "Wizard" which provides templates for letters, faxes, agendas, minutes, mail merge, and other routine tasks. An "AutoCorrect Dictionary" can check and correct spelling as words are being typed. For those who need to export documents to the web, Writer can save documents in the universal HTML format, allowing for rapid uploading to a web server. Publishing needs such as a table of contents, bibliography, and an index can be easily created with Writer. Documents can be saved in the universal standard Open Document format

(XML), or in the common "portable document format" also known as PDF, without the need for an external PDF writer. For those who have a commercial office suite at work and Open Office at home, and for those who collaborate and exchange documents in Microsoft's Word (doc) format, Open Office can read and write the doc format. Writer is a very capable word processor that can satisfy almost every writing need, and best of all it is free.

Possibly the second most utilized office software product is the spreadsheet, and Open Office obliges with its Calc software. Calc can do whatever most other spreadsheets can do, including number crunching, charts, and tables. The interface and menus will be familiar to any one who has used a major competing product such as Excel. Formulas can be entered similarly to other spreadsheets, but an added feature is the ability to use common terms instead of formulas and cell numbers; one example is to simply type "quantity * price" to get a sales amount, rather than typing geekish terms like "=B4*C4." Open Office spreadsheet documents can be saved in the universal open document format (XML) or in PDF format. Calc can also read and write Microsoft Excel's XLS format allowing for the easy exchange of files between products.

Many of us do presentations, and Microsoft's PowerPoint has become the de facto standard for presentation software. Open Office can accept the PowerPoint challenge with its Impress software. Virtually anything that can be done in PowerPoint can be done with Impress, and the intuitive and familiar interface that many of us are already accustomed to is substantially preserved

with Impress. Impress offers animations and special effects to rival PowerPoint. Like other Open Office components, Impress can save its files in the open document format, or as a “Flash” presentation in the SWF format. Not to be outdone by its competition, Impress can read and write in the PowerPoint PPT format allowing PowerPoint files to be opened and edited in Impress, and played on any PowerPoint equipped computer.

Open Office is not just a Windows product; there are versions for Mac OS-X, Linux, Solaris, and Free BSD. Open Office is also not just available in English, but also in dozens of other languages ranging from Albanian and Afrikaans to Vietnamese and Welsh. Open Office is truly a universal office application that can easily serve in a domestic application or with the largest multinational corporations. What is especially nice about Open Office is its price; it is free. Open Office can be downloaded from openoffice.org. It is a large download, in excess of 120 megs, depending on version desired, but it is free. For those who may want to distribute Open Office on a CD, such as to employees or students, an image file for a CD can be downloaded and burned to as many discs as desired for distribution.

Now when one of my students commiserates that he can not afford a full featured office suite, I will refer him to the free Open Office. Since it can read and write Microsoft Office file formats, there should be minimal problems moving files between home and school. For those who desire to do first class presentation, Impress will do an impressive job. Writer can write with the best of them. Calc can calculate and

hold its own with the best competitive spreadsheets. Draw can read almost all popular graphics formats and compose its own popular graphics, and also output in SWF “Flash” format. The Base database program can read and write almost all database formats, and easily create reports. There is not much missing in Open Office, and it has definitely gained attention. According to the Open Office website (Market Share Analysis), over 100 million copies have been downloaded worldwide, and countless more distributed on disc.

To quote a popular phrase from the old “Mikey” TV commercial, “Try it—you’ll like it.” I tried it and I liked it. You can too. There is nothing to lose, other than some download time. Go ahead and download Open Office 2.3. You may not need another office program after you do.

WEBSITES:

<<http://www.openoffice.org>>.

<<http://download.openoffice.org/2.3.0/index.html>>—FREE Download

<http://distribution.openoffice.org/cdrom/iso_download.html>—FREE CD Image

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 and TV show host. Contact him at <iwilsker@apcug.net>.

Documents! Spreadsheets!
Presentations! A suite of free
software tools is available at:
<<http://www.ibm.com/software/lotus/symphony>>. For Linux and
Windows.



BOARD MEETING

9/9/2007

Carol Sanzi

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

President Gary DeNise, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Co-Chairman Tom Callow, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. Also present was Internet Committee Chairman Mike Bader. Arriving late were Vice President Richard Jackson and SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Carl Massie, Jr. The meeting was called to order at 12:04 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Bette Gay reported that the amount in the treasury equaled \$8,401.63 with \$3,824.32 in the bank account and \$4,577.31 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 79.

It is time for Federico U. Acerri, Wendell Anderson, Jack and Claire Baum, Stephen Cook, and Jim Vincent to renew their memberships.

Tom Callow moved to reimburse Bette Gay \$41.00 for postage stamps. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Carol Sanzi registered SEMCO with Peachpit Press and received a book on Microsoft Windows Vista that will be used as a door prize at today's meeting. She reported that Peachpit Press, in return, would like feedback on their publications and would like some advertising of their products.

Mike Bader reported that the Yahoo group is having active question and

answer sessions. Their membership stands at 33.

Richard Jackson is in the process of arranging for a guest speaker who will present a program on digital photography.

Tom Callow will be unable to present the December program for SIG-IBM. If you have any topic ideas, or would like to fill this spot, please contact Richard Jackson.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

BACK ISSUES

Associate Editor Bob Clyne indicates that he has extra copies of many of the back issues of the 'DATA BUS.'

If anyone wishes a back issue, please contact Bob at e-mail <[clyne\(at\)mich.com](mailto:clyne(at)mich.com)> or phone 810-387-3101.



Is your firewall operational?

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE
Carl Massie, Jr.

October 14: This month includes a variety of topics and everyone should find something of value. Scribus is free desktop publishing software featured in the September issue of Linux Format magazine. Presentations on Office 2007, PowerShell, Vista User Account Control, file/MIME associations and the following topics: (1) Buying news and views. (2) Office 2007 tips. (3) Blogs, Forums, Wikis. (4) Commands—Powershell. (5) Links I like. (6) Open Free—Scribus DTP, Spybot. (7) Windows Wise—Associations, UAC. (8) Networking—Basics.



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow
Warner Mach



October 14: Making Pictures Opposed to Taking Pictures: G. Wm. Buchanan, FPSA, FGDC, will discuss the use of composition, lighting, and camera flash in taking digital photographs as well as saving and organizing digital images on your computer. He will briefly touch on some inexpensive image editing software. Mr. Buchanan is Chairman of the Electronic Imaging Division of Detroit's Photographic Guild, one of the oldest and largest camera clubs in the U.S. Also: News and Questions and Answers with Tom Callow.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP
Rotating Volunteer Hosts

October 14: Help Q & A:
Discussion directed by the audience. No question is too simple! Note: The Novice-IBM Group is 'by request.' If you have special questions for this group then speak to one of the officers to schedule the session..



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

November 5, 2007: . 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.**

Nov. 2007 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., Oct. 21, 11:59 p.m.
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use [Editor address on Page 2](#); e-mail address: [<machw@att.net>](mailto:machw@att.net). PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Contact [Editor \(address Page 2\)](#).

Warner Machmachw@att.net

(to post monthly computer group info)

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS****COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)**

Nov. 7, 7 p.m., (1st Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Range Rd., Marysville, Admin. Building. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Topic: 'Buying & Selling on eBay' by Mark Repp..

DCOM Computer Club

Oct. 12, 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. Topic: TBA. 11/9, 12/14, next.

MacGroup- Detroit

Oct. 14, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 248-569-4933. <<http://www.macgroup.org>>. Topic: 'Photoshop CS3 Killer Tips: Down & Dirty Tricks' by Scott Kelly.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

Oct. 20, 11:00 a.m., (3rd Saturday); (SIGs at 9:30); Ann Arbor Open School, 920 Miller Ave., Ann Arbor. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: 'iLife8.'

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

Oct. 13, 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. Topic: 'The GPL & How it Works Legally' by Ray Ingles.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

Nov. 13, 6:00 p.m., (2nd Tuesday); MUG meetings are at The Farmington Community Library–Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. <<http://www.mug.org>>.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group

Nov. 8, 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>>. Topic: TBA.

Oak Park Computer Club

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

Royal Oak Computer Club

Every Wed., 12:30 to 2:30 PM at Mahany/Meininger Senior Community Center, 3500 Marais Ave., Royal Oak, 48073. Near Crooks & 13 Mile. Guest speakers & regular monthly speakers. <<http://www.geocities.com/royaloakcomputerclub/ourpage.html>>

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

Nov. 6, 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: 'What's New for the Holidays' by Richard Tapaninen from Micro Center

Wayne State University Mac User Group

Oct. 13, 10:00 a.m.–Noon, (2nd Saturday); at Mich.com, 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: JoAnn Olsen 248-478-4300. Topic: Q&A.

Special Offer from Peachpit Press

Peachpit Press represents a collection of the world's leading computer books specializing in graphics and design including New Riders, Adobe Press, and Apple Certified, among others. They are offering user group members a 30% discount off the list price of any of their books. Go to <<http://www.peachpit.com/store/>> to examine their book list. Place purchases in your shopping cart. Then, at checkout, right before you put your credit card number in, you must enter the user group coupon code UE-23AA-PEUF (case-sensitive)

This coupon code is an exclusive offer that may not be used in conjunction with any other coupon codes.



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@mich.com

Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime

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

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

October 14—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: Making Pictures Opposed to Taking Pictures:
G. Wm. Buchanan, FPSSA, FGDC, will discuss the use of composition, lighting and camera flash in taking digital photographs as well as saving and organizing digital images on your computer. Mr. Buchanan is Chairman of the Electronic Imaging Division of Detroit's Photographic Guild..

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: SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman, Carl Massie Jr. presents: (1) Buying news and views. (2) Office 2007 tips. (3) Blogs, Forums, Wikis. (4) Commands—PowerShell. (5) Links I like. (6) Open & Free—Scribus DTP, Spybot. (7) Windows Wise—File associations & User Account Control. (8) Networking—Basics.

SIG-ADVANCED, Nov. 5, 2007—MONDAY, 6:45 p.m., 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.

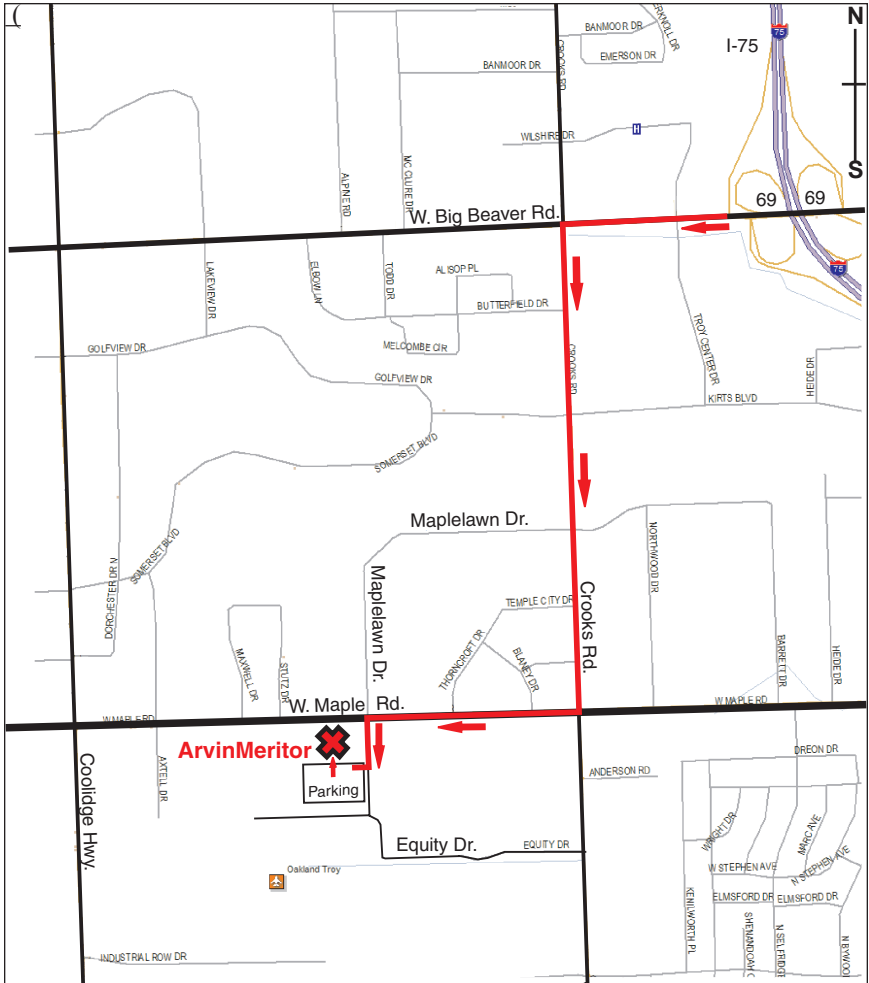
November 11—SEMCO Sunday

<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 48064**



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)

October 14

November 11

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