



Official Newsletter
SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization, Inc.

DATA BUS

Volume 34

May 2009

Number 5

IN THIS ISSUE

Deals Column, by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click	3
Free PC Utilities from Periform Software, by Ira Wilsker.....	5
Computer Speed, RAM, and Virtual Memory, by Brian K. Lewis	8
What We Learned From the Conficker Worm, by Ira Wilsker.....	10
Driver Backup Programs, by Larry Cohen.....	13
Freewaregenius—Evaluates Free PC Software, by Ira Wilsker	14
ESD Pictures	16
Mad Scientist Pictures	17
SIGS: IBM, IBM Intermediate, Advanced, & Novice IBM Group	19
DATA BUS Deadline.....	19
Other Groups Calendar of Events.....	20
Computer Resource People	21
SEMCO Calendar	22
Map & Directions to SEMCO Meeting at ESD	23

SEMCO OFFICERS

President	Mike Bader	(586) 573-7330
Vice-President	Richard Jackson	(248) 546-3694
Secretary	Carol Sanzi	(586) 739-7256
Treasurer	Bette Gay	(248) 641-7799
Members-at-Large of the Board of Directors	Bob Clyne	(810) 387-3101
	Charles Moery E-Mail	< keypounder2@aol.com >

NEWSLETTER STAFF

Publications Committee Chair	Warner Mach	(734) 326-0733
Editor	Warner Mach	(734) 326-0733
Proofreader	Beth Fordyce	(734) 453-0349
Proofreader	Fred Acerri	E-Mail < acerri@att.net >

SIG (SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP) CHAIRPERSONS

SIG-IBM: Chairman	Tom Callow	(248) 642-5770 (9-5)
SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE	Open Position	
NOVICE-IBM GROUP	Rotating Hosts	
SIG-ADVANCED	Franz Breidenich	(248) 398-3359

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

All SEMCO correspondence should be addressed to

SEMCO - P.O. Box 707 - Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707

Web site: <http://www.semco.org>

E-mail: semco@semco.org

General information: (voice) answering device in Royal Oak **(248) 398-7560**

DATA BUS is published monthly by SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. (SEMCO) as its official newsletter. **Mail DATA BUS newsletter copy to: Warner Mach, 1360 N. Hix Rd., Westland, MI 48185; or e-mail: machw@att.net.** The Editor is responsible for contents and control of the DATA BUS. Materials published herein may be used for non-commercial purposes only, without further permission of SEMCO or the authors, except as noted, providing credit is given to the author and source, i.e. DATA BUS, and issue date. Entire contents copyright © 2009 SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc.

SEMCO does not condone in any way the illegal copying of copyrighted material and will not tolerate such practice at any SEMCO function.

Your mailing label and membership card list the month and year your membership expires. Newsletters will not be sent after the month of expiration. Back issues may not be available. Renew your membership as early as possible.

This publication was created using Adobe InDesign CS2
donated by Adobe Systems, Inc.



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

More On Digital Picture Frames

I talked last month about problems reading the internal memory in my digital picture frame. Since then, it's been an education trying to put it into service. The old adage, "you get what you pay for" must apply here. I received no help from "Smartparts" (the company) tech support. At first, the message was that the lines were busy, call back later, but never any luck. Now the message has changed to "No one is available to take your call." I tried their Web site's tech support, but with no response there either.

I used their Optipix™ software to process the pictures and load them into the digital frame's internal memory, but they went into that "eternal bit bin." I eventually got them into the picture frame's memory (no folder) and not on the SD Card I had added. I then copied them from the internal memory into a folder on the SD Card I plugged into the picture frame. So far, so good, but when I tried turning the frame on to display them, it was showing all the pictures I had on the SD Card, even from other folders I had previously put on it, but it retrieved nothing from the internal memory.

I can't seem to select a certain spot for retrieving the pictures. When I remove my SD Card, the frame runs all the pictures it can find in its internal memory, including the samples not in a folder. It seems like I should put each picture set into a separate SD Card by itself. A bit frustrating, but, oh well!

A friend purchased eight digital picture frames on line as gifts for his family, but two came through DOA and the Internet distributor would not replace them. First he deleted the sample pictures in the memory of one of them to set it up, but then could not load pictures. He spotted a small hole and tried a paper clip to see if it was a reset. All the sample pictures came back and he loaded his pictures again, and then deleted the samples. He also purchased more digital frames from another on-line merchant and two had problems, but he got those replaced. He said that with those, he could select the folder to get a slide show from. I checked the book for another friend's frame and it also lets you choose the retrieval source.

I had problems when I tried putting text captions on some of my pictures. At first, I thought it didn't find them; until later when I found it was running them last. Huh! How did that happen? The FAQ on their web site says "Most digital picture frames run the pictures in the order they are copied to the memory." Wow, it's getting complicated, but I guess I can do that. Oh well, hopefully it will eventually do "something" I would like. I'm suggesting that you ask lots of questions if you are buying a digital picture frame.

Another New Toy!

I saw an ad for a HP color laser jet printer for \$199.99, but I've seen those ads before and was never happy with the price of the cartridges because new printers do not come with "full" cartridges. The sale was at Office Depot and I also shopped at a local computer shop that supports our user group and offered a Ricoh color laser jet for the same price. He printed the spec sheet and it came out on a machine that also

featured duplex printing (both sides). It impressed me and it was \$379 for club members. I receive several newsletters in PDF format and can't live with reading that much on my screen. I've been printing them out by first printing the odd pages, and then reverse the page sequence to turn them over and print the even sides.

My present HP laser curls the paper a bit and even though I try to straighten them, sometimes that printer runs two pages through at once when printing the opposite side and ruins the page sequence. A duplex printer would sure simplify all that, so my choice was made. I went back to Office Depot and saw a HP printer with duplex capabilities for the same price, but after asking how the warranty worked, I returned to the other shop and purchased a Ricoh duplex printer from them.

Unpacking the machine when I got it home was a bit frustrating because trying to figure out the many protective tapes and metal stops to remove by looking at their pictorial brochure, and in which direction and sequence to do it, was confusing. I later found a PDF manual on the installation disk. I called their tech support number and a guy picked up the phone and proceeded to help me, also offering suggestions. He was based in Atlanta, Ga. and spoke excellent English. What great tech support! I called again later with the same quick response. Oh yes, the store salesman didn't tell me the new machine was an all-in-one multifunction printer. I noticed that when I unpacked it.

I printed some newsletters the other evening and watched that printer run them out while I just sat there, and in COLOR. The new printer is a treat, and so was the Ricoh tech support. I copied

a color brochure today and that was simple, and a treat also.

FACUG Spring Conference

My wife and I attended the FACUG/APCUG Conference and it was a nice weekend. There were about 140 attendees from several Florida user groups, but a few were from other states. There were less sponsoring vendors this year, but that void was filled with other interesting presentations such as "Cloud Computing," "Doterati," "Wikis," "Twittering," "Second Life" and "BarCamp." I had never heard of BarCamp, but it is an intriguing event where you sign up to speak for fifteen minutes about "anything you want" and this "Unconference" concept is gaining popularity all over the world. Doterati is for people locally that work, study, speculate, ask, and answer questions about interactive marketing, media and technology. <<http://www.doterati.com>>. In just a year, they have 500 members and expanding. Watch the FACUG videos for more information.

A lot was packed into the weekend and it was nice to see friends, especially an attendee there from my hometown area in Michigan. Most of the sessions are available for viewing at <<http://www.facug.org/ConferenceSpring/conference-s.asp>>. Two presentations were by APCUG President Jay Ferron, one on Security, and another on Windows 7. If you skipped it, you missed an enjoyable conference.

Government Discount

I wouldn't ordinarily include this, but a few readers work for the government and law enforcement agencies, and perhaps some others might qualify. ElcomSoft Co. Ltd., a leading provider of various password recovery solutions, announces the availability of a special

discount. <<http://www.elcomsoft.com/special.html>> The new discount program enables government entities, military branches, criminal investigation and law enforcement agencies, and police and emergency services to order selected ElcomSoft password recovery products at a discount. The new 20% discount is in addition to any volume or bundle discounts already offered by ElcomSoft.

Check the URL above for products covered and information about ordering.

Protection For Your Computer

I have not tried this and there's no discount, but the lifetime membership concept sounded OK for the column. I have edited their announcement to shorten it and we found no reviews on it.

South West eCommerce announced the availability of Spyware & Adware Remover 2009, a new version of the privacy protection software ensuring optimal system performance. Spyware & Adware Remover 2009 delivers features to protect valuable data from getting corrupted or stolen, stop hackers and hinder ID theft.

Spyware can transmit secret personal information such as name, address, credit card number, social security number, driver's license number, and passwords. Spyware & Adware Remover provides users with protection from the widest range of threats, and prevents recurrence.

Spyware & Adware Remover helps find what's eating a computer's resources by detecting and eliminating malware and adware running in the background. It removes disturbances and blocks annoying pop-up ads. Spyware & Adware Remover 2009 runs

under Windows 98, XP, ME, 2000 and Vista. The one-time membership fee is \$29.90. Lifetime Membership includes unlimited downloads and support. Further information on the product, and its free evaluation copy, is available from <<http://www.webdefenders.net>>.

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>>.



Free PC Utilities from Piriform Software By Ira Wilsker

There are some excellent free software utilities available that are every bit as good as their commercial counterparts, and sometimes even better. One software publisher, with an almost unknown name, but with very popular products is Piriform Software. Piriform, a British software company located in London, distributes free software that it creates, and is financially supported by the advertising on its websites and donations. While Piriform may not be well known, its software is very well known, with over a quarter-billion copies downloaded! All Piriform utilities are totally free to download and used both by individuals and by corporations, or other organizations.

Piriform's best known software is its CCleaner, available for free download at <http://www.ccleaner.com>>. Originally released with a filename that many found objectionable, the moniker was shortened to CCleaner which led to explosive popularity, and a very loyal following. CCleaner is arguably one of the most widely used utilities in the cyber-world, with over 260 million copies downloaded. CCleaner is totally freeware and contains no spyware and adware. CCleaner is a system optimizer that can improve system performance, enhance Internet privacy, and remove useless and obsolete files from the computer, freeing up disk space. CCleaner is one of the utilities that I carry with me on a flash drive whenever I am asked to checkout a computer, and in some cases has safely removed gigabytes of outdated files from overly cluttered hard drives. CCleaner also includes an effective registry cleaner that can remove obsolete and useless entries from the registry, which may improve performance. (CAUTION: Always use the backup feature in CCleaner, and make a system restore point before running any registry repair utility!). One especially nice feature of CCleaner is its speed, typically scanning a hard drive in a matter of seconds, and rarely more than a few minutes.

Web surfers are often unaware of how many out of date and otherwise temporary files are saved in the cache and other places on the hard drive, often creating an enormous amount of clutter on the hard drive that consumes valuable space, and can also lead to a degradation of performance. CCleaner works with Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome, Opera, and Safari, and can selectively clean and remove temporary

Internet files, history, cookies, download history, auto-complete forms, and index.dat files, often freeing up large amounts of hard drive space. By my personal choice, I only choose to delete my temporary Internet files and index.dat files, but that still frees up almost all of the wasted hard drive space, as the remaining items are relatively tiny. Some users who want to maximize their privacy and security may choose to delete all cookies (small text files placed on the hard drive by websites), but many cookies are a convenience item, and not a security or privacy threat.

While controversial in some tech circles, the cleaning of the computer registry of old and obsolete entries may slightly improve performance. To mitigate any possible damage that may result from an erroneous registry deletion, CCleaner integrates a comprehensive registry backup feature which can quickly restore any deleted entries. CCleaner's registry cleaner can remove unused and out-of-date registry entries, including file extensions, ActiveX controls, classIDs, progIDs, uninstallers, shared DLLs, fonts, help files, application paths, icons, invalid shortcuts and other useless entries.

In addition to cleaning browser files and the registry, CCleaner also cleans the residue left behind by many other applications, including Windows Media Player, eMule, KaZaa, Google Toolbar, Netscape, Microsoft Office, Nero, Adobe Acrobat, WinRAR, WinAce, WinZip and many other programs, which will not just save space on the hard drive, but may also improve the performance of those programs.

In the "Tools" section of CCleaner are an uninstall utility and a startup manager. The uninstall utility can be

used to initiate the removal of any unwanted software, and the startup manager can be used to stop any unwanted software from loading at boot. Both utilities are useful in improving system performance.

For those who may be reluctant to use CCleaner to maintain their computers, Piriform states, "CCleaner was designed from the ground to be safe and secure to use. It has multiple levels of checks in place to ensure that it cannot delete any useful information or documents you may still need."

CCleaner will run on any PC with Windows 98, ME, NT4, 2000, 2003 and 2008 Server, all versions of XP including 64 bit, and all editions of Vista including 64 bit. Since it is a small program (3 mb download), and utilizes minimal hard drive space when stored, and minimal memory when run, Piriform states that there are no minimum memory or hard drive requirements to run CCleaner. No wonder that all of this power in a small, free program has gained such a large and loyal following.

Piriform also publishes two other useful, excellent, and free utilities, both of which have earned a large and loyal following. Piriform's newest utility is Defraggler <<http://www.defraggler.com>>, a simple but powerful disk defragging utility that has features lacking in most other defraggers. While Defraggler can do a full drive defrag like other utilities, what makes it unique is the ability to defrag only selected files, without the need to process the entire hard drive. Defraggler is a single exe file less than 1 mb in size that requires no special installation on the hard drive. I carry the Defraggler file on my flash drive, from which it can be run on any compatible computer. Defraggler will

run on any Windows PC with Windows 2000, 2003, XP, or Vista, both 32 and 64 bit versions.

Piriform's other free utility is Recuva <<http://www.recuva.com>>, pronounced "recover," which is a file recovery utility. Recuva can recover and restore files that have been deleted from the computer, digital camera memory cards, MP3 players, and other devices, even if they have been emptied from the recycle bin. It may be possible to recover files that had been lost from program bugs, system crashes, and viruses. I have used Recuva to recover deleted files from my flash drive, and the SD cards from both my digital camera and my GPS. This is another small but very useful utility that I carry on my flash drive, as I will never know when there is an urgent or critical file to recover. As with all other file recovery utilities, deleted files can only be recovered if they have not been overwritten, which is another reason to always have a current and contemporary backup of any important files. Recuva will run on any Windows PC with Windows 98 to Vista.

London based Piriform is to be commended for producing such fine and free utilities as these three above. If you use one or more of them, please seriously consider making a PayPal donation from the link on the respective webpage; that way maybe Piriform can be incentivized to produce more excellent and free software.

WEBSITES:

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

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

<<http://www.recuva.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>.



**Computer Speed, RAM,
and Virtual Memory**
By Brian K. Lewis

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).

One of the more frequent questions raised is: "will adding more physical memory (RAM), speed up my computer?" The answer is a qualified "maybe." The first thing you need to be aware of are the built-in bottlenecks that can slow down your computer. Programs and data move through your computer at different speeds in different locations. The central processor (CPU) is usually the fastest data handler in the system. The hard drive is the slowest and everything else, including the RAM, is intermediate in data handling speed. The speed of processing data in RAM is measured in billionths of a second, or nanoseconds, and the speed of accessing data on the hard disk is measured in thousandths of a second, or milliseconds. So, ideally, you want all the processing to go from RAM to the CPU and back to RAM. Unfortunately, that's not always possible even if your system has the maximum amount of RAM installed.

Every computer running Windows, from several generations back, uses "virtual memory" in addition to RAM. The definition of "virtual memory" is based on redefining the address space to "trick" programs into thinking they

are using large blocks of contiguous memory. Virtual memory is a space on the hard drive, frequently called a "swap file" or "page file." This is a block that is mapped for temporary storage of programs, data, and operating system essentials. This technique gives an application program the impression that it has contiguous working memory (address space), while in fact it may be physically fragmented.

Virtual memory was designed at a time when RAM was much more expensive than space on a hard drive. Even though RAM is now much less expensive, the latest versions of Windows (XP & Vista) still depend on virtual memory. In fact, much of the operating system kernel ends up in virtual memory. This kernel memory also controls the allocation of data to virtual memory. Consequently, it is not really possible to eliminate virtual memory when you are running Windows XP or Vista. If you do disable virtual memory, Windows becomes unstable.

In a 32-bit computer running Windows, the maximum memory that can be accessed by the CPU is 4 gigabytes (2³²). It can not access addresses beyond 4 gigabytes (GB). (A gigabyte is a billion bytes.) Not every computer can accept 4 GB of RAM. Some older computers are limited to 512 megabytes (MB) and still run Windows XP quite successfully. However, if you have a newer computer whose motherboard can accept 4 GB of RAM, you may not be able to fully access all of that RAM. In some cases, RAM is shared with the graphics system. This is usually referred to as an "integrated graphics card." In such a case, up to 1 GB of your RAM may be used by the

graphics leaving only 3 GB for the rest of the system. Then Windows takes 2 GB of space leaving only 1 GB for user space (programs and data). Even if some of this is placed in Virtual memory, the CPU still has only 4 GB of addresses. If you have a graphics card with its own memory, Windows will allocate 2 GB to kernel memory and 2 GB to user memory. Since some of the kernel memory will be in virtual memory, your total memory will be a combination of physical memory (RAM) and virtual memory (hard drive), but the total will not exceed 4 GB in a 32-bit computer. Remember, the 4 GB limit applies to the number of addresses that can be accessed by the CPU. Those addresses can be on the graphics card, the hard drive or in physical memory (RAM).

Windows sets up the memory system by dividing memory into pages. The most recently accessed pages are in RAM. Any pages that have not been referenced in a while are written to the file on the hard drive. According to Microsoft the paging file in a 32-bit system can be a maximum of 16 terabytes (one terabyte equals 1000 gigabytes). So the total virtual memory pagefile system can exceed the 4 GB limit by a considerable amount. However, no more than the 4 GB can be actively handled at one time. The inactive pages are stored on the hard drive.

Virtual memory not only operates at the speed of the hard disk data access, it also requires special handling before it can be used by the CPU or sent to the video screen. Pages on the hard disk have to be read into RAM to be used. That also means that the space they will take in RAM must be vacated. If there was data there, it must be written

to the hard drive, before the new pages can be read into RAM. This paging process must also be managed. Some memory is used just to keep track of which pages are in RAM and which are in virtual memory. This is the role of the Virtual Memory Manager. All of these processes of reading and writing to and from RAM require time. As a result, virtual memory use does slow the computer more than the amount that is just due to the slower speed of disk access.

Before you decide that you need 4 GB of RAM to solve your speed problem, you need to determine how much RAM your computer is designed to accept. Computers in today's market are sold with anywhere from 1-4 GB of RAM. However, only a few years ago, computers were designed to accept a maximum of 1 GB of RAM or less. So you need to check your owners manual to see what the maximum RAM is for your computer. Then, if you don't know how much is installed in your computer, bring up the device manager window from the control panel. The first page will tell you how much physical memory you have in your system. You can also see the distribution of physical memory and virtual memory by bringing up the task manager (Ctrl-Alt-Del) and clicking on the Performance tab.

There are several other possible solutions to this problem. One is to look at your hard drive. If you have an older computer with an IDE drive, replacing it with a drive that has a SATA interface will speed up the data handling in virtual memory. Another change would be to purchase a graphics card with 256-512 MB of RAM and install it in place of the integrated video. That would release the

RAM that was being shared with the video card.

The best, and most expensive, alternative for speeding up your computer is to replace your 32-bit computer with a 64-bit system. The 64-bit computers can access 16 exabytes of RAM (264). That is 16 million GB of RAM. Most of the 64-bit computers in today's market do limit physical RAM to anywhere from 8 to 256 terabytes. Not that we're getting into any really large numbers here, but the amount of RAM in a 64-bit machine is more than adequate to reduce virtual memory to a bare minimum. The catch is that 64-bit machines have other problems, especially with the limited availability of 64-bit software and drivers for peripheral devices. So before you decide to switch to 64-bit computing you need to check out whether or not drivers are available for your peripherals.

Finally, if your hard drive is heavily fragmented, this will also slow down data reading and writing. Simply defragmenting your drive will speed up the drive input and output. It may also improve the computer's boot time. As you can see, there are a number of things to consider if you need to speed up your computer.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems. He is a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL. Web:<<http://www.spcug.org>>. E-mail:<bwsail@yahoo.com>.



What We Learned From the Conficker Worm By Ira Wilsker

On April 1, "April Fools' Day," the globe held its collective breath to see what, if anything, the Conficker worm would do to the millions of computers that it infected. No less a mass media authority than the CBS news show "60 Minutes" broadcast a warning on the Sunday evening prior to the April 1 "activation" of the Conficker worm. Some local and national media tripped over each other trying to get out stories and interview geeks and nerds (me included) about what was going to happen, and then what happened after the April 1 trigger date passed.

Conficker is a computer worm that can infect a vulnerable computer via a network connection or infected flash drive, and there have been some anecdotal claims of infection from visiting infected websites, but this vector has been challenged by some security experts. There are at least four distinct variants of Conficker, appropriately given the suffixes "A" through "D." Each variant has slightly different methods of transmission, with the latter variants being more potentially harmful than the earlier ones. The earliest version, Conficker A, was discovered in the wild on November 21, 2008, and exploited Windows computers that did not have the latest security patches installed (specifically MS08-067), which left open a vulnerability on unpatched computers. The "A" variant did little to protect itself from detection and eradication, but later versions incorporated protective capabilities that rendered many of the detection and

removal methods ineffective. The “D” variant, which first appeared on March 4, 2009 implemented sophisticated techniques to protect itself from detection and neutralization. The “D” version would prevent the Internet web browser from connecting to most of the anti-malware websites, disabled the auto-update function of Windows, and would scan running processes every second looking for anti-malware utilities, patches, or diagnostic utilities that could detect Conficker, and try and terminate it, thus protecting itself from detection and removal. This ability to protect itself created a cat-and-mouse game between the creators of Conficker and the cyber security community who were actively trying to defeat Conficker.

The variants of Conficker have a nasty habit of receiving mutation and update instructions from up to 500 new web domains daily, out of up to 50,000 newly created web domains created by Conficker daily. The organizations that manage the top level domain names have done a lot to cripple the effect of Conficker creating so many domain names, thus making it easier to cripple the ability of Conficker to “phone home” for instructions and updates. The reason why so many pundits were concerned about April 1 was that Conficker D was to “phone home” for instructions, and no one other than the Conficker administrators, knew what those instructions would be. There were predictions of massive spam attacks shutting down mail servers, denial of service attacks, massive identity theft, and other malevolent activities, but April 1 passed without any major maladies being attributed to Conficker. That does not necessarily

mean that Conficker is dead, but simply sitting dormant on millions of infected computers just listening for instructions to do something malevolent.

One point of difference was on the number of computers infected by Conficker, with the media often using the number 10 million. Different cyber security organizations arrived at different numbers using a variety of techniques. Panda, the Spanish publisher of security software, reported that 6% of the 2 million computers scanned with its online active scan service were infected with Conficker. IBM analyzed the number of computers “phoning home” through the networks, and came up with the prediction that 4% of all PCs were infected, which could put the number into the tens of millions. Other prognosticators arrived at the number of Conficker infected computers at between 9 and 15 million. What is so potentially threatening about this large number of infected computers, regardless of the actual number, is that they all have the capability of be remotely administered as part of an army of zombies, in a super computer like network of robots, known as a “botnet,” which can launch some type of concerted action upon the orders of the “botmaster.”

The computer security industry did not sit idly by as Conficker spread. On February 13, 2009, Microsoft posted a \$250,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals behind the creation and distribution of Conficker. Many of the security companies came together and created the Conficker Working Group <<http://www.confickerworkinggroup.org>> as a centralized repository of Conficker data, detection and removal

information. The working group released a very fast and effective, but simple, online detector that anyone can use to quickly determine if his computer is infected with Conficker. The working group calls it the “Conficker Eye Chart,” which is nothing but a simple website that displays the logos of several of the security companies that Conficker blocks; if the logos display, the computer is likely clean of Conficker, but if any of the logos fail to display, the computer is likely infected by Conficker or another miscreant that blocks access to security companies sites. This eye chart, which should be visited by all PC users, is online at www.confickerworkinggroup.org/infection_test/cfeyechart.html.

I carry several utilities on a flash drive that I have used several times in recent days to scan suspect computers. I carry MalwareBytes <www.malwarebytes.org> along with its latest update, and a-squared FREE (both the full version and the version that will run from a USB drive), which I use to scan suspect computers. I found that a-squared FREE can detect more than MalwareBytes, because a-squared FREE will detect both viruses and other forms of malware, while MalwareBytes only detects malware, but not viruses. Both will detect and kill Conficker. There is a comprehensive interactive directory of anti-Conficker utilities at www.dshield.org/conficker. I also carry BitDefender’s two Conficker specific detection and removal tools (BDTools.net), one of which is for PCs, and the other will detect Conficker on a network. While there are several other free Conficker utilities available, I have been satisfied with these few.

While Conficker did not cause Armageddon on April 1, as some in

the mass media had predicted, it is still sitting on countless millions of infected computers, just waiting for commands. I strongly suggest that PC users perform a scan with one or more of the utilities referenced above. If your browser will not connect to one of the major security websites, your computer is likely infected with Conficker or some other self-protecting malware. Connect to the “eye chart” mentioned above, and see if you can access the security sites. If you cannot connect and display the logos of the security companies, then your computer is infected with something bad. It is also possible that the antivirus software installed on your computer has been crippled by Conficker or some other malware, and may need to be reinstalled after the computer is cleaned with a third-party utility, such as a-squared FREE.

Users should not be complacent, as millions are unknowingly infected with viruses and malware. It would be very wise and prudent to scan your computer right now with a reputable third party product just to be sure.

WEBSITES:

<<http://www.malwarebytes.org>>—MalwareBytes.

<<http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/free>>—a-squared Free.

<<http://www.f-secure.com/weblog/archives/00001636.html>>—F-Secure Information.

<<http://www.microsoft.com/protect/computer/viruses/worms/conficker.mspx>>—Microsoft.

<<http://www.microsoft.com/protect/images/viruses/diagram.jpg>>—Conficker Diagram.

<<http://www.dshield.org/conficker>>—Third party removal tools

<<http://www.confickerworkinggroup.org/wiki/>>—Conficker Working Group,
<http://www.confickerworkinggroup.org/infection_test/cfeyechart.html>—Eye Chart.
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conficker>>—Conficker information.
<<http://bdtools.net>>—BitDefender Conficker utilities.

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>.

Driver Backup Programs **By Larry Cohen**

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

As you are aware, drivers are small programs that associate your hardware with your operating system. It is particularly useful to have these programs if you have to re-install windows either from the manufacturer's restore disk or a new install of windows. It avoids the hassle of having to go to each manufacturer's website and download one-by-one drivers.

Driverback.bat

This is a batch file from PCWorld magazine to backup all device drivers. Here are the directions from PCWorld:

Once it's on your system double click the file to create your backup.

The batch file copies the drivers (and a lot of extra files) to a folder called

"driverback" inside My Documents. Use your CD authoring software to copy the contents of this folder to a CD.

To reinstall the drivers, use either Device Manager or Control Panel's Add Hardware applet to open Update Wizard. If the Wizard doesn't automatically look for drivers on the CD, point to the CD drive when asked for a location.

It can be downloaded at:<<http://www.pcworld.com/49366>>.

DriverMax

This is a wonderful easy-to-use sophisticated backup tool that allows you to either set up a login account to retrieve drivers or export them to a zip file that you would copy to a CD for later installation. Here is a description from the DriverMax website:

"DriverMax is a new tool that allows you to download the latest driver updates for your computer. No more searching for rare drivers on discs or on the web or inserting one installation CD after the other. Just create a free account, log in, and start downloading the updates that you need."

You can also export all your current drivers (or just the ones that work ok) to a folder or a compressed file. After reinstalling Windows you will have everything in one place! Most of the situations when Windows is running slower are caused by faulty driver installations. Windows stores all versions of older drivers just in case you want to go back; sometimes it messes up older versions with more recent ones. The Export Wizard will only export the drivers you select by copying the needed files to a folder or a compressed ZIP file. After reinstalling Windows all drivers will be back in place in less than 5 minutes - sparing you of searching, inserting disc after

disk and losing precious time. The Import Drivers wizard allows you to install all the drivers that you exported earlier. The entire operation might take up to 5-10 minutes.

Just one single computer restart will be required after all drivers are reinstalled!

Note: DriverMax only works on Windows Vista, Windows XP and Windows 2003 (all service packs). Driver downloads are *only* available for Windows Vista and Windows XP users.”

It can be found at: <<http://www.innovative-sol.com/drivermax/>> Note: After starting the program, it does require free registration which is acquired from the above web site.

Larry Cohen is a Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Nassau Community College and is a Member-At-Large of the ICON Executive Board.

From The ICON Graphic, Newsletter of ICON PC User Group, Inc., January 2009 Edition. Web: <<http://www.iconpcug.org>>. E-mail: <[president \(at\) iconpcug.org](mailto:president(at)iconpcug.org)>.



**Freewaregenius—
Evaluates Free PC
Software
By Ira Wilsker**

Reiterating what I wrote in a recent column, I still get a positive response from readers that they like the idea of getting free software for their PCs. From your feedback, these freeware columns are among your favorites, and I will continue to compose them.

I have used a variety of sources to denote which freeware programs would be most beneficial to most users, and have now come across another valuable

resource on the subject. Lately I have been reading the listings and evaluations from a site “freewaregenius” (listed as one word in lower case), <<http://www.freewaregenius.com>>, which has been busily locating and testing some of the finest free software available. About once a week, freewaregenius posts its latest recommendations. Two of the recent postings were especially interesting to me, and they are a review of the best free antivirus programs, and a review of software uninstaller utilities.

On almost every radio show, and via a steady stream of e-mails, I am frequently asked about my recommendations for free antivirus software. Users are either fed up with the poor performance of their commercial antivirus software and are seeking free alternatives, or are seeking to conserve their scarce fiscal resources by utilizing free software rather than buying it. Freewaregenius evaluated the three most popular free antivirus programs in order to bestow the title “best freeware antivirus program.” The three contenders for the top spot were the enormously popular programs Avira Antivir, Avast, and AVG. The author of the review summarized his findings with the statement, “My conclusion: all three are very worthy contenders that can hold their own or surpass any heavyweight for-pay antivirus; however Antivir and Avast are definitely in the first tier, while AVG is a close second tier.”

In his evaluations, the author used the latest available objective comparisons performed by a third party testing laboratory, AV-comparatives. While there are some other excellent freeware antivirus programs (I have recommended Comodo in the past), for the purpose of evaluation, the author chose to compare the top three free antivirus programs.

These three programs, which in their aggregate, arguably represent the large majority of users of free antivirus programs, were also compared to the performance of some of the top performing commercial programs, Kaspersky and Eset Nod32.

In the independent laboratory tests by AV-comparatives, Avast and Antivir both performed extremely well, and were very close in their abilities to detect viruses. In fact, the free Antivir came out at the top of the list in detection, beating out all of the commercial products tested. Antivir was also excellent at detecting new threats that had not yet been added to its virus signature database, using a detection technology known as “heuristics.” AVG, while slightly behind in its detection ability, was ahead of the others by having the lowest rate of false positives. To swing the other way, AVG had a slower scanning speed than the other two.

While top rated in detection, Antivir does have one feature that many users found irritating, and that is that it displays advertisements with each update. Antivir also integrates anti-spyware (as does AVG), but both AVG (the most popular) and Avast are easier to use than Antivir. Personally, I have tried both AVG and Avast, and have recommended them, along with Comodo, for a long time. Cognizant that none of the three are by themselves a comprehensive security suite, but are a vital component in protecting the PC, I would feel comfortable with any of the three.

Another common situation that virtually all PC users eventually face is the occasional difficulty uninstalling no longer needed software. Microsoft's

Add/Remove Programs utility is notorious for its inability to remove all traces of an application when uninstalled. Luckily for us there are several free utilities that are available that typically do a better job removing unwanted software than Microsoft's utility. Freewaregenius has recently obliged us by reviewing some of the best of the free uninstall utilities, Appremover, PC Decrapifier, and Revo Uninstaller.

Among the most difficult programs to uninstall are security applications, especially those from Symantec/Norton. Appremover <<http://www.appremover.com>> is a utility expressly designed to remove those no longer needed security applications. I have used Appremover to uninstall Norton security products that have been difficult to remove, even with the utility available directly from Symantec. Just recently, I tried to uninstall a Norton security suite from a troubled computer, and using Norton's uninstall utility, there still were large amounts of digital debris left on the hard drive, including now obsolete registry entries; Appremover handled the job much more efficiently and completely than Norton's own utility. Many other security utilities are almost as difficult to remove, McAfee products being among the most difficult, and Appremover handles them all with ease.

PC Decrapifier <<http://www.pcdecrapifier.com>> may have an unpleasant name, but it is a sweet program that I have used numerous times to selectively remove the trial software, demo software, and other useless items installed by computer manufacturers. Much of this factory installed software and services are commission generating

[Continued on Page 18](#)

ESD Pictures



New meeting location: Engineering Society of Detroit. (Above) Building as seen from front (Civic Center Drive). (Below) Building as seen from rear (where we enter).



Mad Scientist Pictures



Pictures taken at the 'UofM Property Disposition' warehouse in Ann Arbor Michigan. Used university equipment is for sale. Open to the public. See: <http://propertydisposition.umich.edu>.



Continued from Page 15

or advertising in nature. One major PC maker actually charges the user \$50 to order a computer without such software installed! PC Decrapifier can remove that software from a new or not so new computer for free.

Because I review so much software, I am frequently installing and uninstalling software and my most frequent utility to accomplish that task is Revo Uninstaller <<http://www.revouninstaller.com>>. Revo Uninstaller displays all of the software installed on the computer, and can quickly and completely remove unwanted software with the click of a mouse. On my computer, Revo shows several times more programs than Add/Remove Programs, and removes them much more completely. Revo Uninstaller is the primary program that I use for this purpose on a regular basis, and I have been very satisfied with it.

At present, freewaregenius has a directory of over 600 free programs that it has reviewed and evaluated, and another listing of the programs that it has rated with its highest 5-star rating. Freewaregenius is a very worthwhile web site to periodically visit, and use as a resource to discover some excellent free PC software.

WEBSITES:

<<http://www.freewaregenius.com>>.
<<http://www.freewaregenius.com/2009/04/07/the-best-free-antivirus-a-comparison>>.
<<http://www.freewaregenius.com/2009/04/13/how-to-uninstall-anything-free-apps-that-get-the-job-done>>.
<<http://www.av-comparatives.org>>.
<<http://free.grisoft.com>> (AVG).
<<http://free-av.com>> (Avira).

<http://www.avast.com/eng/free_software.html>.

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

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

<<http://www.revouninstaller.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>.



The Tree Command By Warner Mach

If you are somewhat disorganized, like myself, there comes a time when you would like to determine what you actually have in various directories. The 'Tree' command can help you out here. The advantage over using a simple 'Dir' command is that you get a visual representation of the tree structure of the directories.

Over the course of DOS and going into the Windows command box it seems like Tree disappeared for awhile and then reappeared (Don't ask me which versions of the operating system). Anyway, it is definitely back as part of the XP command prompt.

The tree command starts at the directory you are in and shows all subsequent directories or you can explicitly type in some directory and it will show that directory and all subsequent directories. You can optionally request the names of the files in the given directories (/F) and you can optionally ask that the 'picture' that

Continued on Page 21

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow

May 10: 1:45 p.m. Fixing Your Computer: Fixing your computer the easy way: SIG-IBM Chairman will discuss and demonstrate 'Fix-It,' Microsoft's new automated tool for fixing (at least some) problems on your computer. Also, News, Questions and Answers.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

May 10: 3:45 p.m. Marathon Q&A: The Intermediate SIG will try to answer every question you ever wanted to ask about PCs, Windows and Windows software (or at least as many questions as time permits). Tom Callow will moderate the discussion.

NOVICE-IBM GROUP **Rotating Volunteer Hosts**

May 10: 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

May 25 (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., May 17, 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)**

June 3, 7 p.m., (1st Wednesday); St. Clair County RESA, 499 Ranged., Marysville, Admin. Building. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen <compinfo@hughes.net>. <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Topic: TBA.

DCOM Computer Club

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

Focus Hope IT Users Group

June 6, 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)

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

MacGroup- Detroit

May 17, 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: "Vue 7–How 3D Scenery is Created." Presented by member Karen Minto. SIGS: 2:00 p.m.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

May 16, 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: See web site.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

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

MUG (Michigan User Group)

May 12, 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

May 14, 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)

June 2, 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: "New Uses for Social Networking Sites" Presented by Kathryn Ribant Payne of Sterling Heights Public Library.

Continued from Page 18

appears uses normal ASCII characters (/A) rather than 'extended attributes.'

In this example I have a directory named 'filer' which has some subdirectories and there are some data files in some of the directories.

(1) I issue the command:
tree /A c:\filer > c:\test\logtree.txt

I have routed the output to the file 'logtree.txt.' In this file I see:

Folder PATH listing

Volume serial number is C07E-479E

C:\FILER

+---filer1

\---filer2

\---filer2a

(2) I issue the command:
tree /A /F c:\filer > c:\test\logtreef.txt

In this case I asked for the names of the files in the directories. I have routed the output to the file 'logtreef.txt' where I see:

Folder PATH listing

Volume serial number is C07E-479E

C:\FILER

| data.txt

+---filer1

| data1a.txt

| data1b.txt

\---filer2

\---filer2a



REFRESHMENT DONORS

Needed: Refreshment donors!

**Requirements: Desire that
attendees not expire from
hunger.**

**Seriously folks: Need people
to bring refreshments.**

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 Netware: 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**

May 10-SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM 1:45 p.m. Program: Fixing Your Computer the Easy Way: SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will discuss and demonstrate 'Fix-It,' Microsoft's new automated tool for fixing (at least some) problems on your computer. Also, News, Questions and Answers.

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: Marathon Q&A: The Intermediate SIG will try to answer every question you ever wanted to ask about PCs, Windows, and Windows software (or at least as many questions as time permits). Tom Callow will moderate the discussion.

SIG-ADVANCED, May 24, 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.

June 14-SEMCO Sunday

<http://www.semco.org>

PUBLIC INVITED

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

SEMCO Meetings at [Engineering Society of Detroit](#)
20700 Civic Center Drive, Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield MI 48076



It is important that you arrive at the meeting on time because we cannot unlock the outside doors and will have to have a member let you in. In order for that member to attend the meeting, PLEASE be on time.

From I-696 exit at Evergreen. Take Evergreen south to Civic Center Drive. Civic Center Drive is about halfway between I-696/Eleven Mile Rd. and 10 Mile Rd. Turn west, right if you are coming from the north, onto Civic Center Drive. Follow Civic Center Drive, watching the number signs on the right. When you get to the 20700 sign turn right, north, and follow the drive until you arrive at the southwest corner of the brown building with the Engineering Society of Detroit sign near the top. Turn right, east, and go past the front of the building. When you reach the end of the building, turn left, north and go to the back of the building and turn left, west, again. The parking lot will be on your right. The entrance is in the center of the building. Park in back of building.

Enter the rear door and the elevators are on the right about halfway to the front. The ESD office is on the fourth floor and you should see the sign on your left as you exit the elevator. Enter.



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

SEMCO (future meetings)

May 10

June 14

**FIRST CLASS MAIL
Dated Material**

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