

Official Newsletter  
SouthEastern Michigan  
Computer Organization, Inc.

# DATA BUS

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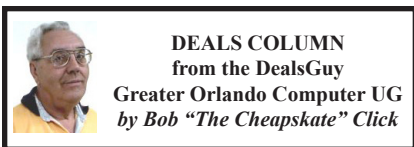
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I read an enlightening article about data center design; even the security was above and beyond what you and I would imagine. Read about new ideas for cheap cooling methods and an interesting concept for filling in the gap between the time the power goes out and your backup kicks in. Well into it, you will read about very tight security. A year ago, I gave you an article about a group of consultants hired to test the security of a company, and they made a joke of the entire building's security; and data security itself, in just a few minutes. I doubt their techniques would work in the facilities described in the article. Here is the Information Week URL: <<http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=206900660>>.

### **Enjoyed The Show**

I did manage to browse the Electronic House Expo for three hours of pure pleasure (I had to hurry). It was not a large show, but there was enough there to keep you fascinated. I saw mirrors that could change to a TV or monitor in an instant. That large mirror on the wall was hiding a TV screen that was able to shine right through it with a sharp picture. This one is interesting: <<http://www.ad-notam.com>>. Automation of your home was all over the show in many forms. There were many booths with distributors of automation components for all facets of the home or business, including Worthington, one of the most well known.

I was fascinated with some of the doorbell/intercom systems that include

a wide-angle camera whose image could be displayed on a dedicated monitor, or appear on your TV to show who is there. Push a button on your remote to ask the nature of their visit and if it was a family member, or your beer-drinking buddy whose TV went out during a game; push a button on the remote to unlock the door. If it was your mother-in-law, you could tell her you weren't home. However, I didn't see an "eject" button on the remote for salesmen; leaving room for further development. I stood where I could easily reach the doorbell button and my entire upper body showed plainly on the screen. I don't remember if that one was Nutone <<http://www.nutone.com>> or another company. eKey was there again with biometric locks. Here are some URLs of interest: <<http://eholovision.com>>; <<http://www.eKeyusa.com>>; <<http://www.linearcorp.com>>; and <<http://www.litetouch.com>>.

Several companies were showing universal remote controls and touch screen systems. Most people would probably think of remote controlled lighting and thermostats, but there are plenty of other items that should be included. Remote cameras around the property, a driveway gate, pool pump, alarms and maybe even devices to feed your pets; and that's only part of the list. I couldn't help notice that using a universal remote (similar to your TV remote) was not as easy as using a touch screen device because a touch screen icon often brought up a menu of other labeled icons for choices, but the button on the remote called for action, so you better get it right the first time. I read in Electronic House magazine <<http://www.electronichouse.com>> about an installation beyond "my" finances, but

it was interesting what was done in this home: <[http://www.electronichouse.com/article/smart\\_controls\\_for\\_a\\_complicated\\_home/](http://www.electronichouse.com/article/smart_controls_for_a_complicated_home/)>.

The EHX show included plenty of luxury audio products to enjoy from your easy chair, featuring great surround-sound. There was even a plush chair with the sound strategically located and controls at your fingertips. Solid Drive <<http://www.soliddrive.com>> was featuring a product that would make a speaker out of anything, and actually, the sound produced was great, (including good bass), from a large glass panel that also featured a large rectangular thin film fastened to it that allowed a projected TV picture to be shone through it clearly. There were also products that would hide your TV, when it was not turned on, by showing art from your choice of artists inside a beautiful wooden frame, or could automatically cover it with tapestry: <<http://www.vutec.com>> <<http://www.tapestriesltd.com>> <<http://www.visionartgalleries.com>>.

Two companies with central vacuum systems were there with impressive products; here is one; <<http://www.airkinglimited.com>>. There was a great little digital camera/camcorder being sold there that could publish your pictures or movies to the Web. One booth had a favorite of mine, a motorized drapery rod that could be programmed, or operated with a remote. I loved the motorized drapery rod we had for about ten years, but it finally bit the dust. It would take a lengthy article to describe that show adequately.

At the same time, other computer oriented shows were going on in nearby hotels, another over in Tampa, a Microsoft Show nearby and the

prestigious Winter Park Art Festival. There are many computer oriented trade shows these days. Microsoft will be back here in June with the large Tech Ed Developers show and the IBM show in early April.

I have not tried the products below.

### **How About An Add-on Toolbar!**

ALToolbar <<http://www.altools.com/ALTools/ALToolbar.aspx>> offers their latest toolbar. ALToolbar is a new add-on that extends Internet Explorer with its suite of tools. It improves many common Internet tasks, making them faster and easier.

- \* Search popular web sites FASTER.
- \* Visit favorite sites INSTANTLY.
- \* SECURELY store logins and bookmarks online.
- \* AUTOMATICALLY login to web sites.
- \* Navigate easier with MOUSE GESTURES.
- \* Capture full web page SCREENSHOTS.

There are other tools in ALToolbar to make online life easier and faster. This one is more than other toolbars that all duplicate each other's limited functionality. It's a real suite of Internet tools designed for faster and easier Internet usage by real people. ALToolbar, like other ALTools, is completely free. We only ask that you enjoy it enough to tell a friend.

Ryan Smyth. Chief ALTools Evangelist. ESTsoft. <<http://www.altools.net>>

### **Need Some Tweaking?**

YL Software announced the availability of WinUtilities 6.1, the newest version of its system-tweaking suite that offers over 20 computer productivity tools. WinUtilities

provides everything a user needs to remove junk data, and improve PC performance. The WinUtilities update offers users additional features as well as improvements on the technologies. For more information or to download a free trial, please visit <<http://www.ylcomputing.com/content/view/9/27/>>.

Two modules, Duplicate Files Finder and Registry Cleaner, are now able to export reports. Other advancements include an improved File Undelete Module for NTFS and FAT32 volume; an improved Plug-ins Editor for the History Cleaner module; improved compatibility for Windows Vista 32-bit and 64-bit systems, plus an improved Registry Cleaner.

Computers accumulate a great deal of junk files. Applications can add things we may not be aware of and you should get rid of these things, but you may not have to if you install WinUtilities. It includes such tools as Junk File Cleaner, Registry Cleaner, Memory Optimizer, System Information, Registry Backup, File Encryption, Safe Uninstaller, Duplicate File Finder, File Shredder, Data Recovery & File Undelete tools, etc. WinUtilities also includes an Internet Tracks Eraser, with Cookie Manager and Secure Deletion. The software is \$39.99, but we get a 30% discount. The following URLs are too lengthy for Word to make them a link. Copy & paste them to your browser or they won't work. They take you to a PayPal page to buy the product with 30% discount. I'll comment on not using Tiny URL next month.

WinUtilities 6.1 Personal License: <[https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=\\_xclick&business=paypal%40ylcomputing%2ecom&item\\_name=WinUtilities\(Personal License\) Special Offer&item\\_number=7019-8-1&amount=28&no\\_shipping=2&no\\_note=1&currency\\_code=USD&lc=US&bn=PP-BuyNowBF&charset=UTF-8](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_xclick&business=paypal%40ylcomputing%2ecom&item_name=WinUtilities(Personal License) Special Offer&item_number=7019-8-1&amount=28&no_shipping=2&no_note=1&currency_code=USD&lc=US&bn=PP-BuyNowBF&charset=UTF-8)>

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WinUtilities Disk Cleaner helps get rid of temporary files and folders, cookies and browser history, duplicate files and links that are no longer valid. It locates zero-length files clogging up your file lists. The Registry Cleaner helps delete entries in the registry that no longer apply to your system. History Cleaner handles all those items you can delete from within the Internet Options dialog box in Control Panel, as well as your system's document history, log-on history, search history.

WinUtilities 6.1 runs under Windows Vista, XP, 2003 Server, 2000 and 98. Registered users get a fully functional product, a year of free upgrades and life-of-product technical support. Additional information, and a 30-day evaluation

version is available from <<http://www.ylcomputing.com>>.

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*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>>.*



**Backup Your Computer  
with NTI  
By Ira Wilsker**

The oft repeated three most important words in computing are “Backup, Backup, and Backup.” Murphy’s first law of computing is, “A properly backed up hard drive will never fail, but as soon as there is not a current backup, the hard drive will always fail at the most inopportune time.” Another cliché is that there are only two types of hard drives, “Those that will fail and those that have already failed.”

Despite evolutionary changes in hard drive technology, especially in capacity, with terabyte drives now readily available and affordable (a terabyte is either 1000 or 1024 gigabytes, depending on the reference); hard drive life expectancy and failure rate is still a vital and contemporary issue that we

all must ultimately deal with. Despite exercising proper precautions such as providing clean and uninterrupted power via a UPS (uninterruptible power supply), and adequate cooling, I still have had hard drives fail in my primary computers. The computer I am typing this column on has a three-year-old hard drive that has been heavily worked, but presently tests OK; despite that, I keep current backups of all critical files on my hard drive. As frustrating as it may be, hard drive failures are quite survivable provided a current backup is available. In addition to hard drive failure from heat or dirty power, data on hard drives can also be damaged or lost by external forces, such as fire, theft, flood, hurricane, or other maladies. As Hurricane Rita threatened the area, I performed another complete backup of my hard drive. When I complied with the mandatory evacuation orders for Rita, the very first item I packed in my suitcase was my external hard drive with my latest complete backup, a set of emergency recovery CDs, and other CDs containing copies of critical data files such as spreadsheets, tax information, and other important personal information that I had on my computer. While the data on the CDs were duplicate copies of what was also on the external hard drive, redundancy is a wise precaution to take for otherwise irreplaceable files. While my computer survived the ravages of Rita, many others in the region were not so fortunate, and lost years of critical data, family photos, music collections, family financial information, and other important data.

I have two external USB 2.0 hard drives that I use for backing up data, only one of which is plugged into the

UPS, and connected to the computer at any given time. The other external hard drive is stored away from the computer, and periodically rotated with the one that is connected. External hard drives can fail also, and I do not want to be caught unprepared when my primary internal hard drive eventually fails. I use two separate backup programs from NTI <<http://www.ntius.com>> to backup my hard drive and its critical files, with each program providing different functionality and protection.

The program I predominately use to backup critical data files is NTI's Shadow (currently version 3.7), currently available for PCs, Mac, and U3 compatible flash drives for about \$20. Shadow does not perform a complete backup of the hard drive, but instead backups selected data files, selected formats (such as .jpg, .doc, .xls, etc.), or selected categories (such as photos, music, videos, etc.) to any desired device; my personal choice of backup device is to an external hard drive. Shadow is not a resource hog and does not adversely affect performance, and I have it running in the background whenever my computer is turned on; that way my files are being continuously backed up, including any new or changed files saved to my hard drive. Shadow backs up files in native format, which means that they can be read directly from the backup device without the necessity of any additional software or utilities. Recovering or restoring any damaged or missing data files on the hard drive is simple, accomplished by simply copying the desired files from the external device (or CD, DVD, flash drive, etc.) to the internal hard drive using Windows Explorer or any other file manager program. Another feature

in Shadow is the ability to sequentially save up to 10 revisions of any data files; this column, for example, has already been saved to my external hard drive several times by Shadow, each additional save, up to the selected limit (uses "first in – first out, or FIFO"), to control the number of sequential saves. I just looked at my external hard drive and there are four previous "saves" of this current file I am typing and auto-saving every five minutes. If I wanted to go back to an earlier version of this column, I could very easily open it from the external hard drive, using a sequential copy saved by Shadow.

I use my other external hard drive to periodically make a full backup of my hard drive, sometimes referred to as an "image" of the hard drive. With an image, if my hard drive were to fail (and it eventually will), I could install a new hard drive in my computer, boot the computer with a bootable CD, and copy the image of my defunct hard drive from the external backup drive to the new drive. After restoring the image to the new hard drive, it will appear identical to the failed hard drive with all programs installed and running, and all data files in their proper places. My chosen program for this backup function is NTI's Backup Now, currently in a newly released version 5. The new NTI Backup Now 5 comes in two versions, the \$50 Standard Edition, and the \$100 Advanced Edition. Some might feel that spending \$50 or \$100 for backup software may be expensive, but the cost of losing data, or recovering data from a dead hard drive, can be many times that.

The Standard Edition is a comprehensive and adequate backup utility with a variety of features. It can



backup selected files and folders, filter by file type, backup to almost any type of device (hard drive, CD, DVD, Blu-ray DVD, etc.), perform incremental backups (only backup files that are new or changed since the last backup; this is what I do on a regular basis), span across multiple drives or discs (if one is filled, another can be used), encrypt the backups, and backup across networks. The Advanced Edition does all of that, plus offers the additional functionality of continuous or real time backups (like Shadow), file version control (also like Shadow), can create complete images of the hard drive, offers disaster recovery utilities, an open file backup (can backup files that are write protected at the time of backup), and “Test Drive Utilities” to check the functionality and condition of any backup media.

On my computer I have the NTI Backup Now 5 Advanced Edition installed, because I choose to have the increased functionality. I use the Advanced Edition to periodically (about monthly) make a full backup or image of my hard drive, and about weekly, I perform an incremental backup, which backs up any new or revised files to one of my external hard drives. I also used Advanced Edition to create an emergency or rescue CD or DVD, which may be necessary to boot the computer with a new replacement hard drive installed, and then restore the backed up image. On a continuous basis, I have Shadow running to make contemporary and real time backups of all of my critical data files to my other external hard drive. In the event of a catastrophic hard drive failure or other major damage, I can be up and running in a few hours, having lost nothing but the restore time.

It may be a slight inconvenience in time to create and maintain backups, and a moderate expense to have backup software and hardware installed and running. This inconvenience in time, and the cost, is very minor when compared to the aggravation, and likely major expense of a catastrophic data loss. Whatever hardware and software you choose to use, just remember to backup, backup, and backup. It is better to have it and not need it, than to need it and not have it.

## WEBSITES

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

<<http://www.ntius.com/shadow.asp>>.

<[http://www.ntius.com/backup\\_now.asp](http://www.ntius.com/backup_now.asp)>

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## The New, the Best, and the Worst By Pim Borman

*Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.*

## Good, Bad, or Who-Needs-It?

### Penryn

With the introduction of Intel's Penryn Core 2 Duo and Extreme CPUs Moore's Law stays right on track. Thanks to further miniaturization to 45-nanometer elements, the chips have significantly lower power consumption, a feature that will be even more desirable in the five new Penryn-based CPUs for laptops that have now been released. The new Penryn-based systems are not



significantly faster than systems with Intel's previous-generation processors, but outstrip those with the currently fastest AMD chip, the 2.2 GHz 9500 quad core Phenom CPU. Intel has introduced a new instruction set for the Penryns, called SSE4, that can greatly speed up applications written to work with it. That may take a while yet. Adobe is updating its next version of Premiere Pro video editing with SSE4 support. (PC World, March 2008)

Only two years ago I bought a new desktop screamer using the then-tops AMD Athlon 64 X2 Dual-Core processor. My pride in the new system didn't last long, as usual, as the AMD CPU was left in the dust by new Intel processors. Nevertheless, I doubt that even now my run-of-the-mill programs make use of all the special capabilities of the dual-core CPU. Photo editing with Adobe Photoshop Elements or The Gimp happens instantly, faster than I can think of what to do next. So who needs any more power?

PC World's 25th anniversary issue (March 2008) quotes from the March 1991 issue:

"These five screamers are amongst the fastest - and the costliest - systems you can buy. We pick the best of the lot and answer the obvious question: Who needs this much power? - We reviewed four blazing 486 PCs in the March 1991 issue, starting at \$8300, and decided that they were simply too fast for most people."

Famous last words!

### **False Firefox Fix**

Usually I don't pay attention to application software tips, such as keyboard shortcuts for common actions. The most important ones I already know, and the obscure ones

are not worth the effort remembering. Therefore I would normally not have paid much attention to an article in the January issue of PC World by Lincoln Spector about undocumented Firefox tips. What caught my eye was that, according to the author, Firefox is optimized for dial-up connections, and one of the tips concerned changing its settings for broadband.

Firefox has dozens of hidden configuration settings that are not readily available to the ordinary user, for obvious good reasons. They are stored in HTML documents that can be accessed by typing about:config in the address bar of the browser. The article suggests that you back up the configuration file before you fiddle with it, and shows how to do that.

Following the instructions, I turned network pipelining and network proxy pipelining on (set their values to "true"), increased the network pipelining "maxrequests" to 15 (up from 4), and entered a value of 0 for a new integer nglayout.initialpaint.delay. After restarting Firefox I tried it out. It seemed to perform with alacrity, although I couldn't have sworn that it was faster than before.

Looking for background information on Firefox configuration, I found a June 2006 article on the PC World Web site by the ever knowledgeable Scott Spanbauer on the about:command to access hidden information. Specifically he mentions about:cache that gives access to an enormous file listing the URLs accessed in the past. Handy to find some old data or revisit a Web site without logging on.

Anyway, Spanbauer's article provided a link to Mozilla's about:config FAQ site <<http://find.pcworld.com>

[com/53066](http://com/53066)>. I took it from there and found out that the suggested settings to optimize Firefox for broadband were either irrelevant or actually retarding downloads. Turning pipelining on is not always supported by all servers and may therefore cause crashes. The value "maxrequests" has a maximum value of 8; higher values than that default to 8. Setting the delay value too low actually slows down the download; its preferred value is the default 250 milliseconds (about the blink of an eye). So much for helpful tips. I reset the parameters to their original values and left it at that. Don't believe everything you read!

### Fatalyzer

Wondering if your dieting and exercising is doing any good? Fret no more! Soon you'll be able to take a fatalyzer test to see how fast you are burning off fat. Based on technology developed by Dow Chemical, and under development by a start-up company Kemeta <<http://kemeta.com>>, a hand-held breathalyzer detects acetone in your breath that results from metabolizing body fat. This is a more accurate measure of how effective your dieting and exercising efforts are, eliminating the influence of fluid and muscle fluctuations (Chemical and Engineering News, 1/28/2008, <<http://snipurl.com/fatalyzer>>). The results are shown in terms of pounds of body fat lost per week.

It might motivate the dieters stronger if the unit also indicated how much fat was added to their hips by that pizza they just ate. And with the run-away popularity at the recent Toy Expo of digital doggies that can sit up and beg or fart on command, maybe the next product ought to be a doggy robot with a nose capable of detecting drugs, explosives, lost children and misplaced

car keys. That should be a bestseller for sure!

### All a-Twitter?

"Twitter is a free networking blogging that allows users to send 'updates' (or 'tweets'; text-based posts, up to 140 characters long) to Twitter website, via short message service, instant messaging, a third-party application such as ..."

That's how Wikipedia describes the latest rage in digital jabbering <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter>>. Presidential candidates use the service constantly, undoubtedly hoping to reach younger voters. Find out what Barack Obama <<http://twitter.com/BarackObama>> Hillary Clinton <<http://twitter.com/HillaryClinton>> up to. Ron Paul <<http://twitter.com/RonPaul2008>> to be the only Republican who twitters. John McCain is noted by his absence.

As the Twitter site <<http://twitter.com>> puts it,

"Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?"

Indeed.

Thanks to The Economist (Feb.2, 2008) for enlightening us about this service.

*Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. <<http://swipcug.apcug.org>>. e-mail<[Swipcug\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:Swipcug(at)gmail.com)>.*

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## **Watch HD or Standard TV on Your Computer**

**By Ira Wilsker**

On a recent trip to Dallas, while in my hotel room, I had some time to kill while my wife and daughters went shopping. I had a new little tech-toy to play with, so I opened the package, installed the software included, and began to watch the local Dallas on-air (free) TV stations on my notebook (laptop) computer. What was fascinating to me was the ability to watch about a dozen crystal clear on-air HD and digital TV broadcasts at 1080i resolution, as well as the traditional NSTC format (analog) channels. When provided by the broadcaster, stereo sound is supported for both analog and digital TV. For those who want to receive stereo FM radio, this product also supports that as well. The product I was using was Pinnacle's PCTV HD Pro Stick.

The heart of the PCTV HD Pro Stick is a USB device similar in size to a common flash drive. On one end, under a protective cap, is a standard USB 2.0 plug which plugs directly into a USB 2.0 port on either a laptop or desktop computer. The other end of the USB device has a standard coax connector that can be connected either to an existing cable or satellite feed, or to the telescoping high gain antenna included in the package; it is this antenna that I used in my hotel room in Dallas. Also included in the package is a full featured but miniature remote control that is only about 3 ½ inches long, by about 1 inch wide, and runs on two AAA batteries (included). Additional cables are included that allow for input from other inputs, such as VCRs, DVD

players, digital camcorders, and other devices. For those who want to relax and listen to FM Stereo radio or TV without disturbing others, there is also a 3.5mm headphone plug included on the adapter.

While very small in size, and reasonably priced (in the \$90 - \$100 range), this device, along with its included software, offers a lot of features and capabilities. The software (included) allows for the recording of any standard or HD TV just like any other free-standing PVR (personal video recorder), as well as time shifting. With time shifting, the user can pause, rewind, or replay the video. Automated digital recording can also be scheduled to record shows at selected times. One warning that I have is that TV shows, especially in HD, can take a lot of hard drive space; to save space and provide compatibility with other devices, the PCTV HD Pro Stick and its software supports MPEG 1 and 2 compression, DivX, and MPEG-4 (compatible with iPod or PSP devices). Integrated with the software is a one-year subscription to an electronic programming guide, which incorporates programmed recording. This program guide is especially useful when traveling, as it enables the user to locate local analog and digital on-air TV stations. One minor issue needs to be noted, and it is not a fault of the device, but a technological issue with digital TV; while analog TV can be played in a vehicle while in motion, the on-air HD digital signal is generally poor while in a moving vehicle. This is a known fact of the ATSC digital signal, and in no way a product deficiency.

The PCTV HD Pro Stick will run on almost any computer of recent design and manufacture that supports USB 2.0. The

Stick requires either Windows XP (with Service Pack 2 installed), or the 32-bit version of Vista. To receive standard TV, an Intel Pentium 4 2.4 GHz, Pentium M 1.3 GHz, or AMD Athlon 64 processor is required. To receive HDTV a slightly more powerful system is recommended, with a Pentium 4 2.8 GHz, Pentium M 1.7 GHz, or AMD 64 Athlon processor necessary to process the additional data required. Memory requirements are very reasonable with 256 MB required (512 MB recommended) for XP, and 512 MB (1 GB recommended) for Vista. A sound card that supports DirectX 9 is required (most current sound cards meet this requirement). If it is desired to record TV shows, a minimum of 1 GB of available space will be necessary, but movies and sports events could easily consume 20 GB of hard drive space. A CD or DVD drive is required to install the software, and a writable CD or DVD is necessary if the TV show is to be saved to those formats. The PCTV HD Pro Stick and its software, in addition to saving to the hard drive, can also save direct to DVD.

The package is quite complete and includes some very useful software on CD. The Pinnacle TVCenter Pro software is a full featured TV viewing and PVR (personal video recording) software package for both XP and Vista (32-bit). Also included is Pinnacle's very popular and easy to use VideoSpin editing software, <<http://www.videospin.com>> which enables the user to edit video, add special effects, and save the video in popular formats.

Pinnacle's PCTV HD Pro Stick is but one in a series of products, all offering the same basic features. The basic model is the \$80 PCTV HD Stick, which does much of what the Pro Stick

does, but does not include the remote or the antenna, as well as the enhanced programming guide. Above the Pro Stick is the PCTV HD Ultimate Stick model (\$130), which includes everything the Pro version has, but has no installation required; everything necessary to run is built into the USB device itself. Ultimate Stick also incorporates in the unitary USB device enough additional integral flash memory to directly record up to two hours of TV which can then be played back on any other PC. Ultimate can also write to a hard drive, or directly to a DVD just like the Pro Stick, and includes the same software as the Pro Stick model. Mac users can use the TV for Mac HD Stick which is very similar in features to the PCTV HD Pro Stick, but with Mac specific software.

Whether used at home or in a hotel, with a desktop or laptop computer, these PCTV HD Sticks can provide a lot of free entertainment opportunities often otherwise lacking. By using the computer to drive analog, digital, or high resolution HDTV, and incorporating the ability to program and record just like the obsolescent VCR, these PCTV HD sticks can provide a lot of entertainment capability. My Pinnacle PCTV HD Pro Stick now has a permanent place of honor in my notebook computer case, and is now about as necessary a peripheral as my mouse. Whenever I take my notebook with me, my Pro Stick will be with me.

#### **WEBSITE**

<<http://www.pinnaclesys.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 and TV show host. Contact him at <[iwilsker@apcug.net](mailto:iwilsker@apcug.net)>.*



### **Report on Penguincon 6.0 By Warner Mach**

Penguincon 6.0 was at the Troy Hilton, April 18 through 20; right here in Michigan.

The event that tended to dominate the con on Saturday and Sunday nights was the “Singing Tesla Coils.” These were two large mad scientist type devices that played music by shooting out bolts of lightning. By Googling “Singing Tesla Coils” you can see videos of these coils in action, but it does not compare with the “electrifying experience” of seeing them in person, the air full of ozone.

Some of the sessions that I attended and found of particular interest:

#### **INTERACTIVE FICTION**

Jason Scott is the creator of the documentary “GET LAMP.” The documentary, and the talk, follows the history of adventure games and interactive fiction. Good stuff.

#### **LAPTOP LIBERATION**

This talk featured Benjamin Mako Hill talking about OLPC (One Laptop Per Child). Mr. Hill works on the OLPC project and is also active in the “Free Software Foundation.” During his talk he emphasized the importance of the connection between the goals of OLPC and open software. Some of the connection reasons: (1) So the project can be “open and flexible.” Since the laptops are to be deployed in unusual settings, it is important that they can be adapted as lessons are learned. (2) It is impractical to build the systems

from scratch, so it is necessary to take advantage of the open software that exists. (3) The XO laptops fall into an area between “embedded” systems and larger systems. Open software is available here. (4) Proprietary software is too expensive. The goal is to have a very inexpensive machine for developing countries. (5) Proprietary systems are restrictive in how they can be used. (6) Open software fits in with the “pedagogical philosophy” of the project, which encourages experimentation in all areas.

Reporter's Comment: All of this is ironic since the head of the project, Nicholas Negroponte, has recently indicated that the project might move to a Windows XP platform.

#### **CIRCUIT BENDING**

“Circuit Bending” is hacking sound-producing circuits to produce unusual sounds. In this session, Mr. Sam harmon passed out little envelopes with actual circuit components (transistors, resistor, capacitor). The members of the audience were instructed to poke holes in a printed piece of cardboard to mount the components to produce the sounds. See: <<http://www.glacialcommunications.com/circuitbending.html>>.

#### **STICK FIGURES**

The xkcd comic strip is composed of stick figures, and is drawn by Randall Monroe (<<http://xkcd.com>>). It has a fanatical following and features math, physics, and computer science.

#### **ICE CREAM**

Dawn Sanzi, the daughter of our own SEMCO secretary, Carol Sanzi, took over the “nitrogen ice cream” section of the hospitality suite and produced some great chocolate mint ice cream.

The ingredients for the ice cream are mixed together and then a charge of

liquid nitrogen is poured on, causing a billowing cloud and causing the instant freeze of the ice cream ... There was a slight delay in the procedure due to a search for duct tape for the nitrogen tank hoses; but things went smoothly after that.

The ice cream was good, but will it cause me to grow an extra hand out of the top of my head five years from now? Time will tell.

### OTHER

There were many other useful sessions concerning Linux/Unix commands, the VIM editor, etc.

### NEXT YEAR

Next year Penguicon 7.0 will move to the Romulus Crowne Plaza in Romulus Michigan (Watch out for the Romulans).



**DOC Versus DOCX**  
**By Bill Agnew**  
**Former DATA BUS**  
**Editor**

Things keep happening on my computer that leave me nonplussed, and they result in hours of frustrating experimentation, since there is no manual, and the help button never heard of the problem. Most recently my relatives told me that they couldn't open the Word document I sent them attached to an e-mail.

The document was in Word 2007, which I upgraded to awhile ago from Word 2003. It had an extension .docx instead of .doc, which I was used to in Word 2007. I hadn't noticed that difference, nor had I noticed the different icons, as shown below (bottom).

I found two ways to take care of the problem. One was to simply delete the x on the end of the Word 2007 extension. When I did that the icon for

the document switched from the one on the right to the one on the left, and the document was now in Word 2003 format. And my relatives' computers could open and read it.

The other method was simply to open my eyes and notice that in Word 2007, when you hit the button "Save As" you are offered two options: "Save as Word Document in the default file format (Word 2007)," or "Save as a document that is fully compatible with Word 97-2003." In each case the icons come up as expected.



Word 2003  
.doc



Word 2007  
.docx



## Shortcuts By Mike Moore

***Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.***

Why do some icons on your desktop have a little white arrow embedded in the picture?

These are shortcuts (sometimes called links). They are small files that represent and “point to” the real thing. When you double-left-click on a shortcut icon, Windows reads the location of the file to open from within the shortcut file, then opens the target file. Shortcuts are, in the lingo of computer programmers, symbolic links to actual files. They don’t contain any of the file’s information—they just point to it. In real terms: if Peoria, Illinois was a file, then its shortcut would be the map telling you how to get there.

Why do we use shortcuts? Why not just put the real, actual file on your desktop? There are several reasons. First, since a shortcut does not contain any of the target file’s information, it can be deleted without damaging the file it points to. Therefore, placing shortcuts on the desktop (or in any directory) is safer. Accidental deletion of these links will not affect anything other than you may lose track of where your file was!

The other reason is that you can have many shortcuts and place them anywhere you might need quick access to your file. For example, when we give away computers, we organize the software links in various folders on the desktop. There’s a folder for Educational software and Game software links, and for the software that is both Educational

and Fun, we put links to the same program in both the Educational and Game folders. You can rename shortcuts to anything you want, and it won’t affect the real name of the file they point to.

Shortcuts are also portable! If I know for sure that a program will be in a certain place on nearly every PC, I can e-mail a link to someone and tell them to place it on their desktop. Double-clicking on it should open that file on my recipient’s PC! E-mailing a link is much more of a sure bet than e-mailing an executable file—because most e-mail servers just won’t allow executables (files ending in .EXE) to be sent!

How does one create a link? The best way is to find the file you want the link to refer to, then do a single right-click on it. This brings up a context menu where you can create the shortcut. Once the shortcut is created you can move it to any directory or to the desktop.

For creating desktop links, Windows provides a shortcut wizard that allows you to create a shortcut for any file type including a web page or another folder. From anywhere on the desktop, right click and select ‘New’ and then ‘Shortcut’ to activate this wizard.

***Mike Moore is Editor for the Bowling Green Area Microcomputer User Group, Kentucky. <<http://www.bgamug.org>>. e-mail: <[ml.moore@insightbb.com](mailto:ml.moore@insightbb.com)>.***

***This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).***

No computer? Use cell phone. Ask any question at 1-800-2chacha.



## *Meeting Pictures*



**(Above) Joanne Olson and Tom Callow discuss the VOIP presentation at the April 13 SEMCO meeting. (Below) Carol Sanzi assists with refreshments at the meeting.**



## *Meeting Pictures*



(Above) Richard Jackson assists with guard duties at the April 13 SEMCO meeting. (Below) Members gather at pizza place for post-meeting afterglow (SIG-PIG).





**BOARD MEETING**  
**4/13/2008**  
**Carol Sanzi**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Bette Gay reported that the amount in the treasury equaled \$9,044.96 with \$4,392.62 in the bank account and \$4,652.34 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 74.

It is time for Johnathan R. Loden and Jim Rarus to renew their memberships.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Mike Bader reported that the Yahoo on-line user group has grown to 43 members. Activity continues to grow.

Richard Jackson and Mike Bader offered to write an article for the DATA BUS and give a short demonstration describing the sign-up procedure for SEMCOUG. They will also mention the benefits of using the site.

Chuck Moery suggested that we ask ArvinMeritor if there is a locked area where our refreshment equipment may be stored. After a discussion, it was decided that this request would impose on the generosity of ArvinMeritor.

Richard Jackson suggested that there should be more communication with the members via e-mail. Tom Callow offered to compile a list from SEMCO's

membership with e-mail addresses as compared with the members of the Yahoo on-line user group. Then an e-mail will be sent asking members if they would like to receive on-line communications.

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

**VoIP Resources**  
**By Joanne and Lorn Olson**

At the April meeting, Joanne Olson filled in for her husband, Lorn Olson, who was ill. Mr. Olson was, however, able to answer questions by phone.

The presentation covered VoIP background, the trade-offs for VoIP, setup, vendor issues, Skype, Gizmo5, tips, etc.

Mike Bader has put the outline of the presentation up on SEMCOUG: See <http://tinyurl.com/4lu4vm>.

The outline includes the following list of VoIP resources:

<http://www.voipapp.com/>>—contains an online guide to VoIP.

<http://www.all-voip-guide.com/>>—VoIP guide (pros and cons).

<http://www.why-switch-to-voip.com/>>—an introduction to VoIP.

<http://forums.whirlpool.net.au/forum-replies-archive.cfm/512882.html>>—VoIP made easy.

<http://www.smithonvoip.com/voip-terminology/>>—VoIP terminology.

<http://www.voipreview.org/voipspeedtester.aspx>>—VoIP Speed Test.

<http://www.skype.com>>—Skype Info.

<http://www.gizmo5.com>>—Gizmo Info.



## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



**SIG-IBM**  
**Tom Callow**

**May 11: 1:45 p.m. Screen Shots and More with SnagIt by TechSmith:** Rick Schummer, President and Owner of White Light Computing, Inc. will demonstrate Techsmith's Snagit, screen capture program and Camtasia Studio screen recording program.

### SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

**May 11: 3:45 p.m. Diagnosing and Fixing Windows Device Driver Problems:** Tom Callow, as guest speaker, will discuss how to determine when device driver problems are causing problems to your computer, and will demonstrate how to fix device driver problems and how to locate and install updated drivers.

### NOVICE-IBM GROUP Rotating Volunteer Hosts

**May 11: 3:45 p.m.: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**

**June 2, 2008: . 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.

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### **May 2008 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)**

**SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., May 18, 11:59 p.m.** Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor [address on Page 2](mailto: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](mailto:address Page 2)).

**Warner Mach**[machw@att.net](mailto:machw@att.net)

(to post monthly computer group info)

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

June 4, 7 p.m., (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Range Rd., Marysville, Admin. Building. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen <[compinfo@hughes.net](mailto:compinfo@hughes.net)>. <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Topic: "Tweaking Your Operating System to Improve Performance" with Norb Demmel.

**DCOM Computer Club**

May 9, 6:30–8:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Friday); Henry Ford C.C., Patterson Tech Bldg, Ford Rd/Evergreen, Rm T143, Parking Lot C. Info: Doug Piazza 313-582-2602. Topic: TBA.

**HUG (Holly User Group)**

May 10, 9:00 a.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Sat.); Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Ortonville. Topic: TBA.

**MacGroup- Detroit**

May 18, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <[terry@macgroup.org](mailto:terry@macgroup.org)> or 248-569-4933. <<http://www.macgroup.org>>. Topic: "Ambrosia Software Will Demo Its Suite of Software."

**MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)**

May 17, 11:00 a.m., (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday); (SIGs at 9:30); See web site for meeting location. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: "Photoshop Elements" with Michael Smith.

**MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)**

May 17, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (3<sup>rd</sup> 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: TBA.

**MUG (Michigan User Group)**

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

**Michigan Apple Computer User Group**

May 8, 7:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> 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)**

June 3, 7:30 p.m. (1<sup>st</sup> Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <[Don@VanSyckel.net](mailto:Don@VanSyckel.net)>, 586-731-9232; Web: <<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>>. Topic: "Wireless and Other Wonders of Home Networking."

**Wayne State University Mac User Group**

May 10, 10:00 a.m.–Noon, (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday); at 21042 Laurelwood, Farmington. Information: JoAnn Olsen 248-478-4300. Topic: TBA.



## 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.....	<a href="mailto:mdbader@flash.net">mdbader@flash.net</a>
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770 9am–5pm .....	<a href="mailto:tcallow@monaghanpc.com">tcallow@monaghanpc.com</a>
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm .....	<a href="mailto:clyne@mich.com">clyne@mich.com</a>
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime	
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves.....	<a href="mailto:scook48227@ameritech.net">scook48227@ameritech.net</a>
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm .....	<a href="mailto:jvanders@myself.com">jvanders@myself.com</a>
Yuhasz, Steve.....	<a href="mailto:Help@yuhasz.org">Help@yuhasz.org</a>



**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN  
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

## **SEMCO CALENDAR**

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

**May 11–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: Screen Shots ad More with SnagIt by TechSmith:** Rick Schummer, President and Owner of White Light Computing, Inc. will demonstrate Techsmith's Snagit, screen capture program and Camtasia Studio screen recording program.

**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: Diagnosing and Fixing Windows Device Driver Problems:** Tom Callow, as guest speaker, will discuss how to determine when device driver problems are causing problems to your computer, and will demonstrate how to fix device driver problems and how to locate and install updated drivers.

**SIG-ADVANCED, June 2, 2008–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.

**June 8–SEMCO Sunday**

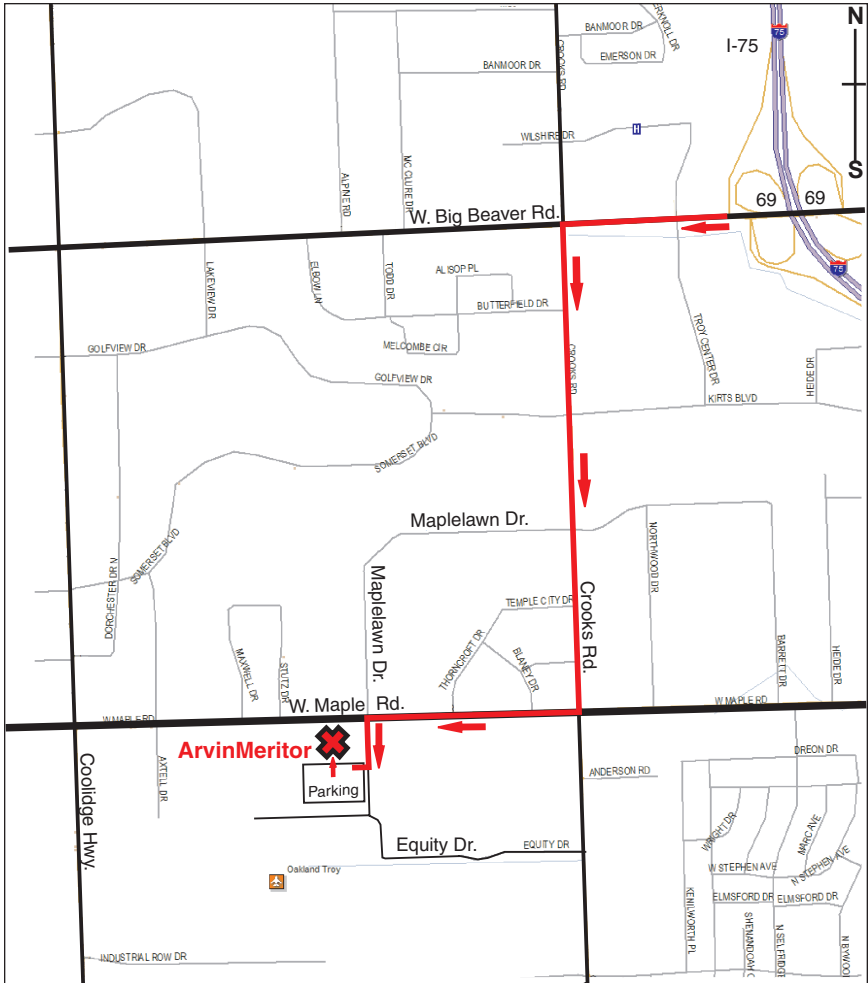
**<http://www.semco.org>**

**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 Mapelawn 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)**

**May 11**

**June 8**

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