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SouthEastern Michigan  
Computer Organization, Inc.

# DATA BUS

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

Attendees walk into a trade show and the glitter and glitz greets them, but they have no inkling as to what goes into setting up an impressive show floor. My wife and I worked the SAP/ASUG Sapphire show <[http://www.sap.com/community/events/sapphire\\_online/2009/index.epx](http://www.sap.com/community/events/sapphire_online/2009/index.epx)>, and it was the most impressive set-up with respect to just the suspended trusses with attached equipment. There were fourteen JLG High lift platform machines working from 8am to 10pm for 9 days, along with 10 battery operated hydraulic scissor high-lift platforms, all needed to assemble and raise the many trusses, signs, lighting and necessary equipment high above the 1.1 million sq. ft. of show floor in the Orange County Convention Center building in Orlando.

You've seen those so-called cherry pickers on four wheels, and the larger ones are hybrid types with a propane gas engine to drive a generator and hydraulic pump. The body can rotate on its mobile frame and the platform's high-lift boom extends in sections that can be manipulated to a great extent. They're completely controlled by the operator using a control panel located on the platform railing, including driving it around, even fully extended. Per OSHA rules, an operator must be properly licensed to operate a boom-lift or scissors-lift.

These trusses aren't the triangular type supporting a home's roof, but are square frame structures made of tubular aluminum for mounting all kinds of necessary paraphernalia used

above booths, and other areas above the show floor. Equipment attached to the trusses might be lighting, including computerized lighting (sometimes very elaborate), projection systems and other electronic gadgetry, drapery and drapery traverse rods, among other things.

Most suspended trusses in this show were heavier (20" square), but some were 12" square. They mostly come in 10' lengths and bolt together end to end, although there are also corner, curved, and angled pieces, depending on the configuration they want. There was almost FOUR MILES of truss suspended in the Sapphire show, and there were over 1,000 1/2 ton electric winches attached to raise and suspend them. The winches to put them up there are interesting because when the workmen get the trusses and equipment assembled, there will be multiple winches attached to each one.

While it's called a winch, a better term would be "chain lift" because there's no cable and drum to wind it around. When lifting, a chain runs through the winch, but then falls over the side into a cloth storage bag until the winch is reversed. These were three-phase (electrically) and are mounted according to whether the winch has to lift itself, or something else. On each truss assembly, every winch's power-cord is connected to a master control panel so that when an assembly is elevated from the assembled position on the floor, the control panel operator simply presses one button and the entire truss assembly, no matter how large, immediately rises in unison retaining the established level position to the required height. Each winch can also be operated individually if needed to adjust individual truss heights.

One I noticed began with a 125' long 20" truss with seven winches attached to the top of it (each winch will pull itself and its attached truss up). The winch's hoisting chains were attached to the roof structure. Then seven more winches were assembled to the bottom of that truss to raise and suspend another truss; and hanging drapery was attached on each side of the top truss. It was raised to the desired height. Then another truss 8" wide by 12" high, and 125' long was attached to the lower winches' chains and a heavy-duty traverse rod was attached to the bottom of that truss to operate a lengthy 8' high drape for the attendee entrance.

Suspended drapery cordoned off a stage and projection screen 70' long by 20' high. Several trusses above the stage held lighting equipment. This screen used four projectors behind it in two stacks of two. The top ones were backups (there's always a backup projector). Smaller projection screens were on each side of the large one, with rear projection, and four more screens and projectors were hung back above the seating area, along with speaker systems.

Entering the show floor from the lobby, attendees saw two giant projection screens showing SAP hype (positioned in a V shape) that were each 30' high and 60' wide. Their projectors were mounted on a truss, in this case, in front of the screens, and there were four projectors (two stacks of two) for each screen, each one producing 30,000 lumens of light. The bottom projector in the stack is the main one and the top one is for backup. If a projector goes out, the backup takes over and you would hardly know anything went wrong. Each projector costs roughly \$100,000.

Some assembled trusses above the show floor were 200' long holding special lighting and drapery to cordon off areas. There were about 50 riggers (workman who work high up) hurrying to accomplish just this work, not the actual show floor exhibits, which were assembled by 200 other workers. The stage area was the most complicated with its lighting, sound and projectors; and most of these productions use about a million dollars worth of equipment that usually takes two eighteen wheelers to transport. In this show, it took three trucks to bring in just the necessary truss sections.

The exhibitor area uses smaller ones, but most other projectors used in this show ranged from 20,000 to 30,000 lumens of light output. They were water-cooled and used three-phase power (if you know electricity); and they use from 30 to 50 amps. The lenses alone can cost \$10,000. The makes were mostly Barco, but some were Christie, a more expensive brand. I was told resolution was 2200 x 1480. They had to change a few of the Christies to something else on hand, because those particular Christies didn't deliver the desired resolution.

There was seating for 9,000 attendees. The production folks don't install the elevated projectors and lighting because of the installation height. I'll put some pictures of the trusses, and audio/video production equipment and consoles on my Web site if you would like to see them. <<http://www.dealsguy.com>> Don Henley was the featured entertainer on the last evening of the show.

### **Consider This!**

Bob Elgines, President and Editor of Colorado River Computer Club, writes an interesting monthly column that is carried by many editors in their

newsletters. I loved his comment about the \$29.97 he paid for 1.42 ounces of black ink. He says that in comparison to gas, it works out to \$2700 per gallon and that perhaps somebody should start drilling for ink. If that wasn't in your newsletter, now you know about a possible new business venture. With this economy, I'd try anything.

### **Help With Your Data Disk Cataloging**

Nowadays, people may own hundreds of CD and DVD data disks. How do you find the necessary information on disks without endless inserting and ejecting disks? SearchMyDiscs is a handy software application that helps people with a large CD and DVD collection quickly find the disk that has a needed file, photograph, music track, or movie clip.

First, you individually insert every CD or DVD that needs to be indexed into your PC and the program will automatically scan the disk, cataloging its contents. The program will store the file structure of the disk, thumbnail images for photos and movies, EXIF tags for digital photographs, ID3 tags for MP3 tracks and many other file properties (video codec information, textual documents' content, etc.). The program is then ready for use. Next time you need to find a certain program or photograph, simply enter the name of the file or other search parameter, like the name of a song, performer or album, digital camera model, etc., and SearchMyDiscs will show exactly what CD or DVD contains the desired data.

The new version 4.0 contains a new powerful report generator that can export reports on files to many popular file formats: PDF, XLS, RTF, HTML, Open Office, CSV, etc.

SearchMyDiscs 4.0 is available at <<http://www.searchmydiscs.com/>> for a free 30-day trial download. The cost of registering it is \$29.95 US Dollars, but user group members get a 25% discount with coupon code (DKLS-TRG2).

System Requirements: A PC with Windows 95/98/ME/NT4/2000/XP.

The download link is: <<http://www.searchmydiscs.com/searchmydiscs-setup.exe>>. Order Link: <<http://www.searchmydiscs.com/order.shtml>>.

*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 Cheap skate) Click <[bobclick at bellsouth dot net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net)>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.*



**Bing—The New Search Engine from Microsoft**  
By Ira Wilsker

Most people think of Google when they want to do an online search. Google has even become a pseudo-verb for Internet searches, as in the context, "I am googling for it." Yahoo! is a strong number two in the crowded and competitive search engine field, with Microsoft's Live Search being third. Anecdotally, most Internet searchers who use Live Search use it because it is the default search engine linked with recent builds of Internet Explorer, which

defaults to MSN and Live Search unless manually changed by the user. Microsoft is well aware that its Live Search is not the coveted top ranked search engine, and that it has significant room for improvement both in technology and in the size of the website database. This has been demonstrated by Microsoft's on again, off again discussions to take over Yahoo!, along with Yahoo!'s canonical search engine (my personal favorite), AllTheWeb <<http://www.alltheweb.com>>. As a free standing search engine, Microsoft's Live Search has simply lacked the pizzazz of its major competitors until now.

Microsoft recently rolled out the latest iteration of its search engine, formerly Live Search, and now called Bing, at [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com). Bing will function well as a traditional search engine, but has additional features that are an obvious attempt to compete against the many additional features of both Google and Yahoo! While all of the search engines have a simple search box where queries are entered, Bing goes a step further by adding additional search features to make the results more meaningful. Bing has the slogan, "When it comes to decisions that matter, Bing & Decide." Bing offers the user the opportunity to select from different categories of information, specifically travel, shopping, health, local, and "even more." Another feature that I found helpful was the "hover" feature, where hovering the cursor over a website provided a preview of the contents of that website. Bing also offers specialized searches for other forms of content, such as images, video, shopping, news, maps, and travel. By selecting a content category, such as images, only the database of images will

be searched and displayed. The Bing news search feature is clearly inferior to the news search features on Yahoo! and Google, and in need of improvement.

In terms of travel, Bing will find the lowest airfares, best hotel deals, and real-time flight status. There is no need to enter a specific search area or click on a special link to get travel information on Bing. All the user needs to do is type the request in the search box. For example, simply typing "flight info" in the search box will display the websites that have real time flight info, including a secondary search box where the name of the airline and flight number can be entered to display the flight status. Typing a city pair in the search box, such as "Houston to Atlanta" will display not just airfares, but a projection of changes in airfares helping the traveler decide whether to buy now before the fare increase, or to wait for lower airfares.

I will admit that I have used Google's price comparison service (formerly called "Froogle") while shopping to get the best deals. Bing goes a step farther by not just displaying a price comparison, but also offers a "cash back" program from merchants that participate in Microsoft's Bing Cashback Program. When prices are displayed from various sellers, a separate column displays the rate of cash back. The "Bing Cashback Program" works on a "search, shop, save" principle, and requires a free registration in order to participate in the program. Search displays competitive prices from multiple merchants, along with any cash back savings, enabling the user to quickly shop for bargains. The cash back amount is automatically credited to your personal account upon purchase, and can be collected in about 60 days, as long as there is at

least \$5 in the cash back account. As I type this, over 700 online merchants are participating in the Bing Cashback Program. Just as a check to see if the shopper is really getting a deal, especially on major purchases, I would recommend that the user corroborate the best price on another shopping bot, such as Google's Froogle <<http://www.google.com/products>>. In addition to getting prices and rebates, Bing's shopping listings also display user ratings and reviews, and other smart-shopper resources.

Health topics are a common search area, and Bing provides an abundance of health related information. Typing an inquiry or health term in the search box will display an answer, as well as other resources on the subject. I tried using the health information search function on Bing, and found it very helpful.

Many people use search engines to locate local information, and Bing's Local section has some excellent resources. One helpful resource on Bing is real-time traffic conditions for dozens of major metropolitan areas. I typed "traffic Houston" and a traffic map of Houston was instantly displayed, with color codes indicating the speed of traffic and any congested areas. Typing a type of restaurant and city will display the establishments of that genre, along with a map locating them, and sometimes even a current menu. Typing the name of a restaurant and a city will present reviews of the restaurant. As a search engine, Bing has done a very good job compiling and easily displaying local information.

The "Even More" category is a catch-all of miscellaneous information. I typed in the make and model of my car and Bing displayed the price range, fuel

economy, user rating, and links to more information. The types of information available here are virtually endless.

While in its earliest release, Bing is a valiant attempt by Microsoft to compete with the rich offerings of Google and Yahoo! I would suggest that Internet users try the Bing service, and make personal judgments as to what search engine best meets their needs. As the user becomes more familiar with it, Bing may be a viable choice.

#### WEBSITES:

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

<<http://www.discoverbing.com/tour>>.

<<http://www.google.com/products>>.

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**The Hypnocube and  
Hypnosquare  
By Warner Mach**

The headquarters of the "hypnocube" operation are located just outside of Ann Arbor Michigan, so we were able to get the two owners to come out and talk about their creations at SEMCO.

The two gentlemen are Gene Foulk (hardware) and Chris Lomont (software). The devices are two dimensional (Times-Square like) LED displays and three dimensional (space-ship like) LED displays, which they sell at their web site <<http://www.hypnocube.com>>. A video of the devices in action can be seen by going to their site or by googling "hypnocube" or "hypnosquare."




The patterns on the devices can be run by simply turning them on. Alternately, there are limited options available using the two switches on the front. Alternately, you can pass commands to the device (over the USB port) using HyperTerminal (Windows XP) or Putty (Windows Vista). There is another program, “HypnoCOMM” which has more options, but some restrictions on where it will run. Finally, there are demo programs in C++ for those who want to run their own programs.

The “hypnogadgets” (so named in the user guide) use the PIC18F4620 PIC controller. 32500 bytes of program space out of 32764 are used on the PIC and 3.3 K of the 3.9 K of RAM. A UART-to-USB chip is used to talk to the USB connection. The COM protocol is 38400 bps, 8N1, flow control None. A 512 bit seed is used for the fixed-point random number generator.

There are four leads on each LED: Red, green, blue, and ground. Each LED is individually addressable, with a maximum of 8 LEDs on at any given instant, but because of persistence of vision it can appear that more are turned on. The LEDs allow for color control through voltage or by “duty cycle” (frequency). The hypnocube uses duty cycle, which is easier.

In the case of the hypnocube, it is currently 4x4x4 (LEDs). The hope is to come out with an 8x8x8 device, but the success of the current cube has not allowed the inventors to go forward.

The devices can be purchase as kits or as finished units. The kits require soldering skills but are considerably less expensive. Notwithstanding the difficulty, the sales have been running at five kits to each finished unit.

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><b>PC PitStop OverDrive—<br/>Free Online Testing<br/>and Analysis<br/>By Ira Wilsker</b></p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Often, it seems that our computers just do not seem to run well. There can be many reasons for poor performance related to hardware and software issues. While there are many utilities which can be purchased or downloaded and installed that can run a battery of diagnostic tests on a computer, one of the most popular and comprehensive testing services is free and online. This service is PC PitStop OverDrive, available online at <<http://pcpitstop.com/betapit>>.

PC PitStop is very popular, with over 100 million tests run. Tests can be run anonymously (no registration required), or the user can register for free, and track computer performance over time. The diagnostic exams are safe, and performed through the Internet Explorer browser. Since many of the tests are performed using Active-X, PC PitStop will not work on Firefox or other browsers, and requires that Internet Explorer be used. The tests are performed on various components in the computer, including the video card, CPU chip (processor), memory, and disk drives. No settings on the computer are changed by PC PitStop, and no content on the hard drive is accessed, meaning that private data is safe and not being read by PC PitStop. Once the diagnostic process is completed, a report card is produced designating the conditions of what is found. Only with the users’ express consent will the automated repair utilities attempt to fix many of the problems that are found. The entire



diagnostic process is fairly fast, just taking a few minutes.

The first step in running PC PitStop OverDrive is to download and install an Active-X utility, which takes only a few seconds on a broadband connection. All of the diagnostics are performed on web pages that use Javascript or Active-X, which display in real time the tests being performed. The first test collects information about the PC itself, such as the CPU type and speed, capacity of disk drive, video resolution, BIOS, memory, Windows version, browser version, and a listing of what is currently running on the computer. After the basic data is collected (no personally identifiable information is collected), the computer hardware is tested. These tests will determine the speed of the system and the health of the CPU chip, as well as the condition of the memory, disk drives, video, and Internet connection. One warning is in line here, and that is that users with epilepsy or other ailments that may be affected by rapidly changing colors and patterns should not view the graphics card component of the tests. Once the diagnosis is completed, PC PitStop will analyze the data collected, and make recommendations about performance improvements. A full graphical report is provided to the user.

On my computer the entire process was completed in about four minutes. In that time, several dozen tests were performed, and the results of each were displayed. The reports are tabbed into the categories of Summary, Performance, Security, Software, and Drivers. Clicking on a tab may open another level of information. Under the Summary tab is a tab for Fixes, which displays any problems found on the

computer. Moving the mouse cursor over a displayed problem will give the user a brief description of the problem. Clicking on any item will open another window with very detailed information giving instructions on resolving the problem. The Summary – Rankings selection displays how the computer tested compared to the millions of other computers tested. In my case on this old computer, I have a very fast processor (top 7% of those tested), but I am sorely lacking memory (bottom 43%) and hard drive space (bottom 23%). My video card performed well, being in the top third that have been tested.

Performance is what matters to most of us when it comes to our computers. The tab “Performance Results” lists 32 performance categories, and the results of each performance test. Items that pass the diagnosis are displayed with a check mark, and those that fail are noted with a bold red “X.” By correcting whatever deficiencies are found may lead to an improvement in performance may result.

Security is another category that should be of high concern, and PC PitStop checks for 37 security breaches, including a very quick scan for viruses and spyware. Included in the security diagnosis are browser tests, desktop security, file download and pop-up ad security, cookie analysis, and other security issues. Each item is clearly displayed and rated, with additional information and fixes being only a click away.

The Software diagnostics displays the name and version of all software installed on the computer, as well as Microsoft hotfixes and updates. The Software – Processes displays the software that is currently running on the

computer along with the CPU usage and memory used for each. Clicking on the title of any software listed will display detailed information about that software, as well as any recommendations.

Our computers are heavily dependent on the drivers installed for our components and peripherals for proper performance and security. PC PitStop identifies the drivers installed on the computer, and shows those that are in need of updating. If an updated driver is recommended, a link to the download may be displayed.

I have run PC PitStop OverDrive on several computers and found it to be a very fast and reliable tool to identify the hardware and software problems on the computer. I have registered as a user so I can track performance degradation over time. PC PitStop Overdrive is free, very fast, and comprehensive. It is an outstanding tool to check out the condition of any computer, and possibly resolves any hardware and software issues that may degrade security and performance.

**WEBSITE:**

<<http://pcpitstop.com/betapit>>.

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**Juice Your Broadband  
Speed  
By Vinny La Bash**

***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).***

People prefer broadband Internet connections because of the obvious speed advantages over dial-up and satellite links. Then why is it that broadband never seems to be fast enough? Are you getting the speed promised by your ISP? Broadband can cost \$100 a month or more, but does the provider really provide the advertised speed? Is the connection reliable or does the modem need a reboot several times a day? Fortunately, there are ways to achieve high, reliable throughput without having to have an engineering degree. Here are some suggestions to get every bit per second possible from your modem without any technical hiccups or interruptions in service.

Start with your computer and TV equipment. A common source of line noise can be traced to improper grounding of anything that plugs into household electrical circuits. This can seriously degrade performance of cable equipment. Every electrical device, especially those in the same room as the cable modem, should be plugged into properly grounded outlets. The best connections are with polarized plugs oriented in the correct direction, and please don't use any three prong to two prong adapters. Get up-to-date gear. Electric outlet testers are cheap. Buy one and use it to test for excess voltage on

your cable wiring. Any problem could indicate a serious safety hazard. Engage a licensed electrician to fix it.

Almost anything manufactured today in the consumer electronics world is light years ahead of its predecessors manufactured only two or three years ago. Cable modems are no exception, so if yours is more than three years old get a new one from your provider. Most providers will make a free exchange, but some will require an extension of your contract. You want to do this because the latest modems conform to the DOCSIS 2.0 standard. This offers higher upload and download capabilities and supports other advanced broadband applications, including online gaming and peer-to-peer computing.

Ask your ISP if they automatically update firmware for the modem. If they don't, have them supply the website address of your modem's manufacturer so you can download the most recent firmware. Check the website about twice a year for new updates.

Next, go to a test site such as PC Pitstop, and check your upload and download speeds to see if they match the terms of your service contract. If they don't, give your ISP a call and have them reset the modem's settings. While you're at it, have them check the signal-to-noise ratio. Too much noise can cause interference, and your modem will then have to resend information cutting down on your throughput.

It's possible that your cable wiring may contain too many splices or simply be too long. That can be fixed by a visit from your ISP technician. Have the technician check the line quality leading to your house. If the signal is good and you're having problems, the house wiring may be the culprit. The definitive

answer for cable modems is to create a split directly after the junction box and then run a new cable directly to your modem. The other side of the split will take care of your television sets which aren't nearly as sensitive to line noise.

After you've done everything from a hardware and firmware standpoint, and your cable connection is as clean as possible, you're ready to fine tune the system for best performance. Vista users don't have to do much of anything to optimize the operating system since Vista does TCP stack tuning dynamically. Any Internet performance adjustments can be made through the browser. Firefox users may want to try Firetune or Fasterfox. They are both free utilities and allow adjustment to cache memory, capacity and other settings such as pipelining.

If you do a lot of downloading, you can save time by installing a download manager like Flashget. This widely used utility claims the highest number of users on the Internet. It uses MHT (Multi-server Hyper-threading Transportation) technique. It's very easy to use and comes with exceptional document management features. Best of all, it's free.

After all this work, it would be a tragedy if you didn't keep in mind that sometimes the simplest solutions are the best ones. Most cable modems and routers have reset features. Many a mysterious Internet ailment has been corrected simply by resetting the equipment. Turn off the computer and the modem. Un-plug the modem for a few minutes and then power everything back on. You may be pleasantly surprised.

*Vinny La Bash is a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users*

Group, Inc., FL. Web: <<http://www.spcug.org>>. E-mail: <[Vlabash@comcast.net](mailto:Vlabash@comcast.net)>.

**Magic Word Brings E-mail  
to the Offline World  
By Gabe Goldberg**

*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).*

If you've ever wondered how to bring e-mail to the techno-phobe in your life, the answer isn't Abracadabra, it's Presto.

If you're reading this online, you own or have access to a computer. But you likely have friends or relatives -- perhaps elderly, budget-restricted, technophobic -- who don't. So they're not in close touch and can't share online family or community activities.

Presto <<http://www.presto.com>> is a combination color inkjet printer and paid Web-based service which allows people without computers to receive e-mail, including attachments.

Setting it up is simple: after purchasing the device, someone with just a bit of tech savvy creates the account, picks an e-mail address (such as [gabeg99@presto.com](mailto:gabeg99@presto.com)), and lists people allowed to send e-mail to the address. At specified times of day, the printer dials a toll-free telephone number, downloads accumulated e-mail, and prints it.

With only two controls -- Volume and Stop -- it's easy to operate. It plugs directly into a telephone jack and doesn't need a separate phone line or jack or even a splitter, since an existing telephone or accessory (answering

machine or Caller ID device) can plug into it, daisy-chain style.

Presto is ideal for letting seniors receive e-mail from children, grandchildren, friends, former colleagues, military buddies, etc. And it's useful when businesses request customer e-mail addresses to conduct or simplify transactions. It handles pictures and many attachment formats nicely, printing them as if it was a FAX machine. So it allows sharing any online or computer content as PDF files such as maps and directions, travel itineraries, Web pages, spreadsheets with financial or family contact information.

Simple steps authorize new people to send e-mail, and when ink runs low, the printer is smart enough to either alert the person who set up the account or automatically order new cartridges.

After failing for a dozen years to excite my in-laws about e-mail -- they steadfastly resisted being online -- my retired Navy father-in-law fell in love with a Presto I loaned him, discovering that it let him hear from his old Navy buddies around the world. And receiving color pictures of the grandchildren sealed the deal.

The printer costs \$150 or less (always comparison shop online!) and the service costs \$12.50/month with yearly subscription. The only thing missing is the printer downloading paper and ink through the phone line -- but that would need real magic!

*This article first appeared on the Tiptet Web site, <<http://www.tiptet.com>> and is copyrighted by the author, Gabriel Goldberg. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, or disseminated, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution*

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**DesktopZoom—  
A Review  
By Bonnie Snyder**

*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 evening while surfing the Web, I stumbled across a free screen magnifier called DesktopZoom. I downloaded it and put it through its paces. And, I was quite impressed with it. There are those freeware programs that “you get what you pay for,” and then there are those that give you a whole lot more value. DesktopZoom is definitely in the latter category.

When you first load DesktopZoom, it comes up with a settings screen, with two tab areas; in the top area, the default is 3) Entire desktop and in the bottom tab area, the Mouse is the default tab. You can type in a numerical size for the mouse pointer and then select a shape and color for the mouse pointer. The “Big Mouse” option is selected by default (if you unselect it, you don't get a mouse pointer at all ... not good). Other options on the Mouse tab include selecting a Crosshair, selecting a thin red Rectangle which helps you focus on the working area of your application (don't use the Crosshair and the Rectangle together because the Rectangle won't move if

you do), and another default selection: Hide real mouse (recommended).

Moving from left to right on the tabs, the first tab is for Zoom. The Zoom selection area has two input boxes for the size of the magnification. Default is 3000/1000. You'll have to fiddle around with the numbers to find the best for you. There are three checkboxes, the first is to hide the configuration screen when the program is running (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The second is for No screen changes when not zoomed (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The third is Stop zoom if mouse in right bottom corner (I checked it because I find it a convenient option).

The next lower tab is for Keys. These key combinations are for increasing or decreasing the magnification on the fly. By default, the Mouse Wheel option, a radio button, With Ctrl-key, in a combo box, is checked. There are three other key combinations you can select from. If you prefer to use the arrow keys instead of the mouse, you can select the Arrows radio button with Without Key selected in the combo box (there are three other key combinations to select from in the combo box). Finally, the Alt-Keys are selected by default in a checkbox with six possible settings for on the fly changes (Zoom in and out; Zoom on or off; tracking and crosshair – each option has a character to press with the Alt-Key to accomplish its task).

The Mouse tab comes next (we've already covered that); then comes the Color tab. There are three checkboxes: the first is for Grey shades (it has a combo box/edit box with seven choices of shades of grey including an option to type in a number of your preference);

the second is for Invert Colors, and the third (checked by default) is for Smoothing. You can have all three boxes checked if you wish. Finally, it has an edit box for Show original screen (you can type in a numeric percentage ... 0 is the default). This one makes me crazy ... what it does is show the original screen as a kind of background of the magnified screen. But, it was probably included because somebody needed that feature!

Then we move on to the Tracking tab. The first Tracking option has a combo box from which you can choose three tracking items: None, Caret, Caret + Menu; the default being Caret + Menu. Next addresses specifically Track MsWord Caret (checkbox checked by default). Then you get to select the Tracking delay time by typing a number in an edit box (30 is the default). Another check box comes next for allowing display of a Thumbnail with your choice of ratio (in an edit box). The Thumbnail is similar to a histogram in an art program; it displays the entire screen in miniature in the bottom right area of the screen. Finally, there is a combo box for choosing View. The options in this combo box include Follow the mouse, Static – changes when hitting the border and Static – Jump to mouse. The default is Static – changes when hitting the border. You'll just have to check these out yourself to see which works best for you. For the present, I am using the default. And then, the final lower tab is for Speech. I have noticed that people with low vision will experience visual fatigue with long documents to read. The addition of speech in DesktopZoom is an excellent option when the eyes are ready to give out (or put you to sleep). The Speech option picks up on

any SAPI5.0 voices you might already have on your computer as well as any premium voices you have acquired. You can turn the speech on only when you want it and you can control volume and speed in this tab.

There is more, but I really ought to leave some of the mystery so you can enjoy setting the program up. DesktopZoom has many really good features. My biggest complaint is that it does slow down movement on the screen. Ah well, nothing is perfect. Give DesktopZoom a try if you feel the need for some screen enlargement to help you read your computer monitor. Just Google DesktopZoom and you'll be taken to a site for download.

*Bonnie Snyder is a member of P\*PCompAS (Pikes Peak Computer Application Society), CO. Web: <<http://ppcompas.apcug.org>>. E-mail: <[Bonniels21\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:Bonniels21(at)gmail.com)>.*

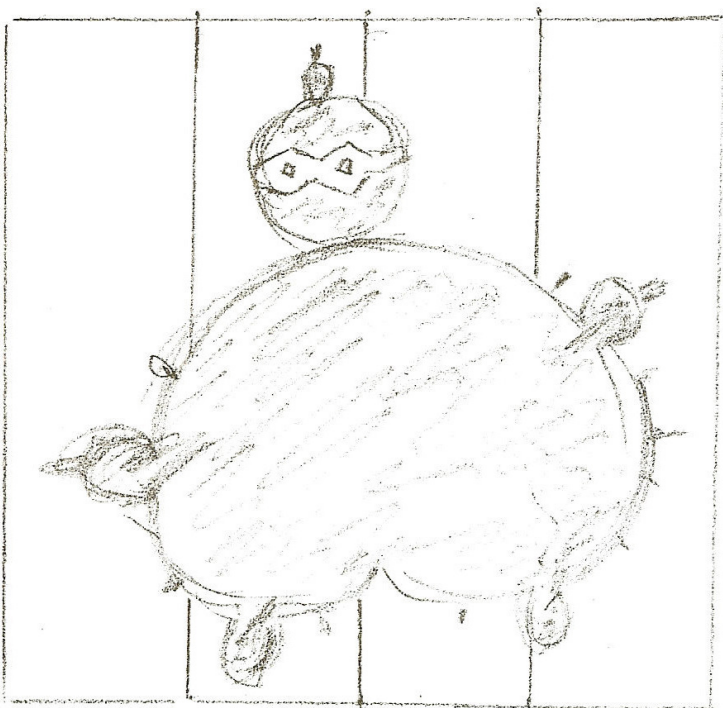
**Preventive Computer  
Maintenance  
By Stuart Rabinowitz**

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The single most important maintenance item that should be done on a regular basis is BACKUP YOUR DATA. Your schedule should depend on much data you can afford to lose. Try daily/weekly to an external hard drive and monthly to a CD/DVD, or use a backup application. Make sure that your software is updated; primarily the operating system and your primary browser.

Use utility software: get a sense of how your computer operates when it's





**Fractal Super Guy escapes the trap by  
slipping into a non-integer  
dimension!**

W. MacH  
4-2009

operating correctly. For the Mac use 'Activity Monitor' or 'Tech Tools.' On the PC (in the control panel) administrative tools/performance. You can also check your Internet connection speed at: <<http://reviews.cnet.com/internet-speed-test/>>

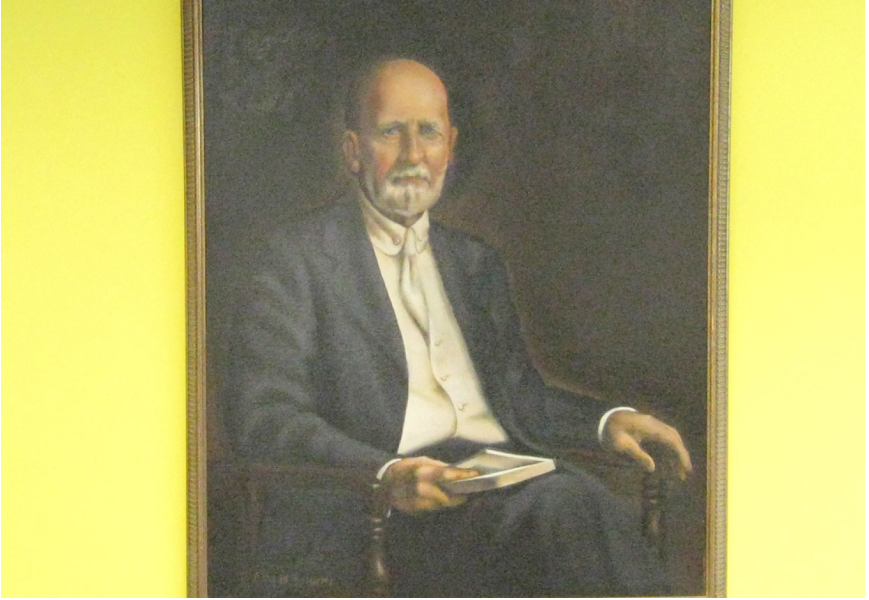
For the PC users—do regular spyware/virus scans. Make sure the definitions are up to date. Primarily for PC users—Defragment your hard drive (this may take a while). Mac users do not really need to do this since OS X (10.3 +) does it automatically.

Free up some space on your hard drive (PC users can use disk cleanup; Mac users can use CacheOutX). Clean out old files that you don't use, after you've backed them up. Uninstall those programs that you don't use. Apple recommends that you have at least 10% free (a bit more for PCs). This will improve virtual memory and may improve disk performance.

Clean the Hardware -- to clean the monitor and keyboard use a dry microfiber cloth (be sure the computer

**[Continued on Page 18](#)**

## ***SEMCO Meeting Pictures***



(Above): HE WHO WATCHES at the Engineering Society of Detroit.  
(Below) Tom Callow, with Scanner, talks about Paperport 11.



## ***SEMCO Meeting Pictures***



**(Above): Gene Folk of Hypnocube Company talks about hardware. (Below) Chris Lomont of Hypnocube Company talks about software. Shown with a "Hypnosquare."**





**BOARD MEETING**  
**6/14/2009**  
**Charles Moery**

**Board Members Present**

President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, Publication Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. SEMCO members Renee Jacque and Gary DeNice also attended a portion of the board meeting. Arriving late was Vice President Richard Jackson. The May board meeting was called to order by Mike Bader at 12:05 p.m.

**Old Business**

Bette Gay reported that the June Current Treasury amount equaled a total of \$5,666.55 in the Checking Account and \$4,731.02 is invested in three Certificates of Deposit for an overall total of \$9,797.92. The membership currently is 84. There was a brief discussion relative to the Social period and no tentative changes were implemented. It is time for Jerry Comptois, Al Gruber and Charles Kamachos to renew their membership.

**New Business**

The board approved a provisional SIG-Linux for a trial, probationary status and the status will be reviewed in subsequent board meetings for approval of a permanent SIG.

There was an announcement that the Internet Committee will meet Monday June 15, 2009 at Richard Jackson's home. The primary subject to be discussed at the meeting will be

**Continued from Page 15**

is turned off) and gently (don't press hard) wipe the monitor, unplug the keyboard and wipe. If there are hard to clean areas, spray the cloth lightly with a vinegar/water solution and then wipe. For an optical mouse wipe the bulb gently. You'll need to open a mechanical mouse to clean the rollers. Use a cotton swab with isopropyl alcohol.

If your computer case is easy to open (i.e.: not an iMac or Mac Mini), then open it up (after shutting down and unplugging it) and use compressed air to blow out the dust. Do not use a vacuum since it may create a static charge that could damage the electronics. After closing the case you can clean out the fan in the back.

You'll also probably want to have the following tools:

- \* Screwdrivers—standard, phillips, and torx in different sizes (especially the small ones)
- \* Nutdrivers—1/4" and 3/16"
- \* Pliers, part grabbers, and tweezers
- Compressed air
- \* Microfiber cleaning cloths
- \* Antistatic strap—especially if you want to put your hands inside the computer

*Stuart Rabinowitz is Editor-in-Chief of the PULP, newsletter of the Hartford User Group Exchange, CT. Web: <<http://www.huge.org>>. E-mail: <[s.e.rabinowitz@att.net](mailto:s.e.rabinowitz@att.net)>.*



**Continued on Page 21**



## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



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

**July 12: 1:45 p.m. Music & Loops:** “Here we go loop-de-loop, Here we go loop-de-li, Here we go loop de loop, On a Saturday night” (or maybe a Sunday afternoon!). Much of the music currently being produced is based on recursion or, in the parlance of the music industry—loops. Using a MIDI editor program to combine MIDI bass, keyboard, and drum phrases, Bob Stead will guide us through the process he uses to create loops for the Roland RC-50 Loop Station. He will end his demonstration with a performance—live flute playing over the Loop Station background. Resume: Bob plays in the Michigan Flute Orchestra and is webmaster of the Michigan Accordion Society <<http://www.michiganaccordion.org>>.



**SIG-ADVANCED**  
**Franz Breidenich**

**July 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.

### SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

**July 12: 3:45 p.m. SEARCH ENGINE SHOWDOWN:** Tom Callow will compare the features, functionality and search results of some of the most popular Internet search engines in the Internet.

### SEMCO

Serving the needs of professionals, hobbyists, novices, and prospective computer users since 1976.

- \* Learn more about computing in an informal, non-academic setting.
- \* Get honest answers to computer questions without commercial bias.
- \* Meet and interact with other computer users.
- \* Gain access to members willing to provide help in response to a phone call or e-mail.

### SIG-Linux

**July 28 (4th Tues): 6:45 p.m.:** At the Oak Park Library. The library is located at 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Topic: Linux issues.

### **August 2009 DATABUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)**

**SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., July 19, 11:59 p.m.** Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor [address on Page 2](mailto:address on Page 2); e-mail address: <[machw@att.net](mailto:machw@att.net)>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.

**Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly.** Contact Editor ([address Page 2](mailto:address Page 2)).

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

(to post monthly computer group info)

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

No meeting in August. Annual Family Picnic in July. For info e-mail: [<compinfo@hughes.net>](mailto:compinfo@hughes.net).

**Focus Hope IT Users Group**

July 11, 9:30-11:30 a.m. (1<sup>st</sup> Saturday-usually), 1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web [<http://www.fhitug.org/meetings/meetings.htm>](http://www.fhitug.org/meetings/meetings.htm). Topic: Online Meeting."

**HUG (Holly User Group)**

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

**MacGroup- Detroit**

July 19, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, [<terry@macgroup.org>](mailto:terry@macgroup.org) or 248-569-4933. [<http://www.macgroup.org>](http://www.macgroup.org). Topic: "TV on your Mac." SIGS: 2:00 p.m.

**MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)**

-----, 11:00 a.m., (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday ); (SIGs at 9:30); See web site for meeting location. [<http://www.mactechnics.org>](http://www.mactechnics.org). JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. **No Meeting in July.**

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

July 11, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday); MDLUG meetings will be at The Gaudior Academy located at 27100 Avondale Avenue in Inkster. Web: [<http://www.mdlug.org>](http://www.mdlug.org). Info: Raymond McLaughlin [<president@mdlug.org>](mailto:president@mdlug.org). Topic: "OpenBSD in 20 Minutes" by MDLUG librarian Mat Enders.

**MUG (Michigan User Group)**

**July 14**, 6:00 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday): MUG meetings are at The Farmington Community Library–Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. [<http://www.mug.org>](http://www.mug.org). Topic: TBA.

**Michigan Apple Computer User Group**

July 9, 7:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Thur.); Westview Office Park, 26100 American Dr., Suite 100, Southfield MI. 48034. Avi Drissman 248-232-7865. Web: [<http://www.themichiganapple.com>](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>](http://www.geocities.com/royaloakcomputerclub).

**SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)**

Sept 1, 7:30 p.m. (1<sup>st</sup> Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel [<Don@VanSyckel.net>](mailto:Don@VanSyckel.net), 586-731-9232; Web: [<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>](http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org). Topic: "Backup, Issues and Techniques." (No meetings in July & August).




relative to updating and improving our SEMCO website.

Also, announced was an APCUG meeting to be held in Newark, Ohio August 28-30 and a few board members plan to attend the meeting. The subject of carpooling among those planning to attend was mentioned. Attendance to the event was only open to board members for previous year meetings, but is now open to all members.

A Linuxfest is also scheduled for September 25th-26th in Ohio. Additional information may be obtained at the MDLUG web site <<http://www.mdlug.org>>, info: Raymond McLaughlin <[president@mdlug.org](mailto:president@mdlug.org)>.

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



**JUNE  
REFRESHMENT  
DONORS**  
**Coordinator: Richard Jackson**  
**Donors:**  
Leatrice Bagley  
Al Bochenek  
Gary DeNise  
Warner Mach  
Roland Maki

**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  
**Relational Database Programming:** Lis

Bader, Mike—586-573-7330, 9am–8pm..... [mdbader@flash.net](mailto:mdbader@flash.net)  
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770, 9am–5pm..... [tcallow@monaghanpc.com](mailto:tcallow@monaghanpc.com)  
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm ..... [clyne@mich.com](mailto:clyne@mich.com)  
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime  
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves..... [scook48227@ameritech.net](mailto:scook48227@ameritech.net)  
Lis, Bernie—248-669-0101, 10am–8pm ..... [BerLis@comcast.net](mailto:BerLis@comcast.net)  
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm ..... [jvanders@myself.com](mailto:jvanders@myself.com)  
Yuhasz, Steve..... [Help@yuhasz.org](mailto: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**

**July 12—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: Music & Loops:** “Here we go loop-de-loop, Here we go loop-de-li, Here we go loop de loop, On a Saturday night” (or maybe a Sunday afternoon!). Much of the music currently being produced is based on recursion or, in the parlance of the music industry—loops. Using a MIDI editor program to combine MIDI bass, keyboard, and drum phrases, Bob Stead will guide us through the process he uses to create loops for the Roland RC-50 Loop Station. He will end his demonstration with a performance—live flute playing over the Loop Station background. Resume: Bob plays in the Michigan Flute Orchestra and is webmaster of the Michigan Accordion Society <<http://www.michiganaccordion.org>>.

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

**SIG-IBM Intermediate** 3:45 p.m. **Program: SEARCH ENGINE SHOWDOWN:** Tom Callow will compare the features, functionality and search results of some of the most popular Internet search engines in the Internet.

**SIG-ADVANCED**, July 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.

**SIG-LINUX**, July 27, 2009 (4th Tuesday), 6:45 p.m., Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Topic: Linux issues.

### **August 9—SEMCO Sunday**

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

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.



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Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707**

**SEMCO (future meetings)**

**July 12**

**August 9**

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