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**Reimage—Online
Service for Windows
XP Repair
By Ira Wilsker**

Recently one of my online technical journals had an article about a somewhat unique online service that claimed that it could non-destructively repair a Windows XP installation. The article claimed that this service could restore the software on the computer to the condition and speed that the computer had when it was new. Being the skeptic that I am, I decided to try the service and see if it really did what it claimed that it could do. I went to the website, www.reimage.com, and tried the service on an aging six year old Gateway computer, with XP Home (Service Pack 3), a 3.06 GHz Pentium CPU, and 1 gig of memory. When new, this computer was a speed demon which amazed me by processing files so quickly, but now it is long in the tooth, and dragging with years of software installations, uninstallations, updates, virus and other malware attacks. Now it seems to boot slowly, process data slowly, and grudgingly shutdown. Sometimes the infamous “Blue Screen of Death” appears indicating that something has gone terribly wrong, and that the computer needs to be shut down. While this computer has been well maintained with frequent malware scans, defragmentation of the hard drive, maintenance of the startup files, cleaning the registry, and other tasks, it still seems to have degraded performance compared to when it was new. This malady is explicitly what Reimage claims that it can remedy.

Reimage was developed in Israel for an international market, and has an

office in New York City. The principles behind Reimage all have impressive backgrounds and qualifications as well as a proven track record of personal performance. The goal of Reimage, as stated on its website, is “Reimage offers a revolutionary online, automated repair tool that empowers PC technicians to expertly service more computers more swiftly. Reimage automatically and quickly first identifies and then, surgically replaces faulty system software without compromising user data.” The company has identified that the typical computer is used for about five years before requiring major overhaul or replacement, and the overhaul process is time consuming and expensive. According to Reimage, there is also a worldwide shortage of qualified computer technicians; “To provide repairs, there are 1,250,000 computer technicians - one technician for every 160,000 faulty computers.” Reimage was designed for computer repair facilities, schools, businesses, Internet service providers, and others to be able to quickly and cost effectively repair the XP operating system installed on the computer, bringing it back to its original performance. Reimage can repair the software on the computer, but cannot replace deteriorated hardware in the computer. The current build of Reimage is for XP only, but Vista (and probably Windows 7) versions are in development.

After obtaining a username and password for a Reimage repair, I rebooted into Safe Mode with Networking (Safe Mode is recommended for speed and safety; tap the F8 key at the beginning of the boot process), and using Internet Explorer, I went to reimage.com. Under the heading “For Home – make

your PC as good as new” I clicked on the “Click to start a repair” link. It downloaded a file ReimageRepair.exe to my computer, which installed the preliminary diagnostic utilities. I entered my registration information, and allowed Reimage to work its magic, and diagnose and repair my software. If for some reason my computer was so badly corrupted that it was not bootable from the hard drive, Reimage offers a free bootable CD utility that will boot the computer with Internet access. After the installation, the Reimage software did a thorough scan of my entire hard drive seeking any malware that may be infecting the computer. Reimage is not a substitute for antivirus software, and still suggests that antivirus software be installed, and that the antivirus software be used after the Reimage process to re-scan the computer. In my case, since I am tenacious about cyber security, no malware was found. If malware had been found, not only would Reimage have neutralized it, but Reimage also has the capability to repair almost any damage the malware had caused. According to the website, “Reimage PC repair is a web service that rapidly diagnoses operating system problems. Reimage surgically implements repairs by accessing a huge web repository of 25 million “spare” systems files and registry objects.” Once installed, Reimage runs automatically with almost no human intervention, and does not need to be monitored.

Reimage also scans and repairs any DLL and system files that are found to be corrupted or otherwise damaged, installing them while online from its library of “25 million spare parts.” In my case Reimage identified about 4000 files that it determined to be in need of

repair, downloaded them, and installed them. It checked the hardware drivers for adequacy, and then checked for any problems that could cause stability problems. I was amazed to see a graph generated about the recent system issues and crashes that I had suffered in the past few months, an indication that I had stability problems. Reimage corrected any erroneous entries in the registry, updated appropriate registry entries, and installed any necessary files. After completion of its diagnosis and repair, Reimage reboots a cleaned and repaired computer. According to the website, the typical repair process takes about 40 minutes, but in my case it took over two hours. One item that I noted is that after the repair, while my computer ran well, Microsoft’s Windows Update Service identified a few recent updates that had to be re-downloaded and installed. This was not much of a problem, and only a very minor inconvenience caused by the fact that Reimage created an operating system on my computer that was like new.

After the reboot, my computer booted up appropriately and promptly, and I was very pleased to see that all of my programs and data files were intact, corroborating Reimage’s claims that it does not harm the data files on the computer. It still would be wise to have frequent backups (I do), but in my case no data files were lost. In the weeks since I ran Reimage, I have not had a single “Blue Screen of Death” or other system crash, very much unlike the weeks preceding the running of Reimage where crashes were frequent and common. My system shutdown also appears to be faster than before running Reimage.

Reimage is not cheap with a one-time home use price of \$65, with a 100% money back guarantee. Reading some blogs about Reimage, where users commented on the price, it was noted that for many users \$65 was a bargain compared to what a technician would have charged for a similar service, and considering the massive database of “spare parts” that Reimage has developed. I can vouch for that because just recently one of my coworkers carried his computer to a prominent local “big box” store because his computer was running slow, and the store charged him \$300 in labor to clean up the operating system and software; no hardware was repaired or replaced. For him in this case, Reimage would have been a bargain, as it could have done about the same as what the big-box technician did for a lot less.

For those families with multiple computers, the marginal cost of running Reimage on additional computers is quite low, totally only \$79 for three repair runs, which would fix the software on three computers. Small businesses (or big families) can get a bulk deal on Reimage, at \$139 for 10 computers. Prorated at \$14 per computer, the service is a bargain, considering the potential increase in performance and productivity. Schools, business IT departments, ISPs, and computer repair facilities may get unlimited access to Reimage and all of its services for \$149 per month. The unlimited plan also includes premium support, where professional PC technician assistance is available. For all plans except the single use plan, Reimage can be installed and run from a USB flash drive. At my school, with hundreds of XP computers of varying

vintage, an unlimited monthly program would likely save the IT department a lot of time cleaning up and improving computer performance.

Reimage claims a 95% success rate in restoring decrepit XP computers to a like-new performance state. For the few that are not successfully restored, Reimage offers a 100% refund, as well as for those not satisfied with the repair. The repairs are totally reversible, and the computer can be quickly restored to its pre-repair state, which may be necessary for some refunds.

I was very satisfied with the repair on my antiquated XP computer, and as said earlier, I have had no software crashes or other severe system problems since running Reimage, and my computer performance seems to be improved. Since the current version of Reimage is for XP only, I eagerly look forward to the potential of having a similar service for Vista and the upcoming Windows 7. While somewhat pricey for a single use, Reimage can be a blessing considering the time and aggravation of dealing with an unstable XP computer that crashes at the most inopportune times. With its money back guarantee, Reimage may be very worthy of consideration for that older XP computer that seems to crash a lot and have other software issues. If it works as well on your computer as it did on mine, it may well be worth the cost.

WEBSITES:

[<http://www.reimage.com>.](http://www.reimage.com)

[<http://www.reimage.com/home/what_it_fix.php>.](http://www.reimage.com/home/what_it_fix.php)

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Social Networking—What Is It, Really?

By Phil Sorrentino

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Social Networking is all over the news; Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are the ones that get the most play. So what are they, really? Well, they're websites that provide another way of keeping in touch with friends, family, and associates. What are some older social networking methods? Maybe, the Telegram, the Telephone, Visiting on Sunday, Writing Letters. These are all ways of keeping in touch with your family and/or circle of friends. Yesterday we had these less technical ways of keeping in touch. Today we have the computer to help us keep in touch via e-mail, instant messaging, Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone, and social networking. Social networking has encouraged new ways to communicate and share information. Social networking websites are being used regularly by millions of people, and it now seems that social networking will become a regular part of everyday computer life.

Social Networking is probably the newest technology and revolves around an Internet website that provides social networking services. How about this for a definition of a social network: A site that allow individuals to construct

a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; to create a list of other users with whom they have a connection; and to view their list of connections and those made by others within the system. With that in mind, a social network focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging.

On many of the large Social Networking sites, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network, such as on Facebook and Twitter.

While it could be said that e-mail and regular websites have most of the essential elements of social networks, the social networking sites make it easy to use. Here's a look at some of the more popular sites.

LinkedIn <<http://www.linkedin.com>>

LinkedIn is mostly for business people and professionals. People use it to maintain contacts and to develop new business opportunities. To use LinkedIn, you create a profile where you describe yourself, listing work and education history, skills, specialties, etc. Just like a resume. Once you have your profile, you start connecting to others. That's the driving force behind LinkedIn. You use your connections to promote yourself and build relationships.

Twitter <<http://www.twitter.com>>

Twitter is a micro blogging service. When it started out, people used it to tell others what they were doing at

various times during the day. Now it has evolved into a way to tell people about your activities and then provide a link to further details. SPCUG as a group could have its own Twitter account. Once we had it, interested members could “follow” it and receive our group information known as “tweets” delivered to them. A Twitter “tweet” has a limit of 140 characters. This may possibly be a substitute for our use of Constant Contact to contact the membership for changes in educational class schedules.

Facebook <<http://www.facebook.com>>

Facebook is sort of a cross between LinkedIn and Twitter. Facebook used to be mainly for students, but has become more mainstream. Like LinkedIn, you build a profile of yourself, where you talk about what your interests and hobbies are. Like Twitter, you can do micro blogging about things you want people to know. In Facebook, you have friends as opposed to connections or followers.

Users of Social Networks, in general, can upload a picture of themselves, create their “profile” and can often be “friends” with other users. In most social networks, both users must confirm that they are friends before they are linked. For example, if Alice lists Bob as a friend, then Bob would have to approve Alice’s friend request before they are listed as friends. Some social networking sites have a “favorites” feature that does not need approval from the other user. Social networks usually have privacy controls that allow the user to choose who can view their profile or contact them, etc.

Privacy of Social Networks is a big concern. On large social networks,

there have been growing concerns about users giving out too much personal information and the threat of sexual predators. Users of these networks need to be aware of data theft and viruses. However, large networks often work with law enforcement to try to prevent such incidents.

Access to one’s information is also of great concern. Many social networks such as Facebook, provide the user the choice of who can view their profile. This prevents unauthorized user(s) from accessing their information. To edit information on a social network account, the site usually requires you to login or provide an access code. This prevents unauthorized users from editing an account such as posting pictures or changing personal information.

Social Networking is a promising new technology for staying in touch. Give it a try, there must be some group of people you would like to keep in touch with.

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What started out in 1996 as a student project at France’s École Centrale Paris has now turned into an international sensation, a free multi-platform utility that can play almost every known audio and video format. This software, VideoLAN VLC Media Player is quite possibly the most widely downloaded media player in the world, with over 260 million copies downloaded, including earlier versions. As I type this, the

latest version, only released in the first week of July, has had almost 10 million downloads, and is currently being downloaded at the rate of over 8 copies per second. Over three million copies were downloaded in the first 72 hours of the current release.

What makes VideoLAN VLC Media Player so popular is that it is unique because unlike its lesser competitors, it does not require any external “codecs” or media drivers to play the vast number of formats that VLC can process. While all of the previous releases were self-referred to as “beta” or pre-release versions with a version number less than one (such as 0.8), a full release with a version number 1.0.0 was released on July 7. Based on the success and popularity of the earlier versions, the version 1.0.0 was met with wild enthusiasm, and was the primary topic in many of the relevant blogs and media reviews.

I have been a user of VideoLAN VLC Media Player beta for several years, periodically downloading updated versions. When I saw that a real version was available, I jumped on the opportunity to be one of the first few millions to experience what a fine utility that this software is. Another reason for its extreme popularity is that builds of this software are available for free download in almost all popular operating systems, including all current versions of Windows, MAC OS X, BeOS, Syllable, and 12 of the most widely used versions and flavors of GNU/Linux. The program code is open source, meaning anyone can have it, and is also available for compilation in three versions of BSD, Solaris, ONX, Gentoo Linux, and Crux Linux. Downloads for all of these operating

systems is hyperlinked by operating system at <<http://www.videolan.org/vlc>>. Since each download is large, about 17 megabytes for Windows, and over 8 copies are downloaded each second, there are dozens of international servers providing the downloads, with the massive data burden being spread among those servers. The download page attempts to route the download request to the closest available server. In my case, I downloaded it at home from the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

VideoLAN VLC Media Player is likely the most capable and feature rich media player available at any price, dwarfing the capabilities of Microsoft’s vaunted Windows Media Player, and the dozens of commercial medial players available. By my count from the VLC features page at <<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/features.html>>, VLC can input media from 14 different sources, including online, DVD video, video CD, audio CD, DVB (Satellite, Digital TV, and Cable TV), MPEG sources, and other forms of media. It can also import audio and video from any capture devices installed on the computer. From these 14 sources, VLC can process data in nearly 20 formats, including MPEG, MP3, MP4, MOV, Realplayer, WAV, Midi, and many others. For those who like digital video, VLC supports 20 international video formats, and can interchangeably play videos in all versions of MPEG, DIVX, H.264, MPEG-4, DigitalVideo, Indeo (all versions), and RealVideo (all versions), as well as some lesser known formats. For those of us who enjoy digital audio, whether music, audio books, or any other audio source, VLC can probably play it, as it supports 29 different audio

formats, basically any audio format in significant use anywhere on the globe. I have downloaded some bizarre videos and audio files in obscure formats, and I have yet to find one that VLC can not play. Simply put, this program will play almost any audio and video that can be found on DVDs, CDs, downloaded audio and video, and streaming media.

VideoLAN VLC Media Player can run as a free standing audio and video player, a Firefox plug-in (plays directly from the browser), an Internet Explorer ActiveX plug-in, or it can also be used as a server to stream in unicast or multicast in IPv4 or IPv6 on a high-bandwidth network. The interface is simple, clean, and intuitive, with a menu for Media, Playback, Audio, Video, Tools, View, and Help. A slider allows the user to go directly to any part of a playing audio or video, and a conventional VCR type set of buttons (icons) allows the user to play, rewind, fast forward, pause, and control the volume. For those who like Windows Media Player visualizations, those entertaining (or boring) dynamic figures that prance on the screen to the beat of the music, they will like the visualizations built into VLC, and accessed through the Audio – Visualizations menu. Sometimes it is necessary to convert from one digital format to another, and VLC has some conversion capability, found on the menu under Media – Convert/Save. Under the Video menu, videos can be viewed in their native size or in full screen at the users' choices. Videos can also be made into DirectX wallpaper, where the video plays continuously on the desktop, or digital photo quality snapshots of playing videos can be created using the Snapshot tool under the Video menu. A variety of novel

icons and skins can be downloaded to customize the appearance of the interface.

VideoLAN VLC Media Player is the most comprehensive media player I have ever seen or used, and it is a wonder with all of its capabilities. What is even more remarkable is its price, which is totally free. This is one utility that all computer users should have installed, especially considering that it is available for so many operating systems. With VideoLAN VLC Media Player you can play any form of audio or video that you are likely to find on any media form, both hardware and software, that you can get on a computer. In summary, VideoLAN VLC Media Player is a “must have”

WEBSITES:

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

<<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/features.html>>.

<<http://www.videolan.org/vlc>>

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In my February 2008 article in the Monitor comparing 32-bit and 64-bit computing, I was still advising caution

for those wishing to upgrade. Today every new computer is capable of running a 64-bit operating system. As a result there are many voices saying if you have the capability to run a 64-bit operating system, you should take advantage of it. Microsoft had previously indicated that Windows 7 would be available only in a 64-bit version. However, they now say both 32- & 64-bit versions will be sold. There is some speculation in the computer industry that Windows 8 may only be 64-bit. So it appears to be time to reconsider the move to a 64-bit operating system (OS). There are many advantages for 64-bit over 32-bit, but in order to better understand them, we need to take a brief look at how these will affect your decision.

To start with we should recall a little history. In the early days of personal computing the processors instruction sets were designed for 8-bit "words." This was the data size that could be used to express a single character. A bit is either a "1" or a "0." Eight bits were then referred to as a "byte" and that was considered a computer "word." In those days the CPUs we had were the Intel 8080, the Zilog Z80, Motorola 6800, and the MOS Tech 6502. These were all 8-bit processors with 8-bit data paths. The Apple I/II/IIe and Commodore Pet all used the 6502. IBM designed the first x86 CPU which was called the 8086 and it was a 16-bit processor. However, when IBM produced their first personal computer in 1981 it used their 8088 processor which was an 8-bit version of the 8086. The next step was to the 16-bit processor with the 80286 processor in 1984. The software changes rapidly followed this advance. The change to 16-bit processing allowed the central

processor and the data bus to transfer data in increasingly larger sizes, referred to as double words. The 32-bit processor arrived in 1989 followed by the 64-bit in 2005. As this history shows, the 64-bit computer is just one more generational step in processing power. In addition, a computer "word" is now considered to be 16-bits, not 8-bits. So a 64-bit processor can handle a quadruple word (4x16). Naturally, the increase in the width of the CPU/data path does increase processing speed.

Every time the hardware has changed, there has been a delay while the software manufacturers play catchup. Applications have to be rewritten to take advantage of the hardware changes including the new instructions in the CPU instruction set. Only then can the application take advantage of the added processing power. Although Windows has been available in a 64-bit form since XP was released, its adoption has been quite slow. Many software manufacturers did not make 64-bit versions of their applications. This coupled with the limited acceptance of Vista has markedly slowed the shift from 32-bit to 64-bit. Another factor in this process is the development of 64-bit drivers for peripherals such as printers, scanners, graphics cards, wireless modems, network cards, etc. Microsoft has also indicated that Windows 7 will not install 64-bit drivers unless the software is "Microsoft Certified." Some manufacturers have obtained certification for some of their 64-bit drivers. For example, my Brother multi-function machine has a certified driver for 64-bit Windows. If you don't have a 64-bit certified driver, your peripheral will not work under Windows 7. Neither Vista64 nor

Win7-64 will accept 32-bit drivers. Something to check out before you pop for a 64-bit OS. However, if you are buying an upgrade version of Windows 7, several of them are supposed to come with both the 64-bit and 32-bit versions in the box, but not in the OEM versions. This specifically applies to the Home Premium, Professional and Ultimate versions (as of this writing and may be subject to change by Microsoft.).

Another advantage of a 64-bit processor is in its memory management. By now I would hope that everyone understands that the 32-bit generation of computers can address a maximum of 4 gigabytes of RAM. This is the maximum number of addresses that can be handled and is calculated from 2^{32} or two to the thirty-second power. This includes addresses needed by the system as well as the data. A 64-bit processor can address 2^{64} addresses or roughly ten billion more than the 32-bit processor. The catch here is that both the hardware manufacturers and Microsoft have imposed limitations on the addressable memory. Generally, new personal computers are limited to 128 GB of memory or less. Some manufacturers configure their laptops for a maximum of 4 GB of RAM. Windows OS software is also highly variable in its limits. Some versions of Vista limit addressing to as little as 8 GB (Home Basic & Premium). It is expected that these limits will be raised in Windows 7. For the present, these levels should be more than adequate for most people. If not keep in mind that it is the Ultimate versions of Vista and Windows 7 that have the maximum addressing ability.

The next thing to consider is the software compatibility. Just because

you have a new operating system, no one really wants to have to upgrade all their software from 32-bit to 64-bit. For that reason both Intel CPU's and AMD CPU's are not true native 64-bit processors. They are, in fact, hybrids. By this I mean that they allow 32-bit code to run in an emulation mode. Consequently, 64-bit Windows has an emulation mode, Windows on Windows, which allows 32-bit software to be run. WOW intercepts system calls to the operating system made by a 32-bit application and switches the CPU to 32-bit mode. It can switch the CPU between 32-bit and 64-bit as needed. This also allows the 64-bit AMD/Intel CPU's to run a 32-bit OS. The only true 64-bit, non-hybrid operating systems for PCs are found in Intel's Itanium processor (IA64) and the various 64-bit versions of Linux. Systems using these CPUs will give you all the benefits of 64-bit computing, but require all 64-bit software. Windows WOW64 also allows for some 32-bit software to run on the IA64 CPU by converting 32-bit calls to 64-bit.

Windows XP, Vista and Win7 contain large numbers of dll files. These are system libraries, many of which are loaded into memory when the computer is booted. In the 64-bit OS, these libraries cannot be used by 32-bit software so instead, there are duplicate libraries written in 32-bit code included in Windows. Microsoft has devised a system so that these libraries can co-exist on the hard drive and in RAM without overwriting the files or accessing the wrong file so that 32-bit code can be run under the 64-bit OS. Sounds good, doesn't it? Yes, it does work, but with some caveats. Adding an emulation layer does slow the overall

processing of software instructions. Also, there is an increase in the amount of memory (virtual memory included) needed for the additional 32-bit libraries that are loaded along with the 64-bit dlls at boot time.

There are other problems, but to a somewhat lesser extent as it affects fewer software applications. Some 32-bit applications still use 16-bit loaders. Since Windows 64 does not support ANY 16-bit code, these applications will not run, unless Windows can transparently substitute an installer with 32-bit code. Hopefully, all 32-bit software will eventually have 32-bit loaders or be replaced with 64-bit code. Additionally, some 32-bit software requires the use of 32-bit drivers. These drivers will not run on any 64-bit Windows platform. So until the drivers are available in a 64-bit form, these applications can't be used with Windows 64.

Another consideration is that any utility software that works at the hardware level must be 64-bit. This generally includes anti-virus software and other anti-malware products. Those few manufacturers I have checked do have 64-bit versions of their applications available. This includes some which provide free utility applications. This is just one more item that should be checked before you decide to move to a 64-bit OS.

If you decide you want to upgrade to the 64-bit version of Windows 7 when it is available, then you have several more things to consider. No matter which 32-bit Windows version you are currently using, you will have to do a "clean" install of the 64-bit version. That means backing up your data to an external medium and formatting your hard drive or at least a part of it (one partition). You

can install Windows 7 in a new partition and dual boot with it and your current Windows version. Or you can install the new version in the space reclaimed from your old version. Either way you will have to reinstall software and drivers. Then you can restore your data. Only if you upgrade to the Windows 7 32-bit version from Vista can you do an "in-place" upgrade. If you are still running XP you have no choice but to do a clean install to convert to the 64-bit version. Of course, if you buy a new computer with the 64-bit Windows 7 installed that reduces your problem to just installing applications and data from your old computer.

I have already pre-ordered a 64-bit version of Windows 7. So, you see, I have answered the question I posed in the title of this article. When it arrives, in October, I will be installing it, then testing drivers and applications. You probably won't see any of my experience until the December Monitor. In the meantime, I have obtained a 64-bit version of the Linux OS, Ubuntu. Over the next few months I will be installing and testing it on my computer. So you will be seeing more about 64-bit computing. I hope it will help you as the entire industry continues to move into a fully 64-bit era. Just think, the next move, in a few years, will probably be to 128-bit computing!

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. Dr. Lewis is a member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida. Web: <<http://www.spcug.org>>. E-mail: <bwsail@yahoo.com>.

**Open Office Org 3.0—An
Evolutionary Improvement
By Bill Wayson**

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OpenOffice.org (OO.o) is Free and Open Source Software's (FOSS) premier alternative to the Microsoft Office productivity suite. It offers a high level of compatibility with many of the ever-changing MS Office formats, provides many of the same features as MS Office, and works similarly to MS Office. This month, we will explore the recently released OpenOffice.org 3.0, which is available for Microsoft Windows, Linux, Apple's Macintosh, Sun's Solaris, and several other operating systems. Many, if not most, users of MS Office who require the broad, deep range of features of MS Office could change to OO.o and become productive after a very shallow learning curve.

If your requirements are more for just compatibility with Microsoft's Word document formats in a word processor, you can consider more streamlined FOSS alternatives such as AbiWord.

OO.o is a full-featured office productivity suite comprised of six integrated applications: the Writer word processor (which also has a Web page editing mode), Calc spreadsheet, Draw graphics program, Impress presentations program, Base database program, and Math equation editor.

OO.o 3.0 is an evolutionary improvement on the application suite, with new features, enhancements, and user interface improvements. Users of Apple Macintosh OS X systems benefit greatly from OO.o 3.0, which will now run as a native OS X application. OS X users will also have support for Microsoft's VBA macro language and the Calc Solver component, which allows solving optimization problems where the optimum value of a particular spreadsheet cell has to be calculated based on constraints provided in other cells. Both of these features are missing in MS Office 2008 for Mac OS X.

All users of OO.o 3.0 benefit from its improvements, including the two above. Another area of significant improvement is one where OO.o is breaking out of Microsoft mimicry mode: support for open document standards. OO.o 3.0 supports the latest OpenDocument Format (ODF) specification. In fact, ODF is the OO.o default document format. ODF is gaining wider acceptance worldwide, being adopted by more companies and governments as the standard for documents, and becoming supported by an increasing number of applications. OO.o will also read and write many other formats, including those of various versions of MS Office and Word, plain text, and several PDA document formats.

Additionally, it will read the newest formats introduced in MS Office 2007. Exchanging documents with users of Microsoft's products should not be an issue. The Writer screen now sports a handy zoom slider control, making it quick and easy to change the zoom level of the view. Additionally, it will automatically display multiple pages

of the document as the zoom level is lowered. Writer now displays notes — notations added to a document that are not necessarily meant to be printed — at the edge of the editing window to the side of the document, making it easier to read them and see their context in the document. In addition, notes from different users are displayed in different colors, together with the editing date and time, facilitating collaborative work on a document.

Calc sees some useful improvements. One is in the charts feature. Now, custom error bars can be included, and regression equations and correlation coefficients can be displayed right in the chart. Another is a new feature, spreadsheet collaboration through workbook sharing. This feature allows multiple users to work collaboratively on a spreadsheet while avoiding editing conflicts. The users share a spreadsheet, each adding their data. The spreadsheet owner can then easily integrate the new data with a few clicks. And Calc now supports 1,024 columns per worksheet.

Draw now lets you crop images the same way that most other graphics programs do, by dragging handles located at the edges and corners of an image. This same improvement appears in Impress, too. Additionally, Impress now natively supports inserting tables into presentations. Tables can be added directly into the presentation and edited within Impress as native Impress objects.

Improvements affecting the entire suite include a new set of icons, expanded feature support when exporting to XML, and a new gateway to the suite called the Start Center, which makes it more intuitive to get to

where you want to go in the suite. There is nothing revolutionary in OO.o 3.0. What is new are several improvements and enhancements that will keep the suite in contention with its competitors. And we have not touched at all on the features OO.o already had before 3.0. If you need a productivity suite with both a broad and deep set of features and, particularly, if you are not married to Microsoft Office, you should give OO.o a look. It costs you nothing to try, you may just like it, so it just may save you hundreds of dollars.

Bill Wayson is Linux SIG Leader, Channel Islands PCUG, California.
Web: <<http://www.cipcug.org>>. **E-mail** <[bwayson\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:bwayson(at)gmail.com)>.

**Beneath the Surface: Deep
Peeping the Web
By Jerry Goldstein**

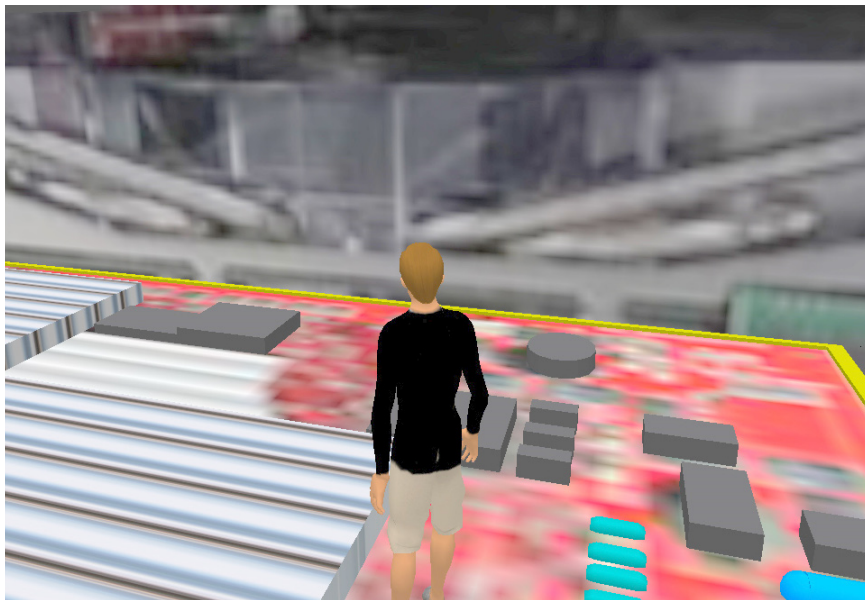
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Last summer Google announced it had passed the one trillionth mark in its list of known and searchable Web pages.

If you think Google does the best job of searching the World Wide Web you will be in for a big surprise. By 'big' I mean a search engine that goes way beyond standard search engines like Google, which only look at the surface of the Web compared to the vast, deep, and so far uncharted depths of the Web. I say "you will be in for a big surprise" because a deeper search engine is only in it's initial research stages.

[Continued on Page 21](#)

PREVIEW: Second Life



At the September 13 meeting there will be a demonstration of "Second Life." (Above): Avatar Warner Magneto in the giant Dell Computer on "Dell Island." (Below): Avatars Warner Magneto and DJ Earnshaw (with APCUG t-shirt) in the APCUG room.



SEMCO Meeting Pictures



(Above): President Mike Bader with Watchful Friend at the ESD. (Below): SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow discusses home networks.



SEMCO Meeting Pictures



(Above): Eddie Durrett shows laptop in the process of disassembly. (Below): Mike Rudas and other members at the break between sessions.





BOARD MEETING
8/9/2009
Carol Sanzi

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Chuck Moery. Also attending were provisional SIG-Linux Chairman Ray McLaughlin and Mike Rudas. The meeting was called to order at 12:20 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

Treasurer, Bette Gay, reported that the amount in the treasury totaled \$9,836.27 with \$5,101.15 in the checking account and \$4,735.12 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership stands at 80. It is time for Jehana Jalil and Christian Parham to renew their memberships.

Bob Clyne moved to reimburse Carol Sanzi \$17.10 for the purchase of refreshment supplies. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Richard Jackson presented a possible Evaluation Form for attendees to give their feedback after the SEMCO meetings. The board discussed the layout and content of the form, offering suggestions to make it more effective.

Ray McLaughlin reported that the SIG-Linux has had 2 meetings. Mike Rudas plans to write an article describing their activities, which will then be published in the DATA BUS. This will help keep members informed and may

increase participation. Attendees need not be SEMCO members, but it is encouraged. Ray McLaughlin requested flyers for the SIG-Linux that would include meeting times, location, and membership benefits.

Bob Clyne moved that the Publication Committee Chairman have final authority over the version of the DATA BUS placed on the web site. Warner Mach seconded the motion and it was carried. Bob Clyne then moved that the board must approve any variation made to the SEMCO logo, which significantly changes its appearance. Warner Mach seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Carol Sanzi seconded the motion and it was carried. The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

**Sig-Linux Recent Topics
Reported by Mike Bader**

At the July Meeting Michael Rudas demonstrated an install of Ubuntu and conducted the Question and Answer session. Gib Nichols provided refreshments. 14 people were present.

At press time, Ray McLaughlin was slated to give a demonstration at the August meeting titled, "A Desktop is a Many Layered Thing." Also "Linux Desktops—use, tips, and tricks."

For the September meeting topic see the "Special Interest Groups" entry on page 19.



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow

Sept. 13: 1:45 p.m. Second Life: Warner Mach, of SEMCO, and Don Singleton, of APCUG (Association of Personal Computer User Groups), will give a tour of the virtual land of “Second Life.” Especially there will be a focus on the new SL APCUG room, and associated nearby areas. Don’s avatar will be controlled from across the country.

SIG-IBM INTERMEDIATE

Sept. 13: 3:45 p.m. Windows 7: SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will discuss and demonstrate the RTM (Release To Manufacturing) version of Windows 7, including a more in-depth discussion of some of the new features of Microsoft’s next operating system.



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

Sept. 28 (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-LINUX
Ray McLaughlin

Sept. 29 (4th Tues): 6:45 p.m.: At the Oak Park Library. The library is located at 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Topic: Mike Bader will use Linux/Widows cross-platform software, and Linux equivalent programs, to achieve results that match Windows.

Oct. 2009 DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMCO Input and Members’ Ads—Deadline: Sun., Sept. 20, 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).

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)

Oct. 7, 7 p.m., (1st Wednesday); (New Location). Black River Country Club, Port Huron. Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: <compinfo@hughes.net>. Web: <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>. Topic: "Chase Bank—Internet Access for Financial Management."

Focus Hope IT Users Group

Oct. 3, 9:30-11:30 a.m. (1st Saturday-usually), 1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info <<http://www.fhitug.org/meetings/meetings.htm>>. Topic: TBA."

HUG (Holly User Group)

Sept. 12, 9:00 a.m., (2nd Sat.); Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Ortonville. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup- Detroit

Sept. 12, 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: "Social Networking: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Etc." SIGS: 2:00 p.m.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

Sept. 19, 11:00 a.m., (3rd Saturday); (SIGs at 9:30); See web site for meeting location. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: TBA.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

Sept. 12, 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)

Sept. 8, 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

Sept. 10, 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)

Oct. 6, 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: "Backup, Issues and Techniques." .

Continued from Page 14

Standard search engines only skim the surface of the Web. Kind of like you're looking over the surface of the ocean, instead of looking into its vast undersea life. The plan is to create a search engine that will open 90% of the Web to searches.

A study at the University of Utah is trying to find a way. The study searches typed text rather than the hyperlinks that the present search engines use. A beta version of DeepPeep is available at: <http://www.deeppeep.org/>.

We have a long way to go but eventually almost the entirety of the Web will be searchable. Web pages exist already that tell you the best taxi fare, flight schedules, and shopping catalogs. DeepPeep wants to give you access to this information. A whole new way of searching has to be worked out first.

Scientists have said that 90% of what we know was discovered in the

last 50 years. DeepPeep is working out a way to get that knowledge to you.

Jerry Goldstein is Vice President and Newsletter Editor of the PCUG of Connecticut. Web: <http://www.tpcug-ct.org>. E-mail: [jerryg\(at\)attygoldstein.com](mailto:jerryg(at)attygoldstein.com).



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
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
Lis, Bernie—248-669-0101, 10am-8pm.....	BerLLis@comcast.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**

Sept. 13–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: Second Life:** Warner Mach, of SEMCO, and Don Singleton, of APCUG (Association of Personal Computer User Groups), will give a tour of the virtual land of “Second Life.” Especially there will be a focus on the new SL APCUG room, and associated nearby areas. Don’s avatar will be controlled from across the country.

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

SIG-IBM Intermediate 3:45 p.m. **Program: Windows 7:** SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will discuss and demonstrate the RTM (Release To Manufacturing) version of Windows 7, including a more in-depth discussion of some of the new features of Microsoft’s next operating system.

SIG-ADVANCED, Sept. 28, 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.

LINUX DISCUSSION GROUP, Sept. 29, 2009 (4th Tuesday), 6:45 p.m., Oak Park Public Library, 14200 Oak Park Blvd., Oak Park, MI. Topic: Mike Bader will use Linux/Windows cross-platform software, and Linux equivalent programs, to achieve results that match Windows.

Sept 13–SEMCO Sunday

<http://www.semco.org>

PUBLIC INVITED

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



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. The ESD office is on the fourth floor.



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

**SEMCO (future meetings)
September 13
October 11**

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