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

We worked Pittcon <<http://www.pittcon.org>>, the Annual Pittsburgh Conference on Analytical Chemistry and Applied Spectroscopy, which is mostly about laboratory products and services. Pittcon began as a small conference held annually in Pittsburgh, PA and was originally called The Pittsburgh Conference. Since it's a one-of-a-kind event, it gradually became larger than originally anticipated so it was necessary to move it to larger facilities and to hold it in other locations. The name was changed to Pittcon, but it's still referred to as The Pittsburgh Conference. Next year The Pittsburgh Conference will be held in Atlanta, GA.

This 61st annual conference offered almost 2000 booths, as well as many educational and informative breakout sessions during show days. I didn't learn the attendance, but attendees were numerous and the Expo had interesting booths. I often asked questions concerning what a booth was about and the booth people were great about filling me in. I found the products and services fascinating.

The NADA (National Automobile Dealers Association) show <<http://www.nada.org/TrainingEvents/Convention/>> was also interesting (and large) and I met attendees from many other countries, which surprised me. I saw some great female sales people working the booths, but the female attendees tended to call them "Bimbos." I don't know why because even though they were scantily clad they seemed to be

friendly and knowledgeable when giving their presentation. <G>

How My Reimage Repair Went

Using Reimage to bring my computer back to its original condition was an experience. The first time I started the repair, it got deep into downloading over 770 files and all of a sudden, my computer warned that the CPU was overheating. I didn't see any way to pause it, so I forced the computer to shut down. After a few days, I tried running Reimage again. It got almost all of the way though the downloading, but the session was interrupted for unknown reasons. When you start a Reimage Repair, it goes through examining your entire hard drive and operating system for viruses, malware, and all the bad stuff, as well as any corrupted files in your operating system, and replaces them with the correct ones.

A few days later, I gave it another try and it went through the many downloads, which took well over an hour, but one of the problems I wanted repaired was the proper shutdown of my computer, which hadn't been happening. I had to finish the shutdown myself, so it failed to reboot when the repair was completed, which was necessary to finish the session and I was left with a Reimage "we'll soon be finished" screen each time I started my computer.

I sent a message to Reimage tech support concerning the failed repair and they responded telling me to run it again in safe mode. When I tried it in safe mode, it couldn't access the Internet, so nothing could be done. Then they said it was necessary to schedule a remote session to attempt the repair from their end. A week later, I had scheduled a remote session and the tech

sent me an e-mail prior to the scheduled time with a “LogMeIn” link to use for my session. Their tech worked over an hour and downloaded “autoruns” (Sysinternals) from the Microsoft Web site and installed it. Eventually the machine started shutting down saying it would be downloading 60 updates, but when it finished doing that, it failed to shut off. I never found out why all the updates because I try to keep them up-to-date.

I received an e-mail saying the session had been interrupted and I needed to reschedule a new session. I finally scheduled a new session a week later and the tech worked almost two hours and finally told me he had decided that the failing shutdown was being caused by my firewall, Online Armor. When he disabled it, he could restart the computer successfully, but when it was activated, the restart failed because the computer failed to shut down. I was convinced and so far the shutdown is working and my firewall is disabled, so that’s where I stand now. He suggested that reinstalling it might help. I’m not sure if I’ll try that, but the peculiar part is that I have been using OnLine Armor successfully for over two years, but the problems started after I installed Internet Explorer 8 recently. What is the connection? Tonight, I noticed that I was unable to launch MS Access so I’m wondering what’s wrong with that now. It wants to install when I launch it.

Reimage is located in Israel and the tech used perfect English in his sessions, which consisted of us communicating via LogMeIn. There is no telephone support. He was patient with my typing and sometimes had questions that he wanted answered in my own words.

During the session, he found Glary Utilities on my machine. I thought I had installed a full version downloaded from Giveawayoftheday.com, but I apparently had actually installed a trial. He asked if I would like him to install it for me and I readily agreed. How helpful is that! While the time duration for the repair was lengthy, I was satisfied to an extent. Not all of my problems were fixed, but my lack of adequate memory could be part of the problem. When I first built the computer, it was enough memory, but because of all the updates and other installed items, memory may be part of the problem. However, it uses Rambus, which is very expensive.

How To Make Posters

I was visiting a friend the other day and he was enlarging some photos to be used as posters. I ask what he was using and it’s a free program called Easy Poster Printer that he read about. It’s at <<http://www.gdsoftware.dk>>. He said it worked well for him. He made a beautiful poster while I watched. It was interesting how it divided the poster up into multiple pages so you could paste them together. That way you don’t need to purchase one of those \$20,000 wide-carriage printers to make a large poster. If the above URL doesn’t work, try <<http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file/fid,83419-order,4/description.html>>, which is the PCWorld site.

How Is Your Flash Drive Working?

Browsing the results of a search the other day I noticed H2testw <<http://wareseeker.com/free-h2testw-1.4/>> and took a look. It’s a test you can run to tell you that a flash drive does, or doesn’t, work like it should. There are many places to download this test and it seems to have other uses, but H2testw 1.4 will test your Flash drive and tell

you if there are any errors, and won't hurt your data.

Flash drives are a different type of storage that sometimes perplexes a user. There have been articles on how long they last, but since they are new technology, who really knows for sure. I've seen numbers stating their dependability, but do you count the times you use yours? It wouldn't hurt to check occasionally to see if a Flash drive is working as it should because anything can fail at any time; especially when a user carries it in their pocket or hanging on their neck. After all, just reading the drive has little effect on it, but writing to it and bumping it against pocket items doesn't help. The product is free.

Help For Your Downloads

Downloading files can sometimes be a trying experience when things aren't going right, but here is a product that will help things along. FlashGet will help your download in many ways including the speed of the download. I'm told FlashGet is a popular download manager and it was suggested by a tech support person. It uses the MHT (Multi-server Hyper-threading Transportation) technique (OK, if they say so), supports various protocols, and has excellent document management features. FlashGet is freeware and said to be without any adware or spyware. Their Web site also says they accept donations. Check their information at <http://www.flashget.com>.

Coral Deals

From time to time, special offers are sent out by the Corel people and they usually expire before I could include them in my column. Perhaps you can get on their mailing list by calling their ordering number, 1-877-582-6735, to

ask. (Mon- Fri, 9:00 am to 7:00 pm EST). Also, here is the URL <http://www.corel.com> for browsing.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [bobclick at bellsouth dot net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net). Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>



**Remove Resistant
Malware Free With
Bootable CDS
By Ira Wilsker**

In some recent columns I wrote about several free utilities that can be used to remove malware from most infected computers. Those utilities either had to be loaded and run on the infected computer (such as Malwarebytes) or run from a USB flash drive (a-squared free USB stick files and SUPERAntispyware Portable version). While those excellent utilities were very capable of removing almost all infections from a contaminated computer, there are some computers that are so badly infested with malware, spyware, viruses, and trojans that either nothing could be run on those computers, or, in a few cases, the computer would not even boot. I have had users with badly infected unbootable computers who were going to either reformat their hard drives (with the resultant loss of

all of their data and files), or trash their otherwise good computers and purchase a new one.

Prior to taking such drastic actions, the user still has another choice to kill the malware and retake control of his computer at little or no expense. Several of the security software companies offer free software that can create a bootable CD complete with software that can detect and kill the malware, and possibly repair the computer to a bootable condition. As a matter of practice, if this bootable CD process is successful, I routinely run two other malware killers on the newly booted computer to verify that the computer is indeed clean of malware.

The well respected security company BitDefender offers a comprehensive free antimalware scanner “BitDefender Rescue CD ” that is intended to be burned to a CD. This utility, which is in the ISO format, can be downloaded from <http://download.bitdefender.com/rescue_cd>. In addition to the ISO file, there are two PDF files “HowTo.PDF” and BD_Rescue_CD.PDF” that should be opened, as they contain detailed instructions on how to properly burn the ISO file to a CD (it is not simply copied to a CD, but must be burned as an ISO image), and when to use the many utilities that will be on the bootable CD. Since the infected computer may not be capable of downloading and burning the CD, this step should be performed on another clean computer. Since the CD is in the Knoppix operating system (a cousin of the Linux OS), the user will need to precisely follow the instructions on the PDF files in order to disinfect the computer, and recover the Windows files. Since the CD is not in the Windows computer language,

the malware on the computer will be incapable of executing or otherwise interfering with the BitDefender Rescue CD. The antivirus signatures used on the Rescue CD are updated automatically each time the CD is loaded.

Once the computer is booted from the BitDefender Rescue CD, a dark red desktop will appear with icons representing the several functions available, including the Firefox browser, and an icon to update the antivirus signatures. The logical icon to start the recovery process is appropriately labeled “Start Here.” As a safety precaution, the Rescue CD offers the ability to open the drives on the infected computer allowing for critical data files to be copied to a USB flash drive or similar device. Since the operating system running is not Windows, the drive on the computer will not have the familiar “C:” designation, but more likely a designation something like “sda1.” Despite the difference in the drive name, files can be copied from the hard drive to the USB drive just as they are when booted into Windows.

Once the Bit Defender Rescue CD has completed its malware scan and removed the detected malware, the CD should be closed according to the directions in the manual, removed from the CD drive, and then the computer rebooted into Windows. Once Windows successfully boots, it would be a good idea to use one or two other free utilities, such as Malwarebytes, a-squared free, or SUPERAntispyware to confirm that the computer is indeed clean of infection. Another point to remember is that it will likely be necessary to reinstall any antivirus software or security suite that was on the computer, as much of the malware in circulation

destroys the protective software that may be on the computer. I always have a BitDefender Rescue CD in my car, and take it with me if there is a sick computer that may need rescuing. I have used this CD several times with a high degree of success, and can recommend it to anyone who may need to rescue a badly infected PC.

One of the most popular free utilities that can create a bootable CD is Avira AntiVir Rescue System. This utility, which is maintained and updated several times a day by one of the top rated security companies, when downloaded and executed, will create a bootable CD or DVD containing software that can scan the system for malware, repair system damage, and likely rescue the data on the computer. Since the infected computer may not be in running condition, this software should be downloaded on a clean computer and burned to CD or DVD from that computer, and then used to boot the infected computer. While the software installed to the CD is in the Linux operating system, which is bootable on a Windows machine, all of the utilities on the CD will be capable of reading and repairing a Windows system. Since the software on the Avira website is updated several times a day, a fresh copy should be downloaded and burned to CD each time it is to be used.

While not as capable and up to date as the other products, F-Secure offers a free Rescue CD at http://www.f-secure.com/en_EMEA/security/tools/rescue-cd. Both the software to be burned to CD and an instruction manual, "Rescue CD Users Guide (PDF)" is available from this location. The users' guide contains detailed but easy to follow instructions on how to use the bootable

CD. As with the other bootable CDs, the F-Secure Rescue CD is bootable (in Knoppix) and contains several utilities that may be able to recover a Windows computer that is not bootable. This Rescue CD will scan the computer, and quarantine any malware that it detects; sometimes this is all that is necessary to allow the computer to boot into Windows. This CD also allows the user to copy any desired files to a USB drive for backup purposes, a necessary function in case the Windows is so badly damaged that it is still not bootable into Windows.

It is not necessary to be a geek in order to use any of the above utilities to create a bootable CD and recover an infected computer, but it may take some time and the ability to follow the instructions in the PDF manuals. If a computer is heavily infested with malware, or otherwise will not boot, it may be well worth the time and effort to try one or more of these rescue and recovery CD utilities. Blank CDs are cheap, and the time and effort to recover the damaged computer may well be worth the endeavor.

WEBSITES:

http://download.bitdefender.com/rescue_cd.

http://www.free-av.com/en/tools/12/avira_antivir_rescue_system.html.

http://www.f-secure.com/en_EMEA/security/tools/rescue-cd.

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**Soluto Anti-Frustration
Software Improves
Boot Time
By Ira Wilsker**

In several past columns I have written about utilities that can speed up the computer boot process. As cluttered as it was, my old XP machine could take up to five minutes to boot; my newer Windows 7-64 machine boots in under two minutes, considering the multilayered security that is installed on it. Traditionally, the ways of speeding the boot process on a PC was to defrag the hard drive, and clean up the programs in the startup that load when the computer is first turned on. When someone tells me that his computer takes forever to boot, my typical responses are “is your hard drive defragged” (defragmented), and “how many little icons do you have on your task bar adjacent to your clock?” There are several excellent startup managers available (including Windows ‘msconfig’ feature), both independent utilities and components of utility suites, that can easily control what programs load at boot. Simply unchecking unwanted and unnecessary programs at boot is an accepted way of improving boot time. Likewise, there are several excellent defragmentation utilities available, including the simple one built into Windows, that can do a credible job; by defragging the hard drive, it does not have to work as hard when reading files and data, thus providing some improvement in load times.

While these two methods are well accepted and proven to speed up the boot process, a new concept in utilities was recently released that goes an extra step in controlling the boot process using

a software “genome” and community experiences to determine what is loading in the computer at boot, how long each item takes to load, displays what is required or optional to load at boot, and gives the user control of what loads and when it loads during the boot process. Wanted, but low priority items, can be set to load after the computer has fully booted, and is sitting idle, thus not degrading the boot process. Unwanted items can be stopped from automatically loading, but set to load upon demand. The process may sound complex, but it is very simple with the information provided by this new utility, “Soluto Anti-Frustration Software (beta).”

Available as a free download from <http://www.soluto.com>, this software is a “beta” or pre-release version, which by definition, is not a highly refined final “release” version. My 18 month old “new” computer booted very quickly when new, but now that I have a lot of security software and other utilities loading at boot, it was taking between a minute and a half, and two minutes to boot. After I downloaded and installed Soluto, and rebooted the computer such that Soluto could measure and analyze my boot process, my first modification of my boot process improved my boot time by almost 25%! Subsequent refinements of my boot process with Soluto, and input from the “community” have helped me to shave off about another 10% of my boot time.

After being installed, Soluto monitors what loads at each boot. During the boot process, the bottom left corner of the desktop turns up like the corner of a page and displays each item as it is loading, while displaying the elapsed time to boot the computer. Information is gathered during the

boot process, and added to what has been gathered at previous boots, to provide the data that is analyzed by the program. The data that is collected is anonymously added to the Solutio PC Genome, where the community can input recommendations that will assist the user in determining what can be controlled at boot. According to Solutio, “ This anonymous technical data is gathered and sent to Solutio’s PC Genome, a one-of-a-kind knowledge base containing statistical insights about PC software and hardware behavior, as well as remedies to alleviate PC usage frustrations. By putting this information into the light, the PC Genome will help consumers and vendors alike. Solutio employs another set of innovative algorithms to determine which remedies will have a positive impact on each Solutio user’s unique PC system. These remedies are then shared with other relevant Solutio users.” Solutio has found that by pausing when specific items load in the boot process, and reconfiguring some of the applications, boot time and overall behavior of the computer can improve dramatically. Solutio can also determine those programs that degrade computer performance, and provide the “frustrated” user with possible solutions to reduce or eliminate the source of frustration.

Solutio places a small icon on the task bar that looks somewhat like a smiley-face, and opens displaying the Solutio functions. By opening Solutio anytime after the computer has booted, the first screen called the “Boot Page” displays “Potentially Removable” items in an orange font, along with the boot time and sequence for each. By moving the cursor over any of the “Potentially Removable” items, a brief description of

the software is displayed (if it is in the Genome). By moving over the “more” on the display, a recommendation may be shown, as well as a pie chart of what other users of that software have done. The user is given the option to “Pause” or “Delay” the item in subsequent boots. “Pause” prevents the item from being loaded at boot, but the program can still be loaded upon demand; “Delay” postpones the selected program from automatically loading until the computer is otherwise idle, which means that it will not slow the initial boot process. Since Solutio (beta) has just been released, the genome is still in its infancy, and does not yet contain a comprehensive database of software. The user can easily click on the pencil icon “edit” and open a Wiki which enables the user to “fill in the blanks” about an item, which will then be verified, and added to the Genome. As more users complete the Wiki, the Genome database will become more complete. As the Genome improves through this community input, all of the users can benefit by the dissemination of the information.

The grey section of the main screen “Boot Page” in Solutio displays the “Required - cannot be removed” items that load at boot, in their boot sequence and with their boot time displayed. While most of the items shown are valid Windows components, with an explanation of what each does along with its boot time, some of the items are non-Microsoft files, and lack detailed descriptions. When I first used Solutio, the components of my MagicJack VoIP service (Internet based telephone service) were listed as “Required,” and could not be paused or delayed; I opened the Wiki and explained what they were,

and then commented that I thought that these particular components should be moved to the “Potentially removable” section where their boot process could be better managed. As the Genome grows and improves, items like this will be better sorted into the appropriate category.

The blue section on the “Boot Page” shows the items that were “Paused” or “Delayed” at boot, and how much time was saved by not loading those items. Clicking on any blue item gives the user the choice of changing the status to boot, “Pause” or “Delay,” which will be implemented the next time the computer is booted.

An interesting choice on the Solutio icon is “My PC just frustrated me,” which opens the Solutio window, and analyzes the running processes, and tries to determine which program is causing the slowdown. Any information found during the “frustration” analysis is anonymously added to the Genome where it will be commingled with other data and potential solutions may be determined. If a solution to the “frustration” exists, it looks like it will be displayed to the user. When I clicked on the “Frustration” menu item, Solutio identified the beta version of a new security product that I am testing as the potential source of “frustration” but could not yet show any remedy to my “frustration.”

While Solutio is still in the “beta” stage of development, I found it a very useful and worthwhile utility to improve PC performance, particularly in the boot process, and for resolving potential “frustrations.” Users should give Solutio Anti-Frustration Software a try. In my limited experience with it, I would give

it my recommendation, as well as a rating of “two thumbs up.”

WEBSITES:

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

[<http://blog.solutio.com>.](http://blog.solutio.com)

[<http://www.solutio.com/About/Media-Kit>.](http://www.solutio.com/About/Media-Kit)

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Microsoft Offers Free Online Version of Office By Ira Wilsker

In the over 10 years I have been writing this weekly column I have used the Microsoft Word installed on my desktop computer for all but a handful of the columns. There were a few columns I wrote while using Open Office as a topic of the column; one column was typed using Google Docs and saved as a Word file to send to my editor. Today I am using Microsoft’s recently released Word Web App, which is one of the several Office utilities now available for free at [<http://www.live.com>.](http://www.live.com) Since these applications are online, they can be accessed from anywhere the user has Internet access, and are utilized in a browser window.

From the live.com webpage, the office applications can be utilized by clicking on the “Office” link at the top of the page. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote are currently available. Registration is required in order to use the Microsoft Live utilities, but registration is fast and free. For those users who may need access to the

primary components of Microsoft Office, but do not have it installed on their computers, this service from Live is a viable alternative.

I started by using Live's Word Web App to type this column. The "ribbon" or menu at the top of the browser window is reminiscent of the one in Word 2007, but does not have quite as many choices as the full version of Word 2007 on my computer. While all of the major functions are available, many of the enhancements and "bells and whistles" are not available on the web version. The top line menu choices are "File," "Home," "Insert," and "View." Above the ribbon are small icons to save and undo. Clicking on the "File" tab gives the user choices to open, save, share, close, properties, feedback, and privacy. As I am typing this, I am periodically saving the file in the default .docx (Word 2007) format to Microsoft's SkyDrive, which is Microsoft's server sometimes referred to as "in the cloud." Once saved to the SkyDrive, I can access this file from anywhere.

The default tab on the Word Web App is "Home" which displays the simplified Word 2007 ribbon (menu) with the ubiquitous copy, paste, fonts, formatting, spell check, and another feature which is not in the computer based version of Word, "Open in Word." This "Open in Word" will connect to the Word installed on the computer, and open the document in the computer based Word, but only if a compatible browser is being used. I am using Firefox as my browser as I type this, and clicking on the "Open in Word" icon on the ribbon displays a message that my browser is not compatible. Another anomaly (browser incompatibility) occurred when I tried

to copy some text by painting it, right clicking and going to "copy." A window opened that said, "Your browser does not allow access to the clipboard. Use the keyboard shortcuts for cut, copy, and paste instead." Using the keyboard commands CTRL-C allowed me to copy the text I wanted, and CTRL-V allowed me to paste it where I wanted it. This inability to work nicely with some browsers other than Microsoft's lowers my opinions of this product; while it is not a fatal defect, I do not like the idea of being compelled to use Internet Explorer in order to utilize all of the features of the Word Web App. The "Insert" tab on the ribbon allows the user to insert a table, picture, clip art or links. The "View" tab offers the user the choice of an "Editing View" and a "Reading View." One important item missing from the menu is a "Print" button; I could not find any easy way to print a document, other than using the browser print function.

While Word may be one of the most widely used applications, Excel and PowerPoint are also very widely used. The online version of Excel can be accessed by clicking on the Excel icon on the Live - Office web page. The Excel Web App looks much like a simplified version of the full computer based version of Excel, and uses the same interface and commands. By default, files are saved to the SkyDrive in the Excel 2007 .xlsx format. The first thing I noticed on the Excel Web App is that the formula bar (Fx) does not pull down to display the list of available formulae. I also found that the auto-fill functions where dates and cells could be auto-filled by clicking on the corner of a cell and dragging does not work, at least when used in Firefox. The ribbon

bar on the Excel Web App looks much like a simplified Excel 2007 menu bar, but lacks some of the choices available on the computer installed version. As with the other Microsoft Web Apps, the spreadsheet can be shared as desired. Also as with the Word App, the icon “Open in Excel” will generate an error. According to the online help, none of the Web Apps will open the computer’s Office if using Firefox and Office 2003 or Office 2007; Microsoft’s recommended fix is to install Office 2010. The online help also says that the 64-bit version of Internet Explorer is not supported, and that browsers other than Internet Explorer and Firefox are not supported at all. That means that it may be difficult or impossible for the many users of Chrome, Safari, Opera, and other browsers to utilize these otherwise useful Web Apps.

I do a lot of PowerPoint presentations, and I was especially interested to try the PowerPoint Web App. As with the other apps, it saves in the Office 2007 formats, in this case .pptx. The screen looks familiar, but much simplified from the full version of PowerPoint. One item obviously missing from the ribbon (menu) is the “save” button; that is because the PowerPoint Web App automatically saves the presentation. Another feature that is missing is the ability to right click on an image or text box in a slide to add animations or special effects. I easily inserted an image into a slide, and was given a choice of eight picture styles or frames, but could not animate or otherwise add the special effects that I sometimes use in the full version. Other than using some of the more sophisticated features of the full version of PowerPoint, the

Web App version is adequate for simple PowerPoint presentations.

I will admit that I do not use Microsoft’s OneNote, but it is available as a Web App. Looking much like a Word document, with the addition of a calendar line, when shared, it also shows the other authors and page versions that were accessed and modified. OneNote also allows for images, clipart, links, and tables to be inserted, which can provide a richer user experience. Like Word, the ribbon (menu) in OneNote allows the user to implement traditional formatting and fonts as desired. I could see where OneNote would be useful for taking notes and sharing content. As with PowerPoint, there is no “save” button, as OneNote documents are automatically saved.

If the user desires to import a document or image on his computer in the appropriate Web App, the user would click on the SkyDrive link at the top of the Office page, and then “Add Files.” The user can then drag and drop files from his computer into the “Add Files” browser window, or files can be uploaded to SkyDrive by clicking on “Select documents from your computer.” Documents and other files stored on SkyDrive can be downloaded individually in native format, or all of the files can be downloaded together as a single ZIP file from SkyDrive. I experimented with SkyDrive and the Web Apps and found that this may be a viable choice either as a primary or backup method of doing presentations or working on documents away from my home or office computer, providing there is good Internet access. Clicking on the SkyDrive “More” link allows the user to view a file’s properties, or delete it from SkyDrive.

One of the strengths of using web applications like these is the ability to work together or collaborate on projects. By clicking on FILE - SHARE others can be authorized to access the file. The share choices can be controlled with a slider that ranges from “Just me” to “Some friends,” “Friends,” “My friends and their friends,” and “Everyone (public).” Specific people can be added to those eligible to share by name or by e-mail address.

While not as feature rich as the full versions of Office, the free Web Apps versions at live.com do offer a viable alternative to those who do not have Office installed on their computers, or who need a portable version of those applications. Many users will find these Web Apps quite useful.

WEBSITE:

<<http://www.live.com>>. (Click on “Office”)

Ira Wilsker is an APCUG director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Program Director of Management Development at the Lamar Institute of Technology, Beaumont TX; and a radio and TV show host. Contact him at <iwilsker@apcug.net>.



Useful Resources By Mike Rudas

Mike Rudas, chairman of SIG-LINUX, has had a web site for some time with useful resources. Check it out:

* Articles at:

<<http://tinyurl.com/27s7mwe>>.

* Recommended sites for downloading useful software:

<<http://tinyurl.com/5qrsxx>>



Free Utilities to Uninstall Unwanted Software By Ira Wilsker

Recently, in one of the computer classes I was teaching, a student volunteered that he got rid of unwanted programs by simply deleting the files and directories using Windows Explorer (file manager). He asked if that was OK. I politely explained that the method that he used was not OK, because improperly deleting files can leave errors in the registry, damaged file associations, and a host of other problems. I showed him on my desktop computer that Windows has an integral function commonly called “Add or Remove Programs” that could do a credible job of properly deleting unwanted programs. I also showed him if he clicked on START - PROGRAMS and went to the menu for his now unwanted program, there may be an entry to uninstall the program, directly from the menu. Additionally, if he used his Windows Explorer file manager to look at the directory containing the unwanted program, there would sometimes be an executable file with the name “uninstall.exe” or “unwise.exe” in the program directory, which will start the proper uninstall process. While these methods are at least minimally adequate, and generally safe, they do tend to leave some now useless “garbage” on the hard drive and in the registry. After time, as more programs are installed and deleted, this buildup of obsolete and useless files and registry entries can amount to substantial wasted hard drive space, and degraded performance due to a bloated registry.

A cottage industry has developed where programmers have developed

software to more thoroughly uninstall unwanted software, better and more completely than Windows' integral Add or Remove program, and the uninstallers sometimes included with the now unwanted programs. Many of the commercial and freeware utilities that can perform computer maintenance and cleanup tasks now include some form of uninstaller, and these are generally pretty good. For those PC users who may like a freestanding utility that can effectively and completely uninstall an unwanted or obsolete program, there are two that I am currently using, both of which have proven themselves as capable utilities. Both of these utilities do not just delete the unwanted programs, but also scan the hard drive and registry for now useless files and entries, and allow the user to selectively and safely remove them. The two programs that I am currently using are the freeware version of Revo Uninstaller (version 1.88), and the recently updated freeware IObit Uninstaller (version 1.1).

The freeware version of Revo Uninstaller, available by download link at the bottom of the page at <http://www.revouninstaller.com/revo_uninstaller_free_download.html> is one of the most popular and highly rated uninstallers available. While not as feature rich as its commercial big brother, it does have the ability to totally remove any unwanted programs from the computer. The default display of Revo Uninstaller shows the icons of the programs installed on the computer. Clicking on the icon of the unwanted program opens a "Select an Uninstall Mode" window where the user has four choices. The first choice only executes the target program's own uninstaller, and does not do any additional scanning. While fast, this is

typically not a very complete removal of the unwanted software. The second selection, the one that I use almost universally, is the "Safe" mode, which first runs the unwanted program's own uninstaller, and then scans the registry and hard drive to find leftover items that are safe to delete. The "Moderate" and "Advanced" modes are slower as they perform more comprehensive scans, but sometimes find a few more items to delete. Once a mode is selected, Revo does as instructed, creates a restore point, and uninstalls the program, followed by a registry scan and hard drive scan. After the registry scan is completed, now obsolete entries are displayed in a bold font, with a checkbox to the left of the entry; it is generally safe to check the box adjacent to the bold entries, which will delete them from the registry. The user generally should not check any boxes that are not adjacent to a bold entry. After removing selected registry items, Revo scans the hard drive for now orphaned files and directories, which are displayed along with adjacent check boxes. The user can "select all" or choose which files to delete. Once Revo Uninstaller has completed its tasks, the unwanted program is no longer present anywhere on the computer. Revo Uninstaller has a well-earned reputation for effectiveness and safety, and is a most viable alternative to Microsoft's anemic Add or Remove Programs utility.

Always on the lookout for new products to try, I recently read some very positive reviews of IObit's recently released Uninstaller software, available as a free download from <<http://www.iobit.com/advanceduninstaller.html>>. The interface on IObit Uninstaller is clean, and displays all of the programs

installed on the computer. A checkbox on the left of each program is used to select the program to be removed. There are only two choices available under the “Uninstall” icon on the program toolbar, “Standard” and “Advanced.” The “Standard” selection only runs the unwanted program’s own uninstall function. The “Advanced” choice performs the more thorough uninstall, complete with registry and hard drive scans to locate and remove now obsolete entries. Before any files are removed, IObit creates a system restore point so the system can be quickly and easily recovered if an error is made during the uninstall process. One interesting feature on the left side of the IObit Uninstall window is the “Toolbars” icon, which displays the toolbars installed in the browsers. Many users have too many toolbars installed on their browsers, which robs the user of valuable desktop real estate. Many browser toolbars are redundant and offer no additional functionality, and some are actually security and privacy risks, or slow down the browser. By checking the box adjacent to the unwanted toolbars, this software will do a fast and credible job of removing the unwanted toolbars from the browser.

The IObit Uninstaller allows the user to “batch uninstall” where checking more than one box (selecting more than one program to uninstall) will uninstall several programs with a single click. Another interesting feature is that the program is run as downloaded, and requires no installation. In addition to having IObit Uninstaller on my hard drive, I now have a copy on the USB flash drive that I carry on my keychain, along with my security software.

Either or both of these programs would be worthwhile to have on any computer, and can assure the user that any unwanted programs are safely and properly deleted from the computer.

WEBSITES:

<http://www.revouninstaller.com/revouninstaller_free_download.html>.

<<http://www.iobit.com/advanceduninstaller.html>>.

Ira Wilsker is an APCUG director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Program Director of Management Development at the Lamar Institute of Technology, Beaumont TX; and a radio and TV show host. Contact him at <iwilsker@apcug.net>.



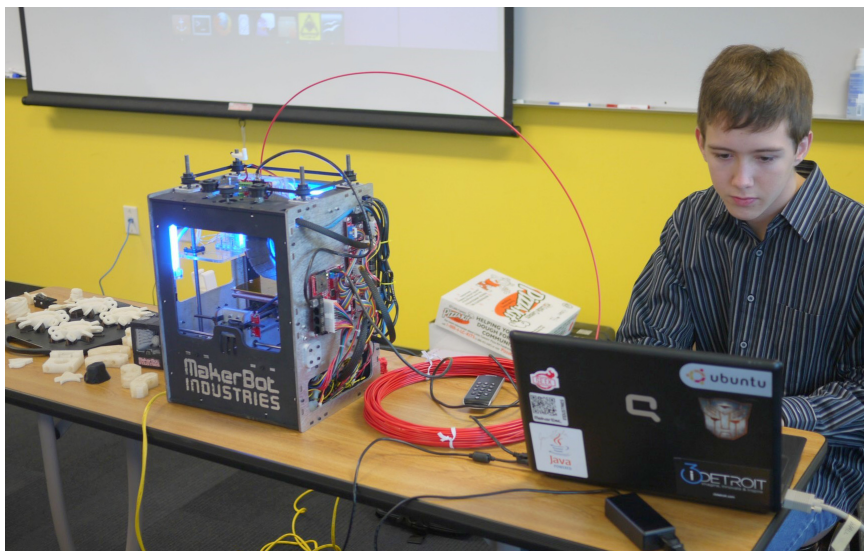
Second Life Meeting 2 in July By Warner Mach

In discussion with Don Singleton, we would like to schedule another APCUG meeting in Second Life. Accordingly, here are four proposed dates and times. If you have an avatar in Second Life and wish to attend the meeting at the APCUG office (“Plush Nonprofit Commons 146,18,26”) then please send me (<warnermach@gmail.com>) your first and second date choices by July 10. Proposed dates and times: 8 PM Eastern (savings time) on (pick) July 16, 17, 23, 24.

The last meeting was on April 24. The meeting went well, but there were some technical difficulties having everyone use voice communication. I would like to suggest that we switch to typed communication at this next meeting – or at least start the meeting this way.

[Continued on Page21](#)

SEMCO Meeting Pictures



(Above): Don Ebben, of Michigan RepRap User Group, demonstrates his 3D printer. (Below): Richard Jackson, Gary DeNise, and Don Ebben discuss the 3D printer.



SEMCO Meeting Pictures



(Above): SIG-IBM Intermediate Chairman Paul DeAthos shows an inexpensive electronic metering device. (Below): SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow discusses (Powerpoint) how to win Afghan War.





BOARD MEETING
6/13/2010
Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present

Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow, SIG-Advanced Chairman Franz Breidenich, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Member-at-Large Bob Clyne. Also present were past president Gary DeNise, member Brian Brodsky, and guest Ben Zottolo. The board meeting was called to order at 12:07 p.m.

Old Business

Bette Gay reported that the current treasury amount equaled a total of \$9,822.84 with \$5,081.65 in the checking account and \$4,741.19 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership currently is 78. It is time for Al Gruber to renew his membership.

A discussion took place regarding the current status of the room rental from ESD. Bette reported that SEMCO has not been invoiced for several months. Bob Clyne offered to send an e-mail to ESD advising them that we had not received invoices for the months in question.

New Business

Bob Clyne moved to appoint Brian Brodsky, Bob Clyne, and Ronald Green as additional members of the Internet Committee. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

A Planning Meeting will be held at Shield's Pizza on Telegraph at 11:00 on June 26th. Warner Mach will give a brief description of its agenda at the General Meeting.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn. Richard Jackson seconded the motion. The motion was carried. The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.



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- * Gain access to members willing to provide help in response to a phone call or e-mail
- * Receive monthly newsletter with informative articles.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-IBM
Tom Callow

July 11: 1:45 p.m.: Virtual Machines Plus Data Destruction: Donald Tillman of “Safe Data” will discuss (1) The basics of Virtual Machines. (2) Windows 7 Integration with VM. (3) Running Windows on a Mac using VM. (4) Also, hard disk destruction methods to guarantee data security.



SIG-IBM
INTERMEDIATE
Paul DeAthos

July 11: 3:45 p.m.: A Computer Potpourri: Tom Callow will discuss and demonstrate several different programs and topics, such as TidyRead, a browser add-in that actually makes it easy to read the text of Web pages, KeyLemon, a program that secures your webcam equipped computer with face recognition, and The Password Meter, a Web page that assesses the strength of your passwords.



SIG-ADVANCED
Franz Breidenich

July 26 (4th Mon.): 6:45 p.m.: Note: Meeting location has changed! Please check the web site: <<http://www.semco.org>> or the answering device: (248-398-7560) for updated information.



SIG-LINUX
Michael Rudas

July 27 (4th Tues): 6:45 p.m.: Note: Meeting location has changed! Now meeting at the Madison Hts. Fire Station; 31313 Brush; Madison Heights. Enter through south door main entrance. Please check the web site: <<http://www.semco.org>> or the answering device: (248-398-7560) for updated information.

August 2010 DATABUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., July 18, 11:59 p.m.
 Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor [address on Page 2](#); e-mail address: <warnermach@gmail.com>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Contact Editor ([address Page 2](#)).

Warner Machwarnermach@gmail.com

(to post monthly computer group info)

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

July 18; (No Meeting) Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: [<compinfo@greatlakes.net>](mailto:compinfo@greatlakes.net). Web: [<http://www.bwcomp.org>](http://www.bwcomp.org). Annual Family Picnic at the Raisanen's - 1 p.m.

Focus: Hope IT User Group

Aug. 7, 9:30-11:30 a.m., 1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info [<http://www.fhitug.org>](http://www.fhitug.org). Topic: "Lights, Cameras, Webcasts!"

HUG (Holly User Group)

Sept. 18, 9:00 a.m.; Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Holly, MI. 48442. No summer meetings.

MacGroup- Detroit

July 18, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, [<terry@macgroup.org>](mailto:terry@macgroup.org) or 248-569-4933. [<http://www.macgroup.org>](http://www.macgroup.org). Topic: "Mac Utilities I Can't Live Without." SIGS: 2:00 p.m.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

(No Meeting), (Usually 3rd Saturday); See web site for meeting time and location. [<http://www.mactechnics.org>](http://www.mactechnics.org). JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

July 10, 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>](http://www.mdlug.org). Topic: TBA.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

July 13, 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>](http://www.mug.org). Topic: TBA.

Michigan Apple Computer User Group

July 8, 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>](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://tinyurl.com/royaloakcc>](http://tinyurl.com/royaloakcc).

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. (1st 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 summer meetings.

Continued from Page 15

The general theme of the meeting is, as before, to cover issues such as: (1) Discoveries in Second Life that are of interest. (2) The ways that APCUG members can best take advantage of Second Life. (3) General computer-club related issues of publicity, speakers, meeting attendance, events and, especially, do you have ideas that have worked with your group(?).

See, also, the Facebook “album” that feature some of the sites posted in the APCUG office. This is a cross-pollination of the two technologies. See: <<http://tinyurl.com/3x716fs>>. You don’t have to be on Facebook. Click on individual pictures to expand them and see related text.



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.....	mbdader@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	BerLis@comcast.net
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm	jvanders@comcast.net
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**

July 11–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-IBM, 1:45 p.m., Virtual Machines Plus Data Destruction: Donald Tillman of “Safe Data” will discuss (1) The basics of Virtual Machines. (2) Windows 7 Integration with VM. (3) Running Windows on a Mac using VM. (4) Also, hard disk destruction methods to guarantee data security.

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

SIG-IBM Intermediate, 3:45 p.m., A Computer Potpourri: Tom Callow will discuss and demonstrate several different programs and topics, such as TidyRead, a browser add-in that actually makes it easy to read the text of Web pages, KeyLemon, a program that secures your webcam equipped computer with face recognition, and The Password Meter, a Web page that assesses the strength of your passwords.

SIG-ADVANCED, July 26, 2010 (4th MONDAY), 6:45 p.m., Note: Meeting location has changed! Please check the web site: <<http://www.semco.org>> or the answering device: (248-398-7560) for updated information TOPIC: Wide-Ranging Discussion Of Computers & Computing.

SIG-LINUX, July 27, 2010 (4th Tuesday), 6:45 p.m., Note: Meeting location has changed! Now meeting at the Madison Hts. Fire Station; 31313 Brush; Madison Heights. Enter through south door main entrance. Please check the web site: <<http://www.semco.org>> or the answering device: (248-398-7560) for updated information. Topic: General discussion.

August 8–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)

July 11

August 8

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