



Official Newsletter  
SouthEastern Michigan  
Computer Organization, Inc.

# DATA BUS

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## **More Free Utilities from Google By Ira Wilsker**

Sometime ago, I wrote about several free utilities available from Google. Google has continued to update and enhance its offerings in its attempt to maintain its dominant position on the Internet by offering dozens of free utilities for PCs, MACs, and Linux computers. The comprehensive listing of Google offerings is online at <<http://www.google.com/intl/en/options>>.

Many people like to chat while online, and while old classics like AIM, Yahoo Messenger, IRC, and ICQ were partially responsible for the explosive growth of Internet chat, Google has joined the fray with Google Talk. Available as a free download from <<http://www.google.com/talk>>, this utility provides both text chat and voice chat with others who also have Google Talk. As with the other popular chat utilities, Google Talk is an instant message utility for Windows PCs only that allows users to type-chat in real time, view the status of “friends,” and directly transfer files between friends. Google Talk also offers voice chat which is basically a free PC to PC long distance call to anywhere in the world, provided that both parties have the free Google Talk application. Google Talk also integrates with Google’s e-mail service, Gmail, allowing for voice chat while in Gmail. For those with Gmail accounts, Google offers a video and voice plug-in for Gmail which allows Windows and MAC users to chat within Gmail directly from a web browser. In addition to Gmail, this video and

voice plug-in works with iGoogle, and orkut.

The browser wars have been heating up with the almost concurrent releases of Internet Explorer 9 and Firefox 4. At about the same time, Google released version 11 of its open source Chrome browser, which has been rapidly increasing in popularity, due to its speed, security, simplicity, and the availability of many apps, extensions, and themes for Chrome. Chrome can be downloaded from Google at <<http://www.google.com/chrome>>, and will mutually coexist with other installed browsers (such as IE and Firefox) without interference. Chrome is used for Windows PCs running on Windows 7, Vista, or XP. Several published comparisons have rated Chrome as the fastest browser to load, and among the fastest to display web pages. Many users like the clean and uncluttered browser window when opened, but the simple interface should not fool users, as Chrome is a very powerful full featured browser. Chrome is also compatible with almost all widely used web apps, making it the browser of choice for millions of users.

Google is best known as the ubiquitous search engine of choice for many users, with the trade name often used in common vernacular as a verb, as in “Google it.” While it is one of the premier Internet search engines, Google also offers a free desktop search utility, that allows a user to search his own computer as easily as he can search the Internet. Google Desktop <<http://desktop.google.com>> is available for MAC, Linux, and Windows (Windows 7, Vista, and XP), and offers the users the ability to find and directly launch applications, as well as locate any data

or other files on the computer. There is also an option to install “Google Gadgets” on the desktop, allowing the user to select any of hundreds of gadgets to display news, weather, sports, games, stock quotes, clocks, calendars, and other gadgets directly on the desktop, without the need to open a browser or other utility.

One of my personal favorite Google utilities is the free version of Google Earth <<http://www.google.com/earth>>. Google Earth integrates Google maps with other enhancements, and lets the user virtually fly anywhere on the surface of the earth, to the depths of the oceans, to outer space. Interactive imagery can be displayed as satellite imagery, maps, terrain, buildings and land features in 3D, Street View, and several other ways. In addition to relatively current maps and images, Google Earth can also display historical images and maps, such as ancient Rome. Google Earth can also integrate with several models of GPS, allowing tracks and other information to be displayed or shared with others. There are many third party applications that integrate with Google Earth, including real time hurricane tracking and predictions, real time flight tracking, business intelligence, voter demographics, and countless other uses.

Google recently released an intriguing new utility, Panoramio <<http://www.panoramio.com>> which can integrate personally uploaded photographs with Google Maps or Google Earth. Panoramio provides an interactive and searchable map that combines the standard map images with the millions of photos that have been uploaded, allowing anyone to view much more than a typical map or

satellite image can display. For example, zooming in on downtown Beaumont using Panoramio displayed dozens of small icons representing photographs taken at those locations; clicking on the icons displays the photos. I noticed a photo icon at a familiar location in downtown Beaumont, clicked on it, and displayed a small photo of the Examiner building! Clicking directly on the small photo opened another window showing a larger image along with a map for reference, and thumbnail images of other photos taken nearby. Many of these photos can be clicked again to display the original format of the photo, often a large image.

Many users like the idea of a single download that can install multiple free utilities, and Google obliges by providing its Google Pack for Windows 7 <<http://pack.google.com>>. This utility allows the user to choose which programs he wants from a checklist, and download a single installer that will install the selected programs on the computer. Included in Google Pack are a variety of utilities from Google including Chrome, Gmail, Calendar, Apps, Desktop, Google Earth, Picasa (image editor), Talk, and toolbars for Internet Explorer and Firefox. Several security utilities included in Google pack include avast! Free Antivirus, Spyware Doctor with Anti-Virus, and Immundet Protect Antivirus. Miscellaneous utilities included in the pack are Adobe Reader, Skype phone service, RealPlayer, and the WebM for IE9 video player.

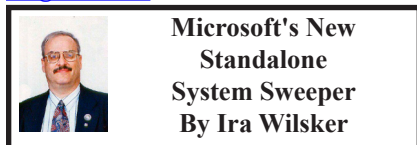
Google has developed a reputation for good quality software and utilities, most of which are available for free. Any or all of the utilities above may contribute to the user’s enjoyment of

the Internet by allowing him to do things that he may have been unaware of. Thanks Google!

#### WEBSITES:

<http://www.google.com/talk>>.  
<http://www.google.com/chrome>>.  
<http://desktop.google.com>>.  
<http://www.google.com/earth>>.  
<http://www.panoramio.com>>.  
<http://pack.google.com>>.  
<http://www.google.com/intl/en/options>>.

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Sometimes, despite our best efforts, it seems impossible to remove the spyware and other malware from our computers. Despite their efficacy, there are just some times that the traditional and well proven malware killers will not be able to neutralize the malware on our computers. While some of the so-called “experts” simply give up and reformat the hard drive resulting in the loss of any programs and files on the computer (unless properly backed up), this is not an appropriate step in trying to restore the computer.

There are a variety of utilities, both free and commercial, that can create a bootable CD or USB drive that contains the necessary files to boot the computer, and then detect and remove any malware from the infected computer. The reason for booting from a special CD or bootable USB flash drive rather than

Windows is that the substitute bootable media does not load the full version of Windows, but instead loads a substitute for Windows. Because this clean substitute for Windows is not loading any drivers or other files from the infected computer (including a possibly infected Windows itself), there are no malware files loaded into memory (RAM) that interfere with the cleaning process, or otherwise protect themselves from detection and destruction. A variety of security software companies, including Kaspersky, Avira, F-Secure, Panda, BitDefender, DrWeb, AVG, and Spybot Search & Destroy have published free utilities that can create bootable media that will run and remove malware, without the need to load Windows. When I am called to clean badly infected systems, I routinely create at least a pair of updated bootable CDs from a variety of the above companies, such that if I encounter a difficult to clean computer, one or both of the bootable CDs will likely be able to detect and remove the offending malware. Just recently Microsoft has joined this august group of software publishers that have released a free utility to create a bootable CD or flash drive that can detect and remove malware from a badly infected computer. This new utility is the Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper Beta (Beta means that it is functional, but not a final release).

Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper Beta <<http://connect.microsoft.com/systemsweeper>>, like the other utilities mentioned above, can be used to boot an infected computer and perform a malware scan that can identify and remove malware and rootkits. This is especially useful when the malware on a computer prevents the installed security

software from running, as many of the contemporary malware titles explicitly destroy the legitimate security software installed on the computer. Many of the current crop of malware infections also make it impossible to run already installed detection and removal utilities, as well as prohibit web access to online services that may be capable of detecting and removing the controlling malware. Some malware also prevents the infected computer from booting, making it nearly impossible to run any of the traditional scanning utilities. For this reason, it is sometimes necessary to be able to boot the computer into some operating system other than the full Windows, and run a scan utility. This is explicitly what Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper Beta (and the other bootable scan utilities) is intended to do.

Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper Beta is available in both 32- and 64-bit versions, and the proper version for the compromised system should be downloaded to another uninfected computer from <<http://connect.microsoft.com/systemsweeper>>. Using that clean computer (not the infected machine!), The user needs a blank CD, DVD, or USB flash drive (with at least 250 Megs of free space) to create the bootable media. According to Microsoft, “ The architecture of Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper Beta does not have to be the same as the Windows operating system of the computer used to create the bootable media. It does need to be the same architecture (32-bit or the 64-bit) as the Windows operating system of the computer infected with a virus or malware.”

The initial download is a small installer (576 Kb for the 64-bit version),

which is used to start the media creation process. This small installer file is run, and a series of windows appear that walk the user through the media creation process. The first window informs the user that he needs some appropriate media and Internet access to create the bootable media, followed by the EULA (End User License Agreement). The third screen gives the user the option to use a blank CD, DVD, USB flash drive, or to create an ISO image that can later be burned to a CD using an ISO file burner to create the bootable CD. I chose to use a blank CD, but any of the appropriate options would be adequate choices. Since virtually all Windows XP SP3, Vista, and Windows 7 computers can be booted with a CD and run the System Sweeper, regardless of the operating system that was on the computer that was used to create the bootable media, I prefer the bootable CD media. Many computers, especially older ones, cannot easily boot from a USB flash drive, which is why I create a CD. Just be sure to create the media with the correct 32- or 64-bit version; you need the setup file that matches the infected computer’s architecture, not the architecture of the clean computer. If the infected computer is 64-bit, you will need the 64-bit installer, regardless of the version on the clean computer. Likewise, if the infected computer is 32-bit, use the 32-bit installer on the clean computer to create 32-bit bootable media.

The actual file that was downloaded from Microsoft by the small installer was 206 MB, which took a few minutes to download. Once downloaded, it only took a few more minutes to create a bootable CD containing the Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper Beta, as

well as its latest malware signature database. While there are some methods that can be used to update the malware signatures, I prefer to create a fresh CD with the latest signatures prior to each use.

After the bootable CD, DVD, or USB drive is created on the clean machine, the media is used to boot the infected computer. Once booted, the interface looks very similar to the established Microsoft Security Essentials, and uses a similar scan engine to detect and remove malware. I would suggest that the user selects a full scan, and allows the software to neutralize whatever it finds. Once the scan and clean function has been completed, remove the bootable media, and reboot the computer into Windows. If the computer still will not function properly, as it appears that it is still infected after running the System Sweeper, one of the other bootable scan utilities listed above may be necessary to remove the infection. If it does boot successfully, I choose to perform a redundant scan with a third party utility such as Malwarebytes <<http://malwarebytes.org>> or SuperAntispyware <<http://superantispyware.com>>. Since much of the malware in circulation destroys the installed security software, it may be appropriate to reinstall the real-time security software of your choice.

The Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper Beta is only intended to boot and clean a badly infected system, and provides no permanent protection, which is why it should not be used as a substitute for a good security suite. Since blank CDs are cheap, it would be a worthwhile precaution to frequently create a bootable CD using Microsoft Standalone System Sweeper or one of

the other bootable utilities, label it with the date, and keep it on hand just in case it is needed.

#### WEBSITES:

<<http://connect.microsoft.com/systemsweeper>>.

<<https://connect.microsoft.com/systemsweeper/content/content.aspx?ContentID=24894>>.

<<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/ee460911.aspx>>.

<<http://www.techsupportalert.com/create-bootable-rescue-cd.htm>>.

<<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/probably-best-free-security-list-world.htm>>.

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#### Of Interest Links (OIL) By Fred Acerri

**Physicists Store Antimatter Atoms for 1,000 Seconds — And Still Counting**  
<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/06/110605132421.htm>>.

**For Stressed Bees, the Glass Is Half Empty**

<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/06/110602122248.htm>>.

**Not That Secure After All: Cryptography in a Connected World**

<<http://www.scientificamerican.com/blog/post.cfm?id=not-that-secure-after-all-cryptogra-2011-06-06>>.

**Quake Experts to Be Tried for Manslaughter**

<<http://www.sciencemag>



[org/content/332/6034/1135.summary?sid=5b377988-01fc-4c1d-bdf5-25081242a939](http://org/content/332/6034/1135.summary?sid=5b377988-01fc-4c1d-bdf5-25081242a939)>.

## **Antiatoms, All Out of Energy and Ready for Work**

<<http://news.sciencemag.org/sciencenow/2011/06/antiatoms-all-out-of-energy-and-.html>>.



### **Synchronize Your Bookmarks Between Computers By Sandy Berger**

In today's world, more and more of us are accessing the Internet from several different devices. We may use a computer at work, a tablet PC at home, and a smart phone or a laptop computer when we are on the go. When we bookmark a website at the home, we might like to bring up that bookmarked webpage when we are at the office or when we visit a relative. If we are using the default settings of an Internet browser, we cannot do this. However there is a way to synchronize bookmarks between devices.

Just about every web browser today offers some way to synchronize bookmarks either through an add-in, a toolbar or a setting. Most of these solutions, however, only work if you use the same web browser on each device. For instance, if you use a Firefox add-in called Sync, you can only access your bookmarks from a device that has Firefox installed. So if you use Firefox at home, but Firefox doesn't work on your mobile device or your mother doesn't happen to have Firefox installed

on her computer, you can't easily access your bookmarks while at those places. There are several stand-alone programs that solve this problem by allowing you to synchronize bookmarks between browsers, but I have a better answer.

The best and easiest solution for synchronizing bookmarks and favorites is a free service from Google called Google Bookmarks. I have used Google Bookmarks for several years. This service keeps a copy of all your bookmarks securely in the cloud, so you can access them from any Internet-connected computer or tablet and most smart phones.

To use Google Bookmarks, you simply surf over to <<http://www.google.com/bookmarks>>. If you already have a Google account from using Gmail, Google Calendar or another Google service, you can just sign in and add Bookmarks to your account. If you don't have a Google account, you can sign up for the free Google account and activate Google Bookmarks right from this page.

When you add the Google Bookmarks to your Google Account you will be asked if you want to copy your current bookmarks or favorites from your web browser. You will want to do this, unless your bookmarks or favorites have become so unruly that you would like to start with a clean slate.

Once you have the Google Bookmarks set up, the easiest ways to access your new bookmarks is to install the Google Toolbar, which is a free download available at <<http://www.google.com/toolbar>>. You should install this toolbar on the computer that you use most often in the web browser that you usually use. For instance, if you use Internet Explore on your home



computer, installing the Google Toolbar there will give you quick access to your Google Bookmarks as well as some additional features.

If you are using another computer that has the Google Toolbar installed, you can simply log into your Google account to access your bookmarks on that computer. On computers and mobile devices that don't have the Google Toolbar, you can log into your Google account and access your bookmarks at [www.google.com/bookmarks](http://www.google.com/bookmarks). Google also has a small icon that you can drag to the links bar of any browser to access your Google bookmarks. It is available on the same page. Just click "Add Bookmark" at your Google Bookmarks page and you will see a blue box marked "Google Bookmark" that can be added to your web browser toolbar.

The only difficult part about this whole process is remembering to use the Google toolbar or icon to create your bookmarks rather than using your browser bookmark icon. Once you get in the habit of doing that, you are good to go.

Using the Google Bookmarks offers two additional perks. First, their bookmark page is extremely well organized. If you have ever tried to delete, rename, or rearrange your bookmarks or favorites in Internet Explorer, Firefox, or any other web browser, you know that this can be a trying task. Google Bookmarks, however, makes it easy. Just surf over to the Google Bookmarks page. As long as you are logged in to Google, you will see all of your bookmarks and find that it is easy to work with them.

The second perk is that Google has recently introduced a feature called "Lists" to their bookmarks. This feature

lets you create a list of websites that revolve around one topic. It is a great way to research a topic, plan a trip, or organize an event. You can share your lists with selected people if you need to collaborate on any project. Google will also give you suggestions that pertain to the items in your list and sometimes these are very useful. So if you decide to try Google Bookmarks, you may also want to try the list feature.

If you use multiple devices, Google Bookmarks will keep your bookmarks in sync. Although this may only be a small step in keeping your world organized, being in sync can give you a very good feeling.

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**Registry First Aid  
(A Review)  
By Herb Goldstein**

## **Solving the Registry Cleaning Dilemma**

Nothing much happens in Windows without control by that mysterious architecture known as the Registry. It is a humongous database repository of instructions, commands and framework for the software, hardware and just about every other kind of ware that functions in Windows. You can also think of it as the Windows brain, and fooling with it is about as welcome as brain surgery self-taught.

Unfortunately and as unwelcome as it may be, the Registry does require some basic manipulation by users from time to time. Add or remove software or change the locations of its components, make routine changes in Windows,

and a whole host of other functions in everyday computer usage result in changes in the Registry. In time it can easily become bogged down with errors that can dramatically hinder the normal or optimal functioning of your computer. It's little wonder why keeping the registry clean and error free is so important, yet so avoided. It's even less wonder why the average computer user either shuns necessary Registry housekeeping altogether or winds up employing tools that do considerably more harm than good.

A clean, error-free Registry is vital in keeping your computer working properly, but finding and fixing Registry errors indeed poses a dilemma. There is no shortage of utilities that promise to make your computer function like new by taking out your Registry garbage. Unfortunately, you are most often better off living with an error-laden Registry than one whose key functions have been impaired by incompetent fixers.

With all these caveats in mind, I spent considerable effort, investigation and experimentation years ago to find the Registry cleaning utility that would do an honest, safe and effective job. Through several versions of Windows and most recently with Windows 7, I have been using Registry First Aid (RFA). It is a well-known, popular, easy to use and remarkably competent Registry utility that will find, fix, and prevent Registry errors and malfunctions safely and effectively. It is the only one I trust to do the job! Here's what it will do:

1. RFA will search the Registry for errors. Your first search will undoubtedly come up with an amazing number of errors. It will present a color coded list of them. Those in green can be safely eliminated

or fixed. For each error, you will be provided with a reason for its problem and an indication of what is needed to either delete or fix it. If, for example, a software reference is not valid because it is sitting in the wrong place, RFA will discover where it rightfully belongs and offers to put it there. If no fix is possible, it offers to delete it.

Those errors that require caution in fixing are listed in yellow, along with reasons and recommendations. The choice will be yours. Those listed in red are also explained and high caution warned.

In any event, each and every error will be explained, recommendation made, and the choice for action will be up to you. No changes are automatic. You are in complete control!

2. Registry backup and restore. Before making any changes, you might want to backup your current Registry configuration. RFA stores the backup and you can at any later time restore the Registry to exactly the way it was before you modified it. Great safety feature!

3. Registry search. If you need to find anything in the Registry, RFA will do a lightning fast keyword search for you. A great feature in finding and eliminating references to software you have gotten rid of.

4. Registry management. Set up the Registry in your own parameters to function according to your preferences.

5. Defragment and compress the Registry.

While most Registry utilities offer to make your computer work faster and better by cleaning the Registry, they offer no information as to what they or doing or why. It's a blind faith and trust scenario. On the other hand, RFA bends

over backwards in every step along the way to keep you safe and informed.

RFA is the recipient of numerous awards as the safest and most effective Registry cleaner available. They are well deserved. It has long ago solved the Registry cleaning dilemma for me. It is compatible with all current versions of Windows including XP, Vista and Windows 7. RFA is published by and available from Rose City Software <<http://rosecitysoftware.com>> for \$27.95.

*Herb Goldstein is editor of the Monitor, newsletter of Sarasota (Florida) PCUG,. Web: <<http://www.spcug.org>>. E-mail: <[pcugedit \(at\) verizon.net](mailto:pcugedit(at)verizon.net)>.*

## July Events By Warner Mach

### APCUG Conference

See the Board Meeting Notes for details concerning the APCUG Conference in Independence, Ohio on July 15 through July 17.

### Maker Faire:

The 2011 Maker Faire will be held at The Henry Ford on July 30 and 31 (Saturday and Sunday). The web site is at <<http://makerfaire.com/detroit/2011/>>. The DATA BASE editor took the following pictures at last year's Faire::  
album: <<http://tinyurl.com/3xkx7by>>.  
video: <<http://tinyurl.com/2elnprq>>.

## Ages in Years and Months (Excel)

By Sharon Parq Associates

Many times in early childhood education, a child's age in Years.Months format is needed for reporting, admitting, and evaluation. Basically, this format shows the number of elapsed years and months since birth, separated by a period.

There are several ways you can go about getting the desired age. The formula you choose to do the work depends, quite literally, on your preference in formulas.

Assuming that you have the birth date in cell A1, you might think you could use some math on the date to determine the proper information. For instance, you might think that you could use this formula:

=NOW() - A1

This produces a value that is the difference between the two dates, but if you then apply a custom format ("yy.mm") to the result, you'll find out that it doesn't give the sought-after Years.Months. You get something close; the years are right, but the months vary from 1 to 12 when they should vary from 0 to 11. (Somebody can be 12 years and 0 months old, but it is not proper to say 12 years and 12 months old.)

This means that you need to start casting about for a formulaic approach. A simple formula would be the following:

=YEAR(NOW())-YEAR(A1) & "." & MONTH(NOW())-MONTH(A1)

There are many variations on the above, but the problem is that they all only look at the month of today compared to the month of the birthdate; they don't take the day of the month into account. What is that important? Because the number

of elapsed months since birth is dependent on how the day of the birth month compares to the day of the present month, and the formula doesn't allow for that distinction.

So, you might consider a more complex formula that actually tries to calculate elapsed years and months, such as the following one:

```
=TEXT(INT((NOW() - A1)/365.25),"##0")&"."&TEXT(INT(MOD(NOW  
- A1,365.25)/31),"00")
```

This comes much closer to what is needed, but it is still possible to be off by a day or two right around the time of the month when the birth day is approached. Closer still is a formula which uses the YEARFRAC function:

```
=ROUNDDOWN(YEARFRAC(A1,TODAY()),0)&"."&ROUNDDOWN((YEA  
RFRAC(A1,TODAY())-ROUNDDOWN(YEARFRAC(A1,TODAY()),0))*12,0)
```

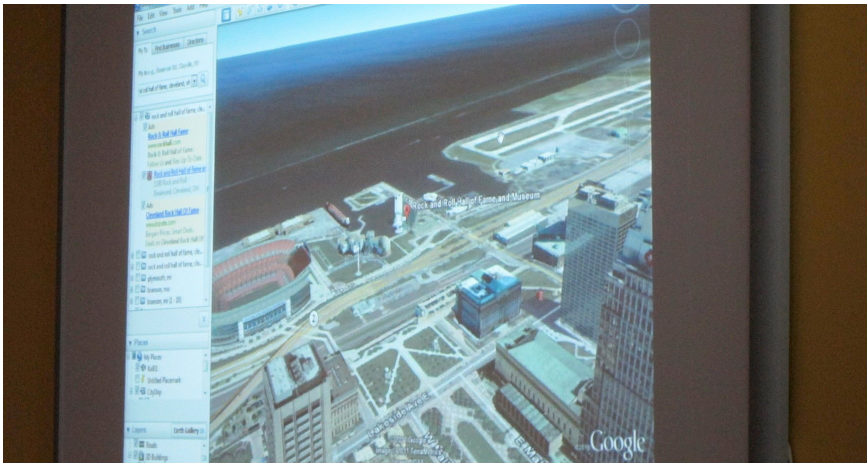
The best (and simplest) formulaic approach, however, is this one:

```
=DATEDIF(A1,NOW(),"y") & "." & DATEDIF(A1,NOW(),"ym")
```

The formula relies on the DATEDIF function, which determines the difference between two dates. The value returned by the function depends on the third parameter passed to the function. In this case, the first invocation of DATEDIF returns the number of elapsed years and the second returns the number of elapsed months. It provides the most accurate results of any of the formulas discussed so far.

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## *Google Earth Image*



Google Earth image shown during presentation by Doug Willett of Luna Tech Designs.



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for Free  
By Ira Wilsker**

If you have downloaded many documents from the Internet, you have likely come across many that are in PDF format. Portable Document Format (PDF) has been around for almost 20 years, and has become the de facto standard document format that embeds text, fonts, and graphics into the document, such that it will appear the same regardless of the operating system on the computer. Originally a proprietary format developed by Adobe that had required an expensive utility, Adobe Acrobat, in order to create PDF files, PDF became an open standard in 2008. While Acrobat was an expensive commercial program used to create PDF files, Adobe Reader has been a free staple included on almost all new computers over the past several years to display documents created with Adobe Acrobat. In the past few years, many free PDF readers have become available that claim to offer some advantages over the original Adobe Reader; my personal choice for a PDF reader is Foxit, with over 100 million copies downloaded, and available for free from <http://www.foxitsoftware.com/products/reader>.

Until a few years ago, Adobe Acrobat had a virtual monopoly on the ability to create PDF files; over the past several years, several other free and commercial PDF writers have come on the market, and PDF creation is now integrally included in many of the newer office suites, without the need of a separate PDF writer. Recently, Gizmo's <http://TechSupportAlert.com> updated its listings and evaluations of free PDF

writing software, and corroborated my choices of PDF writers that I have been using for the past few years.

For several years, going back to my obsolescent XP computer, I had happily used a free PDF creator, CutePDF Writer <http://cutepdf.com>. When I first used my Windows 7-64 computer, I had some issues with CutePDF on my Windows 7-64 computer (now resolved with the newer versions), so I tried several competing free PDF writers. As with almost all other PDF creators or writers, CutePDF Writer is installed and used like a printer driver. In order to create a PDF with almost all PDF writers, simply click on PRINT from the program being used to create or display a document, and select the PDF utility instead of a physical printer. The PDF creating software will function somewhat like a printer, but instead of putting the output on paper, it will create the output as a PDF file. The output thus created is "WYSIWYG" (What You See Is What You Get), with the new PDF document being identical in appearance to the one created or viewed. Almost all PDF writers allow the user to save the PDF with a default file name (often the same as the original document but with a PDF extension), or to manually enter a file name. In addition to being able to print (save) almost all documents as a PDF, I also use my chosen PDF writer to save web pages. From my browser (usually Firefox) I click on FILE - PRINT and select one of my PDF printers; within seconds I have an exact copy of the web page saved as a PDF file. I do precisely this whenever I order anything online, saving both a copy of the webpage displaying the item, and a copy of my itemized receipt. I also frequently save as PDF files (print to PDF) news stories,

e-mails, and other documents that I want to preserve. Basically, anything that can be printed, can also be saved in PDF format precisely preserving color, format, font, and other information from the page.

On all of my computers, I am now predominately using the Bullzip Free PDF Printer <<http://bullzip.com>> to create PDF files. Bullzip Free PDF Printer is currently rated by [Gizmo's TechSupportAlert.com](http://Gizmo's TechSupportAlert.com) as the top rated free PDF writer. It can run on any 32- or 64-bit version of Windows from Windows 2000 to Windows 7, including XP and Vista. Bullzip offers as user selected options password protection and encryption of PDF files, quality settings, watermarks, and the ability to create documents in formats other than PDF (BMP, JPEG, PCX, PDF, PNG, and TIFF). For most users, there is no need to change any of the settings as the default settings work fine.

Now that CutePDF Writer has been revised to better support Windows 7-64 (it always worked flawlessly on XP and Vista), it has become my secondary PDF creator. One simple feature that I like about CutePDF Writer <<http://cutepdf.com>> is that when a PDF file is created, the traditional Windows "Save As" window opens, allowing the user to easily select the directory (or use the default) where the PDF file should be saved. CutePDF Writer, as well as many other PDF writers, require that some recent version of a PS2PDF converter, such as Ghostscript, be installed on the computer. The necessary Ghostscript file (free) is linked from the download page where the PDF writers are downloaded. "GNU Ghostscript is an open-source interpreter for the PostScript language and the PDF file

format. It is distributed under the GNU General Public License."

Being somewhat of a software junkie, I have several PDF writers installed on my computer. Another free PDF writer that I periodically use is PDFCreator, available from <<http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator>>. PDFCreator is listed as "Unrestricted Freeware" and runs on Windows 98, 2000, XP, Vista. and Windows 7 (32-bit and 64-bit). While simple to use, and lacking a lot of options (that most people would never use), PDFCreator could be a good choice for those who want a simple PDF writer. Installation is easy as no separate Ghostscript converter is necessary. Another good PDF writer that I have installed on my computer is NitroPDF Reader which includes both a PDF writer and reader. According to its website <<http://www.nitroreader.com>>, NitroPDF Reader can "Create PDF files, comment and review, save PDF forms, extract text and images, type text directly onto the page, and more." NitroPDF Reader also allows the user to type on an otherwise locked PDF form, entering text as if filling out a form, negating the necessity of printing the form on paper, and then filling the blanks by hand. Since NitroPDF Reader is both a reader and a writer, and includes many other powerful and useful features, it may be an excellent choice for most users.

With these free PDF utilities, all of which can create PDF files as simple as clicking on the print button, there is almost no reason to spend a lot of money purchasing a commercial PDF creator. All of these creators or writers work just fine when creating PDF files from almost any type of document.



## WEBSITES:

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-pdf-writer.htm>.

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

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

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

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PDF>.

<http://www.foxitsoftware.com/products/reader>.

*Ira Wilsker is a 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@sbcglobal.net](mailto:iwilsker@sbcglobal.net)>.*



### **Understanding System Restore** **By Vinny La Bash**

Windows 7 has a new and improved version of System Restore that is far superior to the lame utility that came with XP. Setting a restore point was often painfully slow, and it rarely worked as it should have. Windows 7 System Restore easily helps you bring back your computer's system files to an earlier point in time. It's a way to undo system changes to your computer without affecting your personal files, such as e-mail, documents, or photos.

Sometimes, the installation of a program or a driver can cause an unexpected change to your computer or cause Windows to behave unpredictably. Usually, uninstalling the program or driver corrects the problem. If uninstalling does not fix the problem, you can try restoring your computer's system to an earlier date when everything worked correctly.

System Restore uses a feature called System Protection to regularly create and save restore points on your computer. These restore points contain information about registry settings and other system information that Windows uses. You can also create restore points manually.

System Restore is not intended for backing up personal files, so it cannot help you recover a photograph or video that has been deleted or damaged. You should regularly back up your personal files and important data using a backup program. Windows 7 has an excellent built-in backup utility.

Windows 7 uses the Shadow Copy feature, introduced in Vista. It's vastly superior to the process in XP and earlier versions of Windows. The old way used a simple file filter and copied files around the system which was clumsy compared to the Shadow Copy method. Today, Windows creates a snapshot of your drive which can later be used to restore your system should catastrophe occur.

Additional capabilities of Shadow copy include taking snapshots of files even when currently in use. Microsoft has incorporated this feature into Previous Versions which allows restoring a previous version of an application. Unfortunately, this power is available only in Windows Professional or Ultimate.

The easiest way to bring up System Restore is to type System in the Start menu search box and select it from the resulting list. Another way is to select the Recovery option from Control Panel, or you can simply type rstrui in the search box.

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## ***SEMCO Meeting Pictures***



(Above): Doug Willett, President of Luna Tech Designs, talks about Google Earth and 3D images. (Below) Tom Callow discusses digitization of slides and negatives.



## *SEMCO Meeting Pictures*



(Above): Members talk to Doug Willett, President of Luna Tech Designs.  
(Below) Members take a break for refreshments.





**BOARD MEETING**  
**6/12/2011**  
**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 Members at Large Bob Clyne and Brian Brodsky. The board meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m.

**Old Business**

Bette Gay reported that the current treasury amount equaled a total of \$9,747.34 with \$4,999.19 in the checking account and \$4,748.15 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership currently is 76. It is time for Jerry Comptois to renew his membership.

Bob Clyne reported that the registration for the APCUG Conference in Independence, Ohio on July 15 through July 17 is now \$65, but will be \$75 at the door. You may register on-line at <<http://cleveland.apcug.org/>>. At our last check, the hotel still had rooms available at the discount rate, but reservations must be made with the hotel. Phone 216-524-0700 and ask for "in-house reservations."

Mike Bader and Bob Clyne were able to access the User Group Locator Site update facility. Inputting information was limited as it is still in Beta Phase.

**New Business**

Tom Callow suggested that the January ballot for Board Members list the attendance records of those running for office. A discussion followed. No action was taken.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn at 12:18. Warner Mach seconded the motion and it was carried.

**System Restore**

[Continued from Page 15](#)

Whatever method you choose will bring up the System Restore dialog box that gives you some helpful information. Select the Next button to get a list of restore points. Most of the time you will be using the most recent restore point to get your system working again.

Focus your attention on the Description list. This can give you an important indication of what went wrong. Did your problem begin after installing a Critical Update, a backup operation, or a new freeware program that you couldn't resist?

When you apply System Restore the system creates another restore point so you can undo the change if your problem isn't fixed. You can't undo System Restore however, if you use it in safe mode. But you can run System Restore again and select a different restore point.

Restore points are saved until the disk space Windows allocates to the utility is used up. Then the oldest restore points are deleted as new ones are needed. The easiest way to delete all previous restore points is to turn System Restore off, and then turn it back on again. Don't worry about running out of space.

Many computer problems can be traced to sloppy programs written by people who don't know enough about proper programming techniques to get their utilities published by reliable vendors. It's surprising how many

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## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



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

**July 10: 1:45 p.m. Electronic Health Records:** Ms. Gia Feistel, a Doctoral Student at Central Michigan University, will discuss Electronic Health Records (EHRs). The US Department of Human Services is currently working on programs to promote the storage of health related information electronically with the object of, by 2015, having ways for medical professionals and patients to securely share the patient's EHRs. Ms. Feistel, who is working on a doctoral dissertation in the field of EHRs, will discuss what is currently happening in the area of EHRs. She also is working on an online survey which will permit members to voluntarily express their views on EHRs.



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

**July 12 (Tues): 5:30 p.m.:** At the Madison Heights Library located at 240 West 13 Mile Rd. one block West of John R. The parking lot entrance is off Brush St. The lot and entrance to the library is located in the back of the library. Topic: General discussion.



**SIG-IBM**  
**INTERMEDIATE**  
**Warner Mach**

**July 10: 3:45 p.m. Skype Revisited:** SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate Skype, the Voice Over IP service that lets you make free computer-to-computer "telephone calls" to anyone with a computer on the Internet as well as call anyone with a telephone. He will discuss some of the improvements to Skype since the last time it was presented to SEMCO, in January of 2007, as well as briefly consider how Microsoft's acquisition of Skype may affect it in the future.



**SIG-LINUX**  
**Michael Rudas**  
**Mike Bader**



**July 26 (Tues): 6:45 p.m.:** At Motor City Free Geek, 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. The building is on the Northwest corner of Wanda and Jarvis - The first traffic light south of 9 Mile, on Wanda. Topic: Pinguy OS: an Ubuntu derivative for everyone. Mike Rudas will talk about why this is one of the best Linux distros yet and provide installation and customization tips. For the Linux novice and expert. .

### **August 2011 DATABUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)**

**SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., July 17, 11:59 p.m.** Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor [address on Page 2](mailto:address on Page 2); e-mail address: [warnermach@gmail.com](mailto:warnermach@gmail.com). PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.

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

## Warner Mach

[warnermach@gmail.com](mailto:warnermach@gmail.com)

(to post monthly computer group info)

## CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS OTHER GROUPS

### **COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)**

Sept. 7, 7 p.m., (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday) Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen  
E-mail info: <[compinfo@greatlakes.net](mailto:compinfo@greatlakes.net)>. Web: <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>.  
Watch web site for summer picnic or cruise.

### **Focus: Hope IT User Group**

1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info <<http://www.fhitug.org>>. See web site for details. Pre-registration required.

### **HUG (Holly User Group)**

July 9, 9 a.m.-noon (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday) Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Holly, MI. 48442. Ron McCauley 810-629-9683. Topic: TBA.

### **MacGroup-Detroit**

July 17, 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>>. Topic: "Our Favorite iOS Apps." SIGs: 2:00 PM.

### **MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)**

(July - no meet), (3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday); See web site for meeting time and location. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300.

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

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

### **Motor City Free Geek**

Every Saturday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. <<http://www.motorcityfreegeek.net>>. E-mail: <[MotorCityFreeGeek@gmail.com](mailto:MotorCityFreeGeek@gmail.com)>. Recycling & Open Source.

### **MUG (Michigan User Group)**

July 12, 6:00 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday): Engineering Society of Detroit. 20700 Civic Center Drive, Suite 450, Southfield, MI 48076 . <<http://www.mug.org>>. Topic: TBA.

### **Oak Park Computer Club**

Every Fri., 10:15 a.m. at Oak Park Library, 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>>.

### **SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)**

Sept. 6, 7:30 p.m.(1<sup>st</sup> Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <[Don@VanSyckel.net](mailto:Don@VanSyckel.net)>, 586-731-9232; Web: <<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>>. Topic: "Data Management in the Terabyte Age. File management, Partitions, and Backups for Modern PCs" Presented by Michael Rudas.

## Continued from Page 18

problems are generated by faulty uninstall tools. There are many sound freeware offerings out in cyberspace, but don't use them unless they come tested and approved by a trusted source like Smart Computing.

*Vinny La Bash, is a regular Contributing Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, Inc., FL Article from March 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor. Web: <<http://www.spcug.org>>. E-mail:<[Vlabash\(at\)Comcast.net](mailto:Vlabash(at)Comcast.net)>*

**Pictures: Recent SEMCO Meetings:** <<http://www.tinyurl.com/y8cm99e>>

**Video: Recent SEMCO Meeting:** <<http://www.tinyurl.com/363vnbd>>

**Podcasts: Podcasts of SEMCO meetings can be found at:** <<http://www.semco.org/podcasts.htm>>.



### 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.....	<a href="mailto:mdbader@flash.net">mdbader@flash.net</a>
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770, 9am–5pm.....	<a href="mailto:tcallow@monaghanpc.com">tcallow@monaghanpc.com</a>
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm.....	<a href="mailto:clyne@mich.com">clyne@mich.com</a>
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime	
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves.....	<a href="mailto:scook48227@ameritech.net">scook48227@ameritech.net</a>
Lis, Bernie—248-669-0101, 10am-8pm.....	<a href="mailto:BerLLis@comcast.net">BerLLis@comcast.net</a>
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720,12–8pm.....	<a href="mailto:jvanders@comcast.net">jvanders@comcast.net</a>
Yuhasz, Steve.....	<a href="mailto:Help@yuhasz.org">Help@yuhasz.org</a>



**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN  
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

## **SEMCO CALENDAR**

**Engineering Society of Detroit  
20700 Civic Center Dr., Suite 450, 4th Floor  
Southfield, MI. 48076  
42°29'7" N by 83°14'29" W**

### **July 10–SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)**

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

**SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.**

### **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)**

**SIG-IBM, 1:45 p.m., 1:45 p.m. Electronic Health Records:** Ms. Gia Feistel, a Doctoral Student at Central Michigan University, will discuss Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and what is happening in this area. The US Department of Human Services is currently working on programs to promote the storage of health information electronically with the object of, by 2015, having ways for medical professionals and patients to securely share the patients EHRs. Ms. Feistel is also working on an online survey which will permit members to voluntarily express their views on EHRs.

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

**SIG-IBM Intermediate, 3:45 p.m., Skype Revisited:** SIG-IBM Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate Skype, the Voice Over IP service that lets you make free computer-to-computer “telephone calls” to anyone with a computer on the Internet as well as call anyone with a telephone. He will discuss some of the improvements to Skype in recent years and Microsoft’s acquisition of Skype.

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**SIG-LINUX, July 26 (Tues): 6:45 p.m.:** At Motor City Free Geek, 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. Pinguy OS: an Ubuntu derivative for everyone. Mike Rudas will talk about why this is one of the best Linux distros yet and provide installation and customization tips. For the Linux novice and expert. <<http://www.pinguyos.com>>

### **August 14–SEMCO Sunday**

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

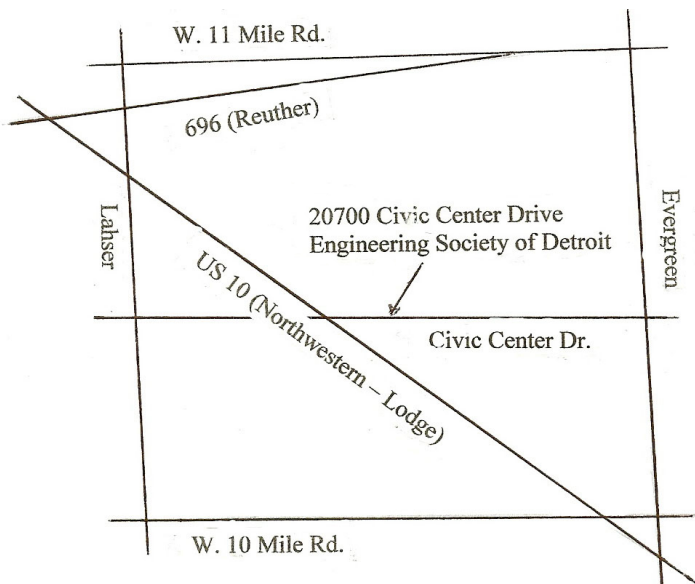
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**SEMCO Meetings at Engineering Society of Detroit**  
**20700 Civic Center Drive, Suite 450, 4th Floor**  
**Southfield MI 48076.**

**42°29'7" N by 83°14'29" W**



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 10**

**August 14**

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Helping People for the 21st Century**