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

Try This One On For Size

Three months ago, I purchased a digital picture frame, but when I hooked it to my desktop machine via the USB cable, "My Computer" was unable to "see" the picture frame's memory, which had software on it to install for processing my pictures automatically and sending them to the frame's memory. I tried repeatedly and it might finally see it briefly, but once you clicked somewhere else, then back, it was gone. Windows Explorer didn't work with this frame's memory any better. I tried it on my other desktop computer with the same results. Both of these computers have an Intel Pentium-4 3.06 Gigahertz motherboard. I adjusted the pictures with another software and put them on an SD flash card, inserted it in a memory slot on the picture frame, and it would run the picture slide show fine when standing alone. As I said, neither machine could see that frame's memory, except for a brief glimpse occasionally. I returned the picture frame for a refund thinking it was defective, and the store manager agreed with me after I explained.

I bought another digital frame the other day, bigger and better. When I tried hooking it up to my desktop with the USB cable, I got the same results all over again. I was unable to "see" the digital picture frame's memory with "My Computer" to install the software that came with it. I finally decided to download the software in question from their Web site and install it on my desktop. After that, I ran the software to access the pictures from the My

Pictures folder, process them, then send them to the frame's memory, but it gave me a message that it couldn't find the memory. I couldn't find it with Windows Explorer either, except briefly on rare occasion, then it would disappear, however, during that brief viewing, I did notice that there were actually three pictures that got loaded before getting the error message.

After several tries using different USB plugs on the computer, different USB cables and always the same response, I gave up and tried it on my other desktop, with no better luck. I have used many USB items on my desktop machines with no problems. I decided there was a coincidence here and tried hooking it up to my laptop, which has Vista on it. Both desktop machines use XP Professional. It works fine on my laptop and I am at a loss to figure out what's wrong on the two desktop machines that work well otherwise. A knowledgeable friend worked with me on the phone one evening, with no luck. I am out of ideas.

Want To Get Modern, Stable and Futuristic?

Do you need a modern, stable and free user interface with 3D effects for Windows Mobile? Touch Shell is now available. MobilityFlow announced the release of Touch Shell Free, a modern user interface integrated with 3D effects for Windows Mobile. With the release of Touch Shell Free, MobiltyFlow combines the full screen customizable user interface with a cutting edge 3D effect user interface, giving users the most advanced and intuitive Windows Mobile user interface available on the market today. Touch Shell Free, with its ground-breaking functions, features and design offers much more than other user

interfaces with 3D effects on the market today. Many of them are only available on very expensive high-end devices sold direct from the mobile carriers. MobilityFlow also has a Touch Shell Pro version of the application that offers additional functions and features.

I included this item because there is a free version, but according to the Web site there is also a 50% discount on the right side of their Web page for the Pro version, making it \$9.98. However, I don't know how long that discounted price will last.

Touch Shell Website: <<http://www.touch-shell.com>>

Tired Of Quicken or MS Money? Try This One

Alzex announced Personal Finances 3.2, the newest version of a personal finance manager that will help users track income and expenses quickly and virtually automatically. With a glance at its reports and graphs, users will understand their earning and spending patterns, find areas of excessive expenditure and cut down unnecessary expenses. Personal Finances also provides future planning. Users can project expected spending and income, and know their exact financial situation at a future date.

The budgeting task is a snap. Running the program will open a simple, uncluttered interface that puts all the financial details, tools and options that matter most to you up front. First the user needs to start budgeting by setting up accounts, categories, and subcategories. Personal Finances allows for any number of accounts, so the user can set up accounts for your bank, credit card, and cash. Next, set up categories and subcategories. They will classify and sort income and expenses and help

the user see this important data in a meaningful and detailed way through reports and graphs.

Next for budgeting is to enter transactions that can reflect income and expenses. Transactions can be one-time or scheduled, which makes Personal Finances handy for regularly occurring expenses, such as tax payments, electricity bills, Internet, etc. Transactions can be identified in a number of ways including categories, family members, and tags. Tags provide a way to differentiate between similar transactions that fall into the same category. Categorization by family members will show spending habits of each member of the family in reports.

Personal Finances offers a summary view of all transactions, reports by categories, family members and tags to see how much of the budget is allocated to each category or family member, and identify areas to cut spending if the budget comes out on the negative side. The user can generate reports that cover any period of time. Results can be printed out, or saved to one of the formats: HTML, CHM, or TXT.

With Personal Finances, one can have the convenience of the personal finance software without carrying around the laptop. When the user goes out of town, they can install Personal Finances onto a USB flash drive and keep track of all purchases. Simply plug the USB flash drive in to any computer, update transactions and unplug it. No traces are left behind on the host machine.

New to version 3.2 are 50 icons for accounts and 200 icons for categories. Now the user can see the summary for a month, confirmed and non-confirmed

transactions, and can group transactions by name.

Personal Finances runs on Windows 98/NT/2000/XP/Vista and comes in two editions: Professional and Freeware. For more information about the products, visit <http://www.financesoftware.com>. You can download the 30-day trial version, an absolutely “free” version or the paid version. For the paid version, user group members are offered a 20% discount on the purchase of Personal Finances 3.2. The coupon code is pf43M5G. They failed to respond when I asked when the discount will end, but right now the discount code will still recalculate the price so I hope it’s still good when you read this.

Also, be aware that the description I included above is for the paid version, so do your homework if you want the free one and look at the comparison columns on their Web site. Several features in the paid version aren’t in the free version. Also, I’m not sure if it tracks securities, which MS Money and Quicken will do.

Multiple items on the clipboard

Gerry Gerstenberg of Broward Personal Computer Assn. Inc. wrote a review of Clipomatic in their C:\BPCHA NEWS, the group’s newsletter. <http://www.bpca.com> Its a handy product that allows you to save up to 64 text items that it will hold in a cache, and you can retrieve them singularly when you need a particular one. They will be saved even when you shut your computer down, and be available again next time you start it up. She was happy with the performance and it is a free program that can be obtained at <http://www.mlin.net/Clipomatic.shtml>, but the author is open to donations, which I consider worthwhile if you like it. She said it’s

not clear if Clipomatic is compatible with Vista, but it works with other Windows versions. Gerry’s review is in their august newsletter at <http://bpca.com/newsletter/2008/bpca0808.pdf>.

That’s it for this month. I’ll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn’t offer discounts. 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>.



**magicJack—Bargain
Phone Service Through
Your Computer
By Ira Wilsker**

You may have seen the TV commercials and infomercials about a telephone device called magicJack. The commercials bragged about how easy it was to install and use, and how cost effective it was compared to other telephone services, with its free local and long distance service. Being the skeptic about its claims, I had to try it for myself, so I obtained one directly from magicJack.

The device itself is a USB device, chrome colored plastic; about the length of a common USB flash drive, but twice as thick and twice as tall. It has a standard USB plug on the front, and a standard phone jack on the rear. One side is clear plastic, showing the circuit board inside, the other side

has a sticker for a label, graphically showing the setup. The magicJack must be plugged into a USB port in the computer, or into an AC powered USB hub, but should never be connected to an unpowered USB hub, because the powered USB port provides the power to the telephone, which must be attached to the device.

When I received the package from magicJack, I was slightly dismayed because there was no software CD or instruction book, only the device and a USB extension cord (not often necessary), and the cardboard cover. The only real instructions were printed on the inside front cover of the package, which had the heading “60 seconds for a lifetime of savings, here’s how easy it is ...” and three circular photos displaying the steps. Step 1 was “Plug any phone into magicJack”; step 2 was “Plug magicJack into any USB port”; and step 3, “Pick up your phone and talk for free!” That just seemed too simple, so I tried it. I plugged the cord from an old phone into the back of the magicJack, and plugged the magicJack into an empty port on my powered USB hub. I picked up the telephone handset, and had a dial tone, a good first sign. When plugged into the USB hub, the magicJack was identified by the computer as a USB device, and started to install its software on my computer. In about a minute, including downloading updated software, my magicJack was fully installed. I was greeted with a window where I entered my registration information, 911 information, and selected a prefix from area code 409, and it assigned me a phone number with a 497 (Galveston) prefix. Seconds later, I received a confirming e-mail, and a separate e-mail

telling me about my 911 service, and my magicJack was fully functional. Being nosy, I used Windows Explorer to look at the software in the magicJack device, and saw that it actually installed as two drives, one with the software, and the other was the telephone device.

Without fussing with the address book and other features now on my desktop, I picked up the phone, dialed my wife’s office using required 10 digit dialing and it rang! Total elapsed time from opening the FedEx package to making my first phone call was less than five minutes. My wife said the voice quality was fine. I called my daughter in Atlanta, and left her a voice mail message; the system worked flawlessly. In the next few minutes I called several other people, including one of my coworkers in his office. He has a son who is currently working in Japan, and I saw that magicJack used AT&T for its international service, at a discount of up to 95% off of retail international long distance rates, and calls to Japan were only 2.5 cents a minute on a prepaid international plan using the magicJack.

MagicJack is widely available from the big box electronic stores and online <<http://www.magicjack.com>> for about \$40. This price includes the device, and a full year’s local and long distance service to the US and to Canada. In addition to the phone service, supplemental services are included at no extra charge, such as caller ID, call forwarding, call waiting, free 411 directory assistance, and voice mail. Extra years (note that this is “years” and not “months”) are \$19.95 per year as a “license fee”, including all of the services. People who try and like magicJack can purchase up to five

additional years of service for a total of \$60 for all five years, making it only \$12 a year, or a dollar a month; compare this to more traditional phone service rates from any other source. MagicJack uses a well proven technology called VoIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol, the exact same technology used by the cable company's digital phone service, and other services such as the widely advertised Vonage, and Skype.

MagicJack requires that the user have some form of broadband Internet service, such as cable or DSL, and works fine on Wi-Fi, WiMax, and FiOS services. It does not work well or at all on dialup or satellite Internet services. The software runs on Windows XP and Vista, and on recent Apple Macs. Other than a telephone (either wired or cordless), to connect to the magicJack no other hardware or software is required. When using the phone, magicJack uses about 80k of internet bandwidth to send and receive high quality digital phone data. This 80k of bandwidth is just a small fraction of the available bandwidth in even a budget broadband connection, which still allows for the Internet to be used with minimal degradation while a call is being made. MagicJack is also not a resource hog, as I monitored its memory usage in Windows Task Manager, where it used about 6 megs of memory in standby mode, and about 11 megs when in use. This small overhead did not degrade performance on any computer I tried it on.

The magicJack device is very portable, as long as there is access to a computer and broadband Internet. I have read in the blogs that there are thousands of US military personnel who use magicJack in Iraq and Afghanistan to call home for free, as the device

is registered with a domestic phone number, and domestic calls are free; the Internet does not care where the call is being made from. One of my daughter's recently taught college in Europe for a summer, and if she would have had a magicJack with her, she could have called us or we could have called her for free.

The magicJack software appears on the desktop as an interactive phone pad, and may be displayed as a large image, small image, or dropped down to an icon in the system tray. Phone numbers may be entered on the screen, or manually dialed on the phone. Received calls are displayed with their caller ID phone number, and dialed calls are displayed on a call list. Clicking on a number allows the number to be entered into a contact list, where additional information can be entered for one click dialing. A single click will also dial the free 411 directory assistance, as well as start other telephone services, such as voice mail. One interesting optional free feature is a small software utility which can be downloaded from magicJack, which integrates Outlook contacts with the magicJack software which creates an Outlook toolbar. Clicking on the toolbar dials the selected phone number from Outlook contacts. If service or support is needed, it is provided by online chat or via a directory of frequently asked questions; no live voice support is available.

I was especially impressed with the voicemail function. By default, magicJack uses voicemail for unanswered calls. Voicemail can be accessed from anywhere by dialing your home phone number, and then pressing “*” when the voice mailbox opens, and entering your four digit password. An

especially cute feature is that voicemail messages are also converted into a WAV file which is a universal standard audio format, and e-mailed to the registered e-mail address. I received a 20 second voicemail, and listened to it in my e-mail!

I only have two issues with magicJack, one of which the company can address, the other it can not. First, while magicJack offers local phone numbers in virtually all area codes in the US and Canada, the only prefix in area code 409 was a Galveston number, meaning that it would be a long distance call for people here in southeast Texas to call my magicJack assigned phone number. To be fair, I did check on the Dallas, Houston, and Atlanta area codes, and there were true local numbers for my kids, to whom I recommended getting a magicJack. The second issue is that the computer must be left on in order to get 24 hour phone service, a practice which I have recommended against in the past. There have been a few references in the blogs about people hooking up a magicJack to a broadband router and making it work when the computer is off, but many others who tried it were unsuccessful and claim that the few successes were a hoax. Currently, I use my magicJack to supplement, but not replace, my primary home phone, but for those who leave their computer on 24 hours, it may be used to replace a primary phone.

All in all, I was very impressed with magicJack, its ease of installation, its features, sound quality, and its price. To me, it is almost unfathomable how anyone can get high quality and full featured local and long distance phone service for as little as a dollar a month.

MagicJack does precisely that, and does it very well.

WEBSITES

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

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Photoshop CS4 Has Arrived By Ron Hirsch

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Actually this is Photoshop version 11, since [Adobe](#) still does keep a number ID for Photoshop. Adobe has been releasing a new version about every 18 months, and they are right on track for this newest version. I've been reviewing Photoshop since version 2.5, and it really has come a long way. With each new version, I ask myself what they can possibly add in to warrant a new version. Adobe has always surprised and delighted me with the new features.

Most of my activities in Photoshop are related to image retouching and restoration. I closed my custom darkroom and switched to all digital about 5 years ago. Color processing in the complete dark, along with the smell of chemicals can't hold a candle to processing in Photoshop. It's like comparing the stone age to today's hi-tech world. And with all the digital tools in Photoshop, pure magic can be

accomplished when compared to what could be done in the darkroom era.

I consider Photoshop to be the finest program ever written for the PC.

SOME OF THE NEW GREAT FEATURES

Adobe has been refining and improving the program's ability to work better, faster, and more smoothly, using new approaches for many of the tools and processes that Photoshop incorporates. There are a number of new capabilities that build upon existing tools to make using them better, and more flexible. And there a number of totally new features which allow users to improve their work flow. Many of these are described below.

ADJUSTMENTS PANEL

Up to CS3, the various tools such as curves, etc., were individually selected from a dropdown menu. Using them in an adjustment layer required that the user click on a different menu path to create a specific adjustment layer. Adjustment layers are the best route to take, as one can go back to that layer at any time, and change the adjustments made. Each adjustment layer had to be called up from the dropdown menu lists.

In CS4, there is a new Adjustment Panel with a choice of 15 icons, all representing the various adjustments that are possible, such as Levels, Hue/Saturation, Exposure, Channel Mixer, Color Balance, a revised version of Curves, and also a brand new Vibrance adjustment tool. All these adjustment layer capabilities can now be created from a central panel. With each choice, there are also a number of preset adjustments, along with the ability to create a custom "adjustment," and save it for future use. The user can readily

turn off/on any adjustment, delete it, or reset that adjustment to the starting no change default.

There is enormous flexibility in the adjustments panel. You can resize it to take up more or less space than the default size. When any of the various buttons on it are selected, the display in that panel changes to what one would normally see for that adjustment. Having the ability to use the default presets, and custom user saved presets, make it all the more powerful.

THE MASKS PANEL

Masks are an indispensable feature of Photoshop. They allow the user to block/pass material from one layer as needed. Painting with white on a layer mask will allow the painted material in that layer to become visible. Black will block it. Gray will partially pass it. A mask is actually a selection that is created. The selection can be "adjusted" via the usual selection modifiers, to soften, expand, contract, etc., the selection boundaries. And it can also use other selection tools to modify the actual selection mask. The Mask panel has a collection of all these tools in one place to make working with masks much more efficient. And this panel can handle both pixel and vector based masks.

An update color range feature is included in the Mask panel. "Density" and "Feather" sliders are also included. In the Mask panel, you can select the color range to apply the changes to, use a brush to change the mask, and adjust the mask edge to suit your needs. All in all, this panel makes using masks much easier, and more powerful.

ADOBE CONFIGURATOR

This is something totally new to Photoshop. Configurator is a utility that enables the user to create custom

“panels” within Photoshop CS4. Running this utility brings up a window where you can create (drag to size) an empty panel. Then you can drag just about anything that Photoshop has in the way of commands, tools, actions, et al, to build a custom set of Photoshop activities, with all of them at your fingertips. Configurator provides you with a good-sized window on the left of the Configurator program window, where all the tools, menu items, et al, are displayed. And, for those tools where there are multiple tools for a given tool choice, all the choices are displayed for one to choose from. The same goes for all the dropdown menu items in CS4. Every one is displayed.

Now, just drag the things you want to be available into the custom panel. You can position them where you like, and in any order you want. If you need more room in the new panel, just drag an edge to adjust the size. When you want to call up that custom panel, click on Window>Extensions, and select it from the menu. Then drag the panel to the desired location on your screen, and you can now click on any of the buttons in the panel to make things happen. Configurator does not give you any added activities that were not in CS4 to begin with. But it makes accessing them much quicker, much as the Adjustments and Mask panels do.

BRIDGE CS4

Bridge has been the “file manager” for Photoshop and other programs in the “CS” suites since the suites started. Bridge is more than just a file manager however. It has a wide range of features and customization capabilities that make it the tool to use when browsing, selecting, rating, and editing the EXIF information in images.

Users can customize the display, set the thumbnail sizes, and the size of the individual right side image display for the image selected in the left side thumbnail area. It can mark images via a user set rating value, and of course sort images via the many choices of parameters. Any custom settings can be saved and recalled for specific tasks. Files can be renamed in batches, via a comprehensive set of rules which the user can customize. And contact sheets can be designed in Bridge, and saved as PDF files for printing and other uses.

CS4 does not appear to have any significant changes from CS3. But it is a powerful tool to use in viewing, ranking, selecting, evaluating, and ranking your images prior to opening them in Photoshop.

ADOBE CAMERA RAW 5.0

Adobe Camera Raw is the intermediate step for users to open RAW files from their digital cameras, et al, and do some preliminary “processing” before then moving them to Photoshop for the final retouching. All the activities in Camera Raw are non-destructive, that is the file in question is not permanently changed. And Camera Raw has the equivalent of a “Panel” of very comprehensive image adjustment features, some of which are not in Photoshop, such as color temperature.

Prior to version 5.0, adjustments made in Camera Raw covered the entire image. Now, however, the user has the ability to restrict the areas where adjustments are made, essentially functioning like a layer mask does. The “Adjustment brush” is the tool that does this job. One can paint onto and limit the affected areas. There is also a Graduated Filter that applies a selected effect using a gradient, which tapers the effect from

full to none. This filter was previously only available in Lightroom, but has now been included in Photoshop CS4.

When CS3 was introduced, it included the ability to open a JPG file in Camera Raw, which was not possible earlier. So, that gave the user the ability to work with the “Panel” of adjustments that Camera Raw offers, even if the file is not a RAW file. This became a usual route for me when working on JPEG images, as the clustering of tools in Camera Raw moved most retouching tasks along much faster.

DODGE&BURN IMPROVEMENT

The dodge and burn capability in CS4 has been improved considerably. In earlier version, when dodging and burning, the tone of the items that are being worked on suffered a shift in the actual color/tone. Now an option to “Protect Tones” has been added to the options for these tools. When dodging in CS3, without the “Protect Tones,” the area being dodged looks as if a whitish color is overlaying the dodged material. When “Protect Tones” is checked, this whitening is greatly reduced, and the tone/color seems more vibrant after being dodged. The same saving of the tonal quality is preserved when burning.

THE VIBRANCE TOOL

This was a tool only available in Camera Raw in CS3, but it is now available in Photoshop CS4. It appears too similar to the older Hue/Saturation tool. But Adobe has improved the results here, similarly to the way they improved the old Brightness/Contrast tool. Vibrance does add saturation to a color, but the more saturated it is, the less it gets changed. Avoiding the garish results when using the older Saturation tool.

SPRING LOADED KEYS

Photoshop has always had several keys that can switch to different tool functions while the key is held down. This feature allows you to access a tool temporarily by holding down the key for that tool, similar to using the spacebar for the hand tool – only for many more tools now. After learning the letter for the tools you use often, you can quickly invoke that tool temporarily, by holding down that letter key. This can be a great time saver.

IMPROVED GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE

Photoshop CS4 makes use of the power of a good graphics card to improve your screen display. Users with a graphics card with 256 Mb (or more) of card memory and a GPU can now do smoother scrolling, zooming, and panning. The capabilities of the “better” card in your system will now be recognized by CS4.

IN CONCLUSION

The new features in CS4 that I’ve presented are only a partial listing. I’ve concentrated mainly on those which I feel are most important to me, in my tasks of retouching and restoring images. Photoshop can of course do much more than that. It has creative capabilities far beyond what most people realize. The more I use it, the more things I discover. It is a bottomless pit of wonderful tools and capabilities.

To discover more of its wonders, sometimes I just open Photoshop and start browsing around in the many menus and command listings, and just “play.” And every time I do this I come away with more knowledge of it what it can achieve. It’s hard to imagine what CS5 will bring, but I can be sure that

it will be more and greater tools and capabilities.

Here's a number that I find amazing. I did a search for "Photoshop" on Barnes & Noble, probably the largest book vendor on the Internet. There were 1080 items found. That is a testament to the widespread popularity of Photoshop.

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**a-squared Free 4.0
Anti-Malware Protects
Computers
By Ira Wilsker**

I am frequently called upon to clean computers infested with malware. I routinely carry a USB flash drive with me that contains a variety of virus scanners and anti-malware programs that I can use to detect and remove any malware that I find on the computer. The primary utility that I have been using is Malwarebytes' excellent Anti-Malware (free version), available at <<http://www.malwarebytes.org>>. The main program file along with the latest signature update database <<http://www.gt500.org/malwarebytes/database.jsp>> has been quite capable of detecting and removing the malware that I find on infected computers. I have trusted, and still trust, Malwarebytes to verify that my computer is free of malware, and that nothing has slipped through the layered security on my computers. Recently, I have been playing with a competitive program that has impressed me very favorably, a-squared Free 4.0 Anti-Malware <<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/free>>. In addition to having it now installed on all of my computers, its desktop icon now residing in honor

adjacent to my oft-used Malwarebytes icon, I have also installed a version of it on my USB flash drive that I use to clean computers <<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/stick>>.

a-squared Free 4.0 is a very popular product of the Austrian security software company EMSI Software GmbH, which also produces other popular and effective computer security products, including a commercial (\$39.95) version of a-squared Anti-Malware. The a-squared Anti-Malware versions, both free and commercial, are very popular, with the website currently reporting 4,878,671 registered users as I type this. The primary differences between the free version and the commercial version of the utility is the ability of the commercial version to perform more comprehensive background scanning, automated updates, scheduled automated scans, management of running services (software), and personal technical support. Both products are integrated with the European antivirus scanner, Ikarus, which is well capable of detecting and neutralizing virus infections along with a-squared's ability to detect and remove almost all known variants of the spyware that is currently endemic, and threatening us. Daily updates are available for both products, with manual updating for the free version, and automatic updating for the paid version.

According to the website, at the time I am typing this, a-squared Anti-Malware can detect and remove a massive amount of threats, including 1,047,314 Trojans ; 1,031,640 viruses; 99,270 worms; 62,331 types of spyware, 53,174 dialers, and 305,287 traces. At present, this means that it can detect and remove 2,599,016 pieces of malware.

It is not unusual for each daily update to include 500 to 1000 new digital signatures, including those of dialers, worms, Trojans, cookie threats, other forms of spyware, and traces (tracks) of malware. I am a stickler for a clean computer, and personally use a sophisticated layered defense against malware. I automatically update my primary security software every hour, and my secondary software daily. I perform a virus and spyware scan with my primary security software weekly, followed by a scan with recently updated Malwarebytes Anti-Malware. I always thought that my computer was squeaky clean until I scanned it with a-squared Free 4.0 Anti-Malware. The a-squared detected 77 items of low to medium threat that were missed by Malwarebytes, including some hacker software I use forensically, some low threat tracking cookies, and several traces or tracks from spyware, but no active or significant threats. I was favorably impressed with what it found and quarantined. Now, I update the software daily, and use the a-squared Free 4.0 Anti-Malware scan on a weekly basis. The quick scan with a-squared takes a few minutes longer than the quick scan with Malwarebytes, but appears to detect more threats. A smart scan or a deep scan do a more thorough job by scanning more content (and takes much longer), and a custom scan is available to manually scan desired targets.

For those who want to perform a free online scan for malware, EMSI Software offers a free online malware scan at www.emsisoft.com/en/software/ax/ which can detect and remove malware from the system, but does not include the "Background Guard" which is the

memory resident component of the downloaded and installed software.

The quality and efficacy of the a-squared Anti-Malware has been acknowledged by the media and third-party testing services. In November, 2008, PC Security Labs tested the product, and gave it a top score with a 99.84% detection rate, with no "false alarms," and awarded it its highest 5-star "Excellent" rating. In October, 2008, SSUpdater tested 30 well known Anti-Malware products against a universe of 800,025 malware samples, and stated that a-squared Anti-Malware had the best rate of detection. PC Magazine said, "Near-Perfect Protection: It blocked every single one of the samples the moment each one tried to execute, scoring a perfect 10 of 10 points." Popular download sites, including Tucows, Security Software Zone, ZDnet, Softpedia, and Major Geeks have given the a-squared Anti-Malware their highest ratings.

I am currently running the free version of a-squared Anti-Malware 4.0 on all of my computers, using its memory resident "Background Guard" as another layer in my protective barrier against cyber threats; it does not appear to degrade my performance when run on top of my other security software. a-squared is now firmly entrenched both on my computers, and on my USB flash drive that I use to clean other computers. The free version is adequate for most detection and removal purposes, but the commercial version, with its additional protective capabilities may also be a good choice. With products such as these, there is no reason why any PC user should have to tolerate a malware infected and degraded computer.

WEBSITES:

<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/free>> (Free version).
<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/stick>> (Free version for USB stick),
<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/antimalware/>> (commercial version).
<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/compare>> (compare versions).
<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/ax/>> (Free online malware scan).
<http://www.malwarebytes.org>>.
<http://www.gt500.org/malwarebytes/database.jsp>> (Malwarebytes latest database).

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.

How To Switch Internet Browsers By Sandy Berger

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address below).

Microsoft's Internet Explorer is a software program that comes on all computers that use the Windows Operating System. Internet Explorer is called an Internet browser since it is the software that allows you to view Web pages and surf the Internet. In fact, at least 80% of you reading this Web page right now are using Internet Explorer. You don't, however, have to use Internet Explorer. There are several other Internet browsers available.

Due to recent critical security glitches in Internet Explorer, other browsers are looking more attractive. Also, while Internet Explorer has stagnated over the past several years, several other Internet browsers have overtaken it with useful new features and advanced functionality. Features like a tabbed interface that lets you quickly move from page to page and voice-activated menu systems have put alternative browsers like Firefox and Opera ahead of Internet Explorer.

Using an alternative browser is easy. You simply download the browser from the Web site of the manufacturer and install it on your computer. Firefox, Opera, and Chrome are all alternative browsers that are free downloads. Just follow the Web site instructions to download and install the new browser. During installation the program will see Internet Explorer and will ask you if you want to transfer your Favorites and other information from Internet Explorer to the new program. Most alternative browsers will help you make the switch from Internet Explorer to their browser program. When you install Opera, Netscape, or Firefox you will be given the option importing your Internet information. Opera can import bookmarks and favorites. Firefox allows you to import options, bookmarks, history, passwords, cookies, and other data from Internet Explorer. This works for many different browsers. For example, if you switch from Internet Explorer to Netscape and decide that you would then like to switch to Opera, you can move your information from Internet Explorer to Netscape and then to Opera by simply following the instructions given during installation.

To use a different Internet browser, you don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer. In fact, it is best to leave Internet Explorer on your hard drive. Not only is Internet Explorer difficult to uninstall, you may need to use it in the future. Internet Explorer is the only browser that you can use to access the Windows Update Web site. Also, since it is the most popular Web browser, many Web sites are optimized for Internet Explorer. If you use an alternative Web browser, in your surfing you may find an occasional Web site that does not work properly in the browser that you have chosen. If that is the case, you can simply switch to Internet Explorer to access that Web site and switch back to your alternative browser for your main surfing. You see, there is no problem with using several different browsers. In fact, you can actually use two or three different browsers at the same time with no interference.

When you start using your new browser you will be asked if you want to set the new software as your default Web browser. Whatever browser is set as your default browser will be the browser that will appear when you click on a link in an e-mail or other document. If you want to use your new browser all the time, you will want to set it as the default. If you say no to setting the new program as your default, the program will continue to ask you this question every time you start it. Look for a notice with a check box in front of it to tell the program that you don't want to see that question again. For instance in Opera you will click to put a checkmark into the box in front of "Do not show this dialog again." In Firefox click to remove the checkmark in the box that says "Always perform this check when

starting Firefox." Then the program will not ask that question again.

If you decide that you don't want to continue to use the new browser, you can switch back to Internet Explorer at any time. Any new favorites or cookies that you have added to the new browser can be transferred back to Internet Explorer by using the export and import settings in the two browsers. You simply export the information from the program you are using and import it into the program you want to use. Click on File, and choose Import/Export to use these functions. Most browsers have Wizards that will help you through the entire process. Some programs like Firefox make it easy to import information, but make it more difficult to export information. If a Wizard is not available you can use the programs Help menu for detailed instructions.

If you are used to using Internet Explorer, downloading and using a different Web browser is a big step. Although most alternative browsers are similar to Internet Explorer, you will need to invest some time into learning the new interface. Some features may not be obvious. For instance the tabbed browsing in Firefox is not instantly noticeable. So be sure to read the help files and information on the product's Web site to get the full gist of what features are available.

Sandy Berger is with CompuKISS. Web: <<http://www.compukiss.com>>. E-mail: <[sandy \(at\) compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com)>.



Meeting Pictures



(Above) Tom Callow discusses 'Windows 7' at the SIG-IBM session. (Below) Larry Kulp of Kulp Computers talks about useful computer products at the SIG-IBM Intermediate session.



Meeting Pictures



(Above): Members at the ESD meeting room, including past president Jim Rarus (left). **(Below):** Members between formal sessions.





BOARD MEETING

3/8/2009

Carol Sanzi

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Member-at-Large Bob Clyne. Also attending was member Ray McLaughlin. The meeting was called to order at 12:18 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Treasurer, Bette Gay, reported that the amount in the treasury equaled \$9,928.24 with \$5,198.33 in the checking account and \$4,729.91 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 78. It is time for Karl O. Anderson, Jan Cartwright, and David R. Smikle to renew their memberships.

Bob Clyne moved to reimburse Carol Sanzi \$21.44 for refreshments. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion and it was carried.

Franz Breidenich moved to reimburse Carol Sanzi \$4.65 for the purchase of paper plates. Mike Bader seconded the motion and it was carried.

Carol Sanzi moved to reimburse Bob Clyne \$42.72 for postage. Franz Breidenich seconded the motion and it was carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Mike Bader reported that there are now 72 members in the SEMCOUG. Activity continues to increase.

Bob Clyne moved to pay the Engineering Society of Detroit (ESD) up to \$100 as invoiced for the room

rental. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bob Clyne reported that the Audit Committee met on February 22nd and found no discrepancies.

After a discussion of SEMCO's two e-mail addresses, it was decided that all correspondences, including the monthly e-mail message subscribe and unsubscribe function, will be handled by [<semco@semco.org>](mailto:semco@semco.org).

Ray McLaughlin offered SEMCO the opportunity to assist financially and with volunteers running a "Party Room" at Penguicon. This would give SEMCO a way to advertise to a computer savvy audience. Bob Clyne moved to reimburse Ray McLaughlin up to \$150 for purchases made in operating the "Party Room." Warner Mach seconded the motion. Bob Clyne moved to amend his motion to appoint Warner Mach and/or Mike Bader to oversee such expenditures. Tom Callow seconded the motion to amend and it was carried. The main motion also carried. Bob Clyne moved to print 50 extra copies of the DATA BUS. These would be distributed at Penguicon. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

Tom Callow moved to reserve the ESD room rental until the end of the year and pay the \$50 membership fee. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

Richard Jackson and Mike Bader have created a one-page flyer describing the function of SEMCO. This will be distributed at Penguicon.

Smart Computing has offered SEMCO a one-year subscription to their magazine as a bonus for members

[Continued on Page 21](#)

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow

No April Meeting.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

No April Meeting.



NOVICE-IBM GROUP Rotating Volunteer Hosts

No April Meeting.



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

April 26 (4th Mon.): 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.

April 2009 DATABUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)

SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., April 19, 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)**

May 6 1, 7 p.m., (1st Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Range Rd., Marysville, Admin. Building. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen <compinfo@hughes.net>. <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Topic: TBA.

DCOM Computer Club

April 10, 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.

Focus Hope IT Users Group

May 2, 9:30-11:30 a.m. (1st Saturday), 1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web <<http://www.fhitug.org>>. Info: <info@fhitug.org>. Topic: TBA."

HUG (Holly User Group)

April 11, 8, 9:00 a.m., (2nd Sat.); Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Ortonville. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup- Detroit

April 19, 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: "Scott Kelly will show his latest portrait retouching techniques using Photoshop CS4." SIGS: 2:00 p.m.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

April 18, 11:00 a.m., (3rd Saturday); (SIGs at 9:30); See web site for meeting location. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: TBA.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

April 11, 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 <president@mdlug.org>. Topic: TBA.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

April 14, 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>>. Topic: TBA.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group

April 9, 7:30 p.m., (2nd Thur.); Westview Office Park, 26100 American Dr., Suite 100, Southfield MI. 48034. 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>>.

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

May 5, 7:30 p.m. (1st Tues); 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: "Microsoft Windows 7 Beta" Presented by Jeffrey Bates of Microsoft.

Continued from Page 18

subscribing. This will be used as a door prize.

There will be no Sunday meetings in April because of the Easter holiday.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Warner Mach seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.



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

Engineering Society of Detroit
20700 Civic Center Dr., Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield, MI. 48076

No General Meeting in April.
Happy Easter!

SIG-ADVANCED, April 26, 2009 (4th 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 248-398-359. TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing.

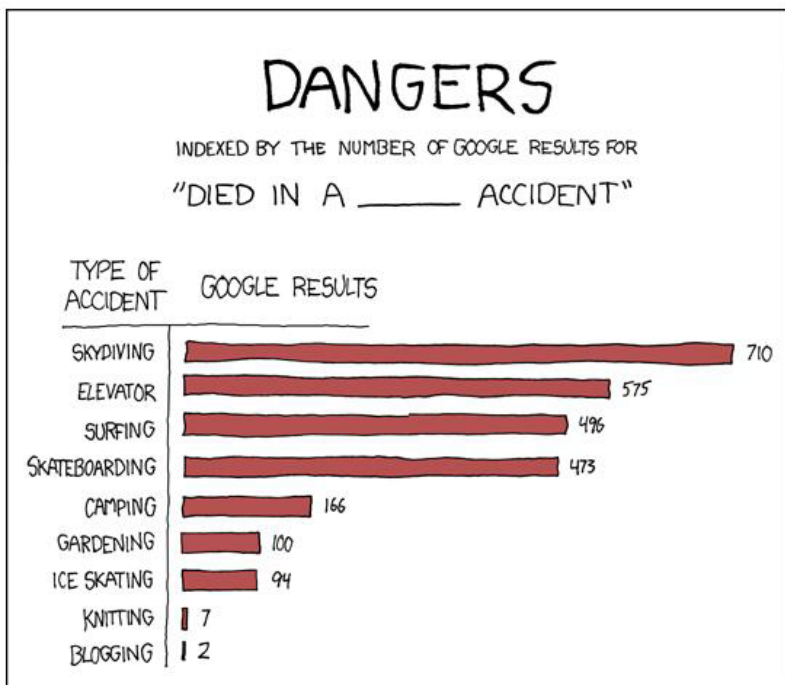
May 10 - SEMCO Sunday (May general meeting)

<http://www.semco.org>

PUBLIC INVITED

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

Directions to the [Engineering Society of Detroit](http://www.esdetroit.org) will appear in the May issue of the Data Bus. In the meantime, there is no April meeting, so enjoy the following cartoon from <http://www.xkcd.com>.



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

SEMCO (future meetings)

No meeting in April

May 10

**FIRST CLASS MAIL
Dated Material**

No meeting in April!

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