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**Free Utility to Test
and Monitor
Your Hard Drive
By Ira Wilsker**

Many times before, in this column, and regularly on my radio show, I have repeated the three most important words in computing, “Backup!, Backup!, Backup!” Hopefully by now, most of you are maintaining current backup copies of all of your critical data, and an image of your hard drive, for the inevitable time that your primary hard drive ceases to function. I have published numerous reviews on good quality free and commercial software and online services that can be used to backup your hard drive. Large capacity USB external hard drives are again becoming readily available at reasonable prices, with 1 TB name-brand USB external hard drives now appearing in the \$70 range (I just bought one at that price), 1.5 TB and 2 TB external drives now becoming available in the \$100 range (or less). If you listen to radio or TV, or read certain computer blogs, you are possibly inundated with ads and commercials for online backup services.

There are now no good reasons for not having a current backup of at least all of your critical data files, including photos, videos, documents, financial records, and other valuable data. Despite my frequent appeals for everyone to backup their data, I am totally cognizant that some users are blissfully unconcerned about certain hard drive failure, do not have contemporary backups, and are hoping for some type of warning or indication that catastrophic hard drive failure is imminent, and then they will perform a backup. This is a dangerous attitude

that almost always results in the loss of important and valuable data.

On my PCs, I have installed and used a variety of free and commercial utilities generically known as “hard drive health monitors” which obviously monitor the health, temperature (hard drives can easily overheat and get a fatal fever), performance, condition, and other drive characteristics. While not absolutely capable of predicting the precise time of hard drive demise, they often can provide the user with powerful indications that hard drive problems are occurring, and that the health and condition of the drive are deteriorating. In the parlance of “dog years,” one “hard drive year” is about 15 human years (my calculation), with a statistical increase of hard drive failure curving sharply upward after about four or five years of use (my anecdotal experience).

One of the top rated and free (but somewhat controversial) hard drive monitoring utilities is CrystalDiskInfo, version 4.3.0a, released March 11, 2012. CrystalDiskInfo is a 1.4 MB download, and can monitor 18 critical conditions, including temperature (in Fahrenheit or Celsius), read errors, spin rate, platter speed, and other important characteristics. By monitoring these conditions, and by using the 25 integral graphing features, potential causes of failure may be indicated before they become catastrophic, allowing the user to take corrective action (such as if the drive is overheating), or perform a backup if conditions start to deteriorate. This utility is heavily customizable, not just by being able to select about three dozen languages, but also by selecting desired functions, such as temperature display (C or F), memory

resident or user loaded, startup delay time, health status settings, and other advanced functions. This version of CrystalDiskInfo can even be instructed to send an “Alert e-mail” to any desired e-mail address if some major problem is encountered or detected.

While CrystalDiskInfo is freeware, there is a degree of controversy on how the author funds his intellectual property. CrystalDiskInfo is bundled with a piece of software called “OpenCandy” which is not generally considered as spyware or malware, but when CrystalDiskInfo is installed, OpenCandy will scan the computer for existing software, and then make recommendations for additional software to purchase or install. This is not some clandestine or otherwise hidden process, but openly displayed before the software is downloaded, with the indication that the installer includes “OpenCandy (Ads).” While installing the CrystalDiskInfo, a user license agreement appears which includes the license agreement for both the main program, and Open Candy. The OpenCandy license agreement says, “This installer uses the OpenCandy network to recommend other software you may find valuable during the installation of this software. OpenCandy collects NON-personally identifiable information about this installation and the recommendation process. Collection of this information ONLY occurs during this installation and the recommendation process ...” For those who do not want to run OpenCandy during the CrystalDiskInfo installation process, there is a very simple method that will prevent OpenCandy from executing. Rather than simply allowing the CrystalDiskInfo installation to run when downloaded, or by clicking on the

.exe file after downloading, click on the START - RUN and then browse to the downloaded file. Click on the filename, but then add /NOCANDY after the .exe and then run the install; this will prevent OpenCandy from running. When I installed CrystalDiskInfo, I followed this process, and my START - RUN box showed “CrystalDiskInfo4_3_0a-en.exe /NOCANDY” which installed properly, without running OpenCandy, despite what the license agreement indicated.

The latest version of CrystalDiskInfo will run on almost all Windows PCs and servers, including those running Windows 7, Server 2008, Vista, Server 2003, XP, 2000, x86/WoW64, and i18n. It works fine on both 32- and 64-bit computers. CrystalDiskInfo does not run on Windows 95, 98, Me, or NT4, but an older portable version of CrystalDiskInfo, version 2.7.5, will run on the antiquated Windows NT 4. CrystalDiskInfo works only on IDE (Parallel ATA) and Serial ATA (SATA) disks connected to an internal ATA or SATA controller. It also works with some USB external hard drives, but does not work with RAID disks and IDE and Serial ATA disks connected to an external drive controller. For those who carry portable utilities on a USB flash drive, there is also a free portable edition of the latest build of CrystalDiskInfo; I have used this portable version to diagnose hard drives running on computers that appeared to have problems, and it worked very well at indicating the condition and health of the target hard drives.

I use CrystalDiskInfo to continuously monitor the hard drives on my computers, and can recommend it (without the OpenCandy) for almost all PC and Microsoft server users. If information

is power, then CrystalDiskInfo provides potential information that may empower the user to be better prepared to deal with pending hard drive problems or potential catastrophic failure.

WEBSITES:

<<http://crystalmark.info/?lang=en>>.

<<http://www.nodesoft.com/diskbench>>.

<<http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-hd-health-monitoring-and-diagnostic-programs.htm>>.

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**Free Hard Drive Cleaners
Remove Junk Files,
Free Up Space
By Ira Wilsker**

It never amazes me anymore when I try and help people having computer problems, often performance related, and find that their hard drives are so badly cluttered with useless garbage that hard drive performance is seriously degraded. While there are many potential causes of poor computer performance, one of the easiest problems to detect and remedy is hard drive clutter.

Our computers are constantly reading and writing data, often creating massive amounts of temporary files that serve no useful purpose after a very short period of time, or after the program is closed. Browsers use cache files as temporary storage, where web pages, images, and other web-based information is temporarily stored. After programs are installed, there are often sizeable temporary files left on the hard drive

that serve absolutely no purpose. The frequent Windows updates downloaded from Microsoft, are usually very large files, often writing huge temporary files on the hard drive, causing littering of our precious hard drive space. It is not at all uncommon for users to literally have several gigabytes of useless garbage occupying space on a device purchased by the user, which wastes time and money, as well as possibly degrading computer performance.

One of the most common and most widely used types of utilities available are programs that will remove the useless files from a hard drive. By far, the single most popular hard drive cleaner is Piriform's CCleaner <www.piriform.com/ccleaner>, which has had over 100 million copies downloaded, and has versions for both PCs and Macs, as well as a portable version. The same fully featured program is available as a "free for personal use" desktop and portable version (no support), an identical "Professional" version (\$25 with priority technical support), a "Business Edition" (\$35 with business grade technical support), and a "Network Professional Edition" with pricing based on the number of workstations.

The user can selectively choose which items to clean from the hard drive, but at a minimum (for those who want to be especially safe and not concerned with possibly deleting useful files) the user should select to clean browser temporary Internet files (cache), recycle bin, temporary system files, memory dumps, and old prefetch data; other items can be selected from both the Windows and Applications tabs. CCleaner will perform a fast scan of the hard drive, disclosing whatever

files are selected for removal. If the user is satisfied with deleting the selected files, clicking the “Run Cleaner” button will complete the cleaning process. As a general rule, I personally choose not to delete Internet cookies (most are harmless or necessary, and I use security software to detect and remove risky cookies), browsing history, passwords, download history, and other possibly useful Internet content.

CCleaner also has other useful features, listed as icons on the left margin, and includes a decent registry cleaner, a series of system tools including a startup manager, uninstall utility, system restore, and a drive wiper which can securely overwrite sensitive data making it difficult to recover.

While CCleaner is an extremely popular drive cleaning utility, there are hundreds of other programs whose useless and temporary files are not cleaned by CCleaner; a free third-party utility, CCEnhancer <singularlabs.com/software/ccenhancer>, works as a plug-in to CCleaner, identifies the software installed on the computer, and if available, adds those software products to the list to be cleaned by CCleaner.

The same publisher that produces CCEnhancer also produces a complete, free, cleaning utility, System Ninja <singularlabs.com/software/system-ninja>, which is a direct competitor to CCleaner, having many of the same functions and features as its larger competitor. In my experience, while it is not quite as fast as CCleaner in scanning the hard drive, the System Ninja “Junk Scanner” performs a more thorough scan for useless files, without the need for any plugins (though two are available for specialized purposes). System Ninja

also includes a “System Tools” feature which incorporates a startup manager, process manager (shows what is running, and can stop any unwanted programs), and a “FileAnalyzer” which can display detailed information on any selected file. The “PC Analysis” function provides the user with very detailed information on the computer’s hardware and operating system. System Ninja bills itself as, “100% Freeware, 100% Safe; System Ninja is provided absolutely free of charge, with no strings attached. It is also 100% free from Virus’s, Malware, Spyware and all that other unwanted junk. We do not package any toolbars with System Ninja, nor do we use it to display ads or popups.”

A third cleaning utility which also has a large and loyal following is Wise Disk Cleaner - Free Edition <wisecleaner.com/wisediskcleanerfree.html>. Wise Disk Cleaner - Free touts that it is “... the only 5-star disk cleaner rated by CNET editor.” Unlike some of the other freeware drive cleaners that offer no or minimal technical support “Wise Disk Cleaner Free provides lifetime free update service and Unlimited Free technical support. In addition, it also provides more and more language packs for worldwide users.” Wise Disk Cleaner is one of the easiest cleaners to use, offering a simple interface. The first option is listed under the “Common Cleaner” tab, which will detect and remove the most common forms of junk files from a hard drive, including obsolete and useless Windows system files, old Internet files, useless multimedia files, and the debris left by Windows components and other program files. Other tabbed options include an “Advanced Cleaner” with additional cleaning options, and

a “Slimming System” feature which cleans the operating system of junk files.

About the only negative characteristic of the Free version of Wise Disk Cleaner is that it is advertiser supported, not an evil enterprise, but something that the user should be aware of; the authors need to be compensated for their work, and the free version does it with advertising and related activities. According to the download website Major Geeks <majorgeeks.com/Wise_Disk_Cleaner_d5436.html>. “This program is advertising supported and may offer to install third party programs that are not required for the program to run. These may include a toolbar, changing your homepage, default search engine or other third party programs. Please watch the installation carefully to opt out.” Unless you want any of these advertising services and activities, be sure to uncheck the appropriate boxes during the installation process when these items are offered.

I have all three of these hard drive cleaners installed on my computers, and rotate through them periodically to ensure that my hard drive is clean of useless clutter. For those who like to defragment their hard drives, removing these useless files prior to defragging will speed up the defrag process, leaving much more usable space on the hard drive. If you ever get errors that you are low on virtual memory (hard drive used as additional memory) or notice degraded performance, try cleaning your hard drive with one of these three free utilities as a first step.

WEBSITES:

<<http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner/>>.
<<http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner/download/portable>>.

<<http://singularlabs.com/software/system-ninja/>>.

<<http://singularlabs.com/software/ccenhancer/>>.

<<http://wisecleaner.com/wisediskcleanerfree.html>>.

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Euphoric DigiDaub Revision 7 By David Pletts

I’m really into textures. They are all around us; some quite formal and repetitive, bordering on patterns, others, especially natural ones, very random. Some textures are fractal in nature, but that’s a whole subject in itself.

I also like abstract art — well, some of it, at least.

I am also rather keen on randomness. Computers are good at randomness, better, I believe, than humans, especially as programming languages include sophisticated algorithms to produce random numbers.

These interests in combination with an interest in computer programming, especially programming graphics, have resulted in the creation of DigiDaub. I started down the route to DigiDaub by programming textures only at first, using the Euphoria programming language, of which more, later. That was in 1997 when some of us were still using good old DOS. Later, I did something similar in Windows 3.1, using Visual Basic 4, but eventually returned to Euphoria for further development of the idea. I

decided that it might be fun to include shapes as well as textures, include plenty of randomness, and create a program to generate abstract art. Thus a predecessor of DigiDaub, known as AmbiDaub was born. Eventually I hit on the name DigiDaub, and DigiDaub was born.

I have to admit that not all algorithms included in DigiDaub are my own; some have been adapted from code in books and on the Internet.

So how does DigiDaub work?

First of all there are a number of Canvases to choose from. All 'painting' is, naturally, restricted to the Canvas. The choice of colours then needs to be considered. When DigiDaub first starts it creates a sequence of blended colours, a palette. Methods of generating palettes are provided, some predefined palettes are also provided, and a single key press will generate a new random palette. Palettes can be saved and reloaded.

Menus provide access to a number of design features including textures, regular textures, geometric and organic shapes plus effects. Almost every one of these features includes a random element, either of colour, shape, position or a combination of these elements. The ultimate generative feature is the ability of DigiDaub to create a stream of images, each building on the previous one, which are entirely random. Design elements are randomly picked from most of the elements available via the menus. As each element or effect is added, DigiDaub automatically saves the image on disk, The selection of design elements is restricted as appropriate when rendering an energy field, an organic or a geometric image which are available from the Auto

menu. A roundel feature is also available which generates circular patterns.

A new feature in DigiDaub 7 is the addition of randomly chosen text in randomly chosen styles using the fonts installed on your computer. A file of text material is provided, but you can load your own selection of words or phrases from your own text file.

You can copy an image from the canvas, then include it in a new canvas in various ways; blended at three strengths, reveal parts of the copied image or have parts of the image show through.

You can import your own images for further processing, by adding design features to it or applying effects. You can also blend or overlay an imported image with the current canvas so as add a photo, for example, or other ready-made image to the canvas. This allows you to incorporate a touch of realism in your abstract image. Naturally any images you make can be saved either as .bmp files or one of three levels of compression in a .jpg file.

Textures and effects are not intended to replace software dedicated to those particular activities but are included to enhance the abstract nature of images produced by DigiDaub.

DigiDaub7 can be downloaded from <<http://www.box.com/s/k69b2qgfhnd8hr2hjlt0q>>.

[Editor's note: See "Example DD7 image with blended image" at end of article].

Euphoria

I am a programmer of only moderate ability. I started programming when many computers came with a version of the BASIC programming language provided, or in-built. Eventually I moved to programming with Turbo Pascal with

which I was very comfortable, until Object Orientated Programming (OOP) was introduced. Although I understand OOP - just - I find that it doesn't suit me as it seems to add a layer of complexity which I can do without. Regrettably it seems that today the main-stream programming languages include it. At about the same time MS Windows became the almost de facto PC operating system which just added another layer of complication for a programmer of my limited ability.

Then I discovered the Euphoria programming language, fundamentally a DOS and LINUX based language. Over time many programming libraries have been made available to the Euphoria programmer including an excellent MS Windows dynamic link library (DLL) which provides easy access to most MS Windows features. The RapidEuphoria archive contains very many example programs, routines and libraries which are freely available. In fact Euphoria itself is also free to use.

I soon found Euphoria greatly to my liking. It has all the usual programming characteristics such as variables, looping methods, if...then...else constructions, expressions, relational, logical and arithmetical operations, procedures and functions. Variables have to be declared as either an atom or a sequence, with a special version of an atom — an integer. These are all considered objects. An object can be any of these variable types and can be tested to see which type of variable it is. The sequence is a special type of what would be considered an array in other languages. It's size does not have to be declared and can vary between just one item to a huge number of items. The size can also be increased or decreased on the fly. A sequence can

consist of another sequence or an atom/integer, or a mixture of both. Strings are simply stored as a sequence (remember that characters are actually represented in computers as numbers.)

I make good use of sequences in DigiDaub, especially when it comes to building a palette of colours. The palette is stored in a sequence as a list of numbers. Colours can be added way beyond a useful quantity but reduced to just a single colour very easily with some very simple programming. Sequences are also used to gather coordinates for drawing polygons and recording the DigiDaub composites. A number of operations on sequences are included in Euphoria, making the sequence almost infinitely flexible. As the information provided with Euphoria says:

“By basing Euphoria on this one, simple, general, recursive data structure, a tremendous amount of the complexity normally found in programming languages has been avoided. The arrays, structures, unions, arrays of records, multidimensional arrays, etc. of other languages can all be easily represented in Euphoria with sequences. So can higher-level structures such as lists, stacks, queues, trees etc.”

A basic programmer's editor is provided with Euphoria, but I prefer to use an alternative, downloaded from the Euphoria Archive.

Euphoria programs can be easily converted to executable files (.exe).

I use version 3.1.1. A version 4 is available, but I am not conversant with it, and not too happy with what I have seen so far.

Here is an example of the famous “Hello World” program in Euphoria for Windows: *[Editor's note: See the*

example of “Hello World” at the end of the article]

Euphoria is extremely well documented, much easier to use than recent modern programs, is well supported and has a large user-base with an archive full of generous helpings of examples and utilities. I don't know if there is anything you couldn't program in Euphoria. You may have guessed by now that I'm really keen on Euphoria,

but I have no other connection with Euphoria except as a happy user.

Euphoria can be found at <<http://www.rapideuphoria.com>>,

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Euphoria DigiDaub - Item 1. *[Editor's note: See, also, images on page 15]*

Example DD7 image with blended image:



Euphoria DigiDaub - Item 2.

-- This example opens a window, and places the text
-- "Hello World!" in it.

```
without warning  
include win32lib.ew
```

```
-- Create a window  
createForm(  
    "My First Message", -- Window title  
    "Hello World!"      -- Put some text in it  
)
```

```
include w32Start.ew
```

Euphoria DigiDaub - Item 3.

Example 1 shows how it looks:





Of Interest Links (OIL) Fred Acerri

Camera Uses Femtosecond Laser to See Around Corners

<<http://tinyurl.com/7e99jyf>>.

Proposed Thorium Neutron-Based Clock Would be Accurate for Billions of Years

<<http://tinyurl.com/87guxkp>>.

THE “TWILIGHT ZONE” OF TRAFFIC COSTS LIVES AT STOPLIGHT INTERSECTIONS

<<http://tinyurl.com/6soal98>>

Spotting ancient sites, from space

<<http://tinyurl.com/8754j9m>>.

Streaming Media By John Somers

“Streaming” is listening to music, watching a TV program or movie as it is being delivered to you over the Internet. The technology is very difficult (say geek intensive) but it works and well for many of us and is an alternative to cable or satellite delivery of the signals. Several years ago Bill Gates said famously or infamously, “The Internet, who needs it!” And, more recently, Steve Jobs said, “We are in the post PC era.” More and more people use the Internet and communicate over smart phones and tablets and do not use computers as we know them. Smart phones and tablets are indeed computers but without a large monitor and a keyboard.

Streaming of music began in the mid to late 90’s as personal computers became more powerful and the networks connecting them became capable of supporting faster data rates. As these

trends continued, it became possible to stream TV programs and eventually movies. This is different from buying or renting a TV program or movie which is downloaded to your computer for you to watch at your convenience. The driving force is us—we do not want to be tethered to the radio or TV stations schedule or have to go to a movie theatre or to a store to buy a DVD. We want to watch what we want when we want it. Time shifting has become more sophisticated compared to the days of the VHS or Beta (remember them?) Netflix recommends 5 Mb/s or more for the best audio and video experience.

First, the sources. (And I will write only about common and legal methods/ sources of content, not about illegal/ pirated sources of content—mostly or completely off-shore now and clearly violating copyright.)

All the websites listed in this article are .com’s unless another domain is listed. (Example: Pandora.com)

MUSIC: [Pandora](#), [Spotify](#), [8tracks](#), [Deezer](#), [fizey](#), [Grooveshark](#), [Last.fm](#), [Mflow](#), [MOG](#), [Pandora](#), [Qriocity](#), [Rhapsody](#), [Slacker](#), [Thumbplay](#), [we7](#), [WiMP](#) and [Zune](#) are among the streaming music sources. This list is probably not complete as things change practically daily. Pandora and Rhapsody are among the best known. Pandora is free but you get ads. There is a paid version (\$3.50/ month) without ads. You get to choose your artist or genre or composer or song and they deliver that or similar material to you. It is also available on many automobiles and on tablets and smart phones as well as computers. For details of how each of these services work and if you need to download a player, and whether they are free or pay I refer you to their websites. Which, if any, you

choose, is a very personal choice: what works for you. Your computer will understand the format as all send MP3's and other common music formats. Only Microsoft uses Windows Media Audio files for music but Zune (Microsoft's service) streams in MP3, AAC, MP4, mp4, mov, and WMA formats.

TV Programs and Movies: some commercial, some not. [Zune](#), [Netflix](#), [Atom.com](#), [blip.tv](#), [Break.com](#), [Citytv.com.co](#), [DaCast](#), [EngageMedia](#), [Flickr](#), [iFilm](#), [imeem](#), [Metacafe](#), [MoboVivo](#), [Multiply](#), [MyVideo](#), [Openfilm](#), [Phanfare](#), [Qik](#), [Revver](#), [RuTube](#), [ScienceStage](#), [sevenload](#), [showmedo](#), [Tudou](#), [Twango](#), [U-verse](#), [Veoh](#), [Yahoo Video](#), [Youku](#), and [YouTube](#) are among sources for streaming video on-line.

I want to emphasize the commercial ones with commercial TV programs and movies and those most used: [Netflix](#), [Hulu](#), and [HuluPlus](#), and [Amazon](#). You can also get TV in Win7 with Media Center set for TV. Some networks are increasingly moving you to their site for the TV programs (CBS on Hulu for example). Disney-ABC, NBC and Fox own Hulu. Netflix is an independent company which began renting DVD's by mail and more recently began streaming. You may be aware of the upset when they tried to separate the DVD service and the streaming and charge more for streaming.

Hulu free gives you the latest 5 episodes of your favorite TV programs. For \$7.99 monthly (HuluPlus) you get the full season and sometimes more than one season. Movies are the current ones and many older ones (Some services claim 10,000.) You get to choose. It's not the manager of your local Cineplex choosing. Once released on DVD they become generally available if the service

has negotiated rights to the flick or to the studio's films. There clearly is conflict between Netflix, Hulu and Amazon and other streaming services and the studios. The movie companies are terrified about what happened to the music industry and only grudgingly cooperate.

How do you get the signal from your router/wireless access point to your TV and what equipment do you need? The simplest way is by registering your device with the service using your Xbox, Playstation 3, Wii, Blu-ray DVD player, smart phone, or other Internet/wireless enabled device. Yes, you can use a computer and the HDMI output on your computer to the HDMI input on your TV. You can also use an Ethernet cable network or route the signal through a power line network. If you want to see other Internet material on your big screen TV (using it as a giant monitor), you need a "smart" TV. Remember the signals on the Internet are different from those on your cable/satellite/or over the air TV station, and a "brain" is needed for the conversion automatically. Some Smart TV's are wireless enabled, and Sony and Samsung make wireless adapters for their TV's. I presume other manufacturers do so also.

Amazon now has two forms of video access: Amazon Instant Videos and (Amazon) Prime Instant Video. The former provides rental or purchase of videos which may be watched by streaming or downloaded to your computer and watched later. Prime Instant Video provides unlimited streaming of thousands of movies and TV shows without commercials if you are a Prime (\$79/yr) member. Not all videos in the Amazon Instant Video store are in the Prime instant video catalog. Videos in the Prime Instant

Video catalog can only be watched by streaming and are not available for downloading. There is a great deal of information on the Amazon site. Start on the upper left side of the home page where it says “Instant Video” and on the following page on the right side below “Start Your one Month Free Trial” is “Help and FAQ’s.” Click there and on the following page in the middle in blue is a link “Amazon Instant Video” and then on the next page in the middle is “Watching Videos” which gives several choices depending on whether you will be using a computer or an Internet connected device. When you (tired yet?) go to your choice, you will get details of connection methods and possibilities.

The easiest way to connect is the HDMI cable from computer to TV and there are adapters to convert the business end of the HDMI to composite cables (3 cables, Red and white audio and yellow video) if your set requires those connectors.

Roku, a streaming device, available for about \$50 from roku.com has comprehensive connection directions. The Roku XD/S has HDMI and component output for high fidelity video on new and older televisions.

[Nintendo](http://nintendo.com) has just announced that Hulu and HuluPlus can now be streamed on the Wii (they previously just had Netflix) but you will need to download an “app” from their website.

[Redbox](http://redbox.com) and [Verizon](http://verizon.com) have announced they will start a streaming service, no details yet.

I will mention [iTunes](http://itunes.com) since everyone knows them. They stream radio stations, podcasts, and iTunes University (lectures from many U’s; there is a huge list on their site) but not TV programs or movies. Those are rentals. If you rent

a TV program or movie from them, it is downloaded to your machine (not streamed). You have it for 30 days, but once you start watching you only have 48 hours (TV) or 24 hours (movie) to watch it. From [iTunes.com](http://itunes.com), download iTunes 10.5 for Mac/PC.

Important to remember: not all services carry all content (programs, movies), and not all devices other than computers (and Roku?) will display all content. Check their websites before plunging in. Apple TV and Google TV seem to be especially limited but other devices may be also.

The bottom line is that the power of computers, the capacity of operating systems, and the capabilities of the networks have improved to the point that streaming has become possible for almost everyone.

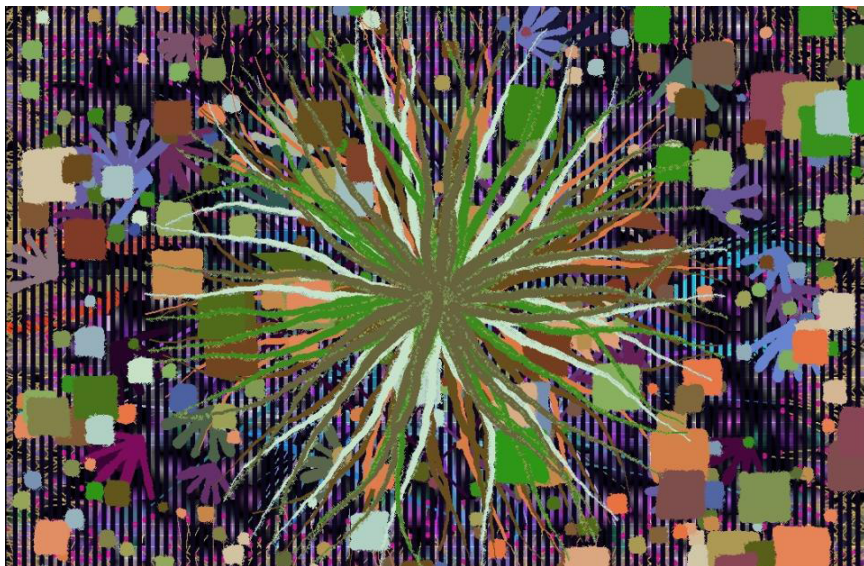
John Somers is a member of the ICON Users Group, MO. Article is from the March 2012 issue, The ICON – Newsletter of the Interactive Computer Owners Network. Web: <www.iconusersgroup.org> E-mail: <[Jesomersmail \(at\) mail.com](mailto:Jesomersmail(at)mail.com)>.

Upcoming Events:

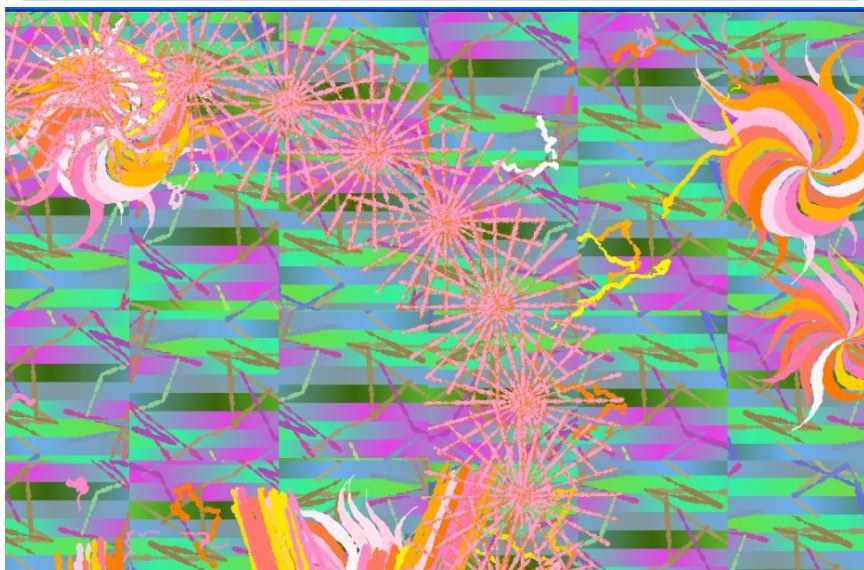
APCUG / CAMUG 2012 Regional Computer Conf.

Will be held Fri., July 13; 12:30 P.M. through Sat., July 14; 5:00 PM. at:
Walsh University
2020 East Maple St
North Canton, OH 44720
<<http://tinyurl.com/APCUG-CAMUG-Regional>>.

DigiDaub Images



Images produced by the DigiDaub program. See the article (above) “Euphoria DigiDaub Revision 7.” For full color go to <<http://www.semco.org>> => Newsletter => V37N5 (when posted).



SIG-Linux Pictures



Mike Rudas led the discussion at the SIG-Linux meeting on March 27, 2012.
Location: Motor City Free Geek in Ferndale, Michigan.



SIG-Advice Pictures



General discussion at the SIG-Advice meeting on April 3, 2012. Location: Madison Heights Library in Madison Heights, Michigan.



**Tablet or Laptop, a Popular
Question—and More
App Reviews
By Gregory West**

Unless you are a “hard core” computer gamer, you can now officially say goodbye to the laptop.

The day of computer frustration is coming to an end. The answer to pulling your hair out as you are trying to figure out why the laptop is so hard to use is called: “touch pads.”

Recently, I was on a technology cruise out of Miami, where 400 plus geeks rode the seas and clicked on computers in various seminars. Wait, that’s not correct. It wasn’t computers these everyday people were using. No, it was touch screen devices. Mostly iPads I must admit. This too is strange as the group was 99.9% Windows users. The average age in the 400 plus crowd was, shall I say, more than 50+. Most of them said they cannot believe the difference and ease when they switched from a laptop or desktop to a tablet.

Most people on the tech cruise, who recently bought a tablet and still owned a laptop/desktop computer, said that they “hardly ever use their computer anymore.” The hot topic on the ship was the app. People were constantly sharing newfound apps for their tablets.

So what makes these tablets so popular? Price, ease of use, two click downloads for software, portability, and low price is enticing laptop/desktop are just a few of the factors enticing people to switch. Here are some tips when shopping for a tablet:

Test drive several. Ask friends who own them what they suggest. Do online searches for reviews.

Decide what exactly you are going to use it for then decide on the size. I wouldn’t worry too much about the hard drive size as most of what we do on computer is heading to the cloud and soon you won’t need software programs for your devices.

Make sure the tablet of choice has a USB slot for thumb drives, cameras, and other such devices. ITworld.com suggests “Decide on the operating system. The three main choices these days are iOS, Android or Blackberry Tablet OS. Do a bit of research on all three and pick the one that will work the best for you.”

One final word...Most people will tell you once they bought tablets their other computers became lonely. Just ask anyone who owns a tablet and they’ll tell you they “hardly use” their computers anymore because the tablet is “so much easier to use and less hassle.”

Forrester.com researchers predict “Tablets will cannibalize netbooks and outsell them starting in 2012. In 2015, 23% of all PCs sold to consumers in the US will be tablets.”

Happy hunting.
App Reviews...”AppZilla 2” won the App of the year award.

I broke down and bought an app for my iPhone, AppZilla 2. Ninety-nine cents is a fair price to pay for an app that houses 120 apps with just one click. Apple reports this app “surpasses 2,000,000 downloads!” AppZilla 2 works on the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. Sorry droid users!

With 120 apps in one app it will take some time to test drive them all. Some are kinda corny but still fun. As a Google user of Docs, mail and much more, I like

[Continued on Page 21](#)

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-COMPUTING
Tom Callow

May 13: 1:45 p.m. : iPad and Best Apps for your iPhone and iPad: SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate his new 3rd generation iPad and demonstrate some of the best apps available for the iPad and/or iPhone.



SIG-PROGRAMMING
Richard Jackson

May 19: At the home of Richard Jackson. Contact Mr. Jackson for full details: (248) 546-3694. **Topic:** A review of chapter 8 — “Working With Text Files.”



SIG-ADVICE
Franz Breidenich

June 5 (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-TECHNIQUES
Warner Mach

May 13: 3:45 p.m. : Virtual Machines: Francis Chao will give a virtual presentation on how to Install a “Virtual Machine Program” into Your “Windows” Computer. Mr. Chao will demonstrate the actual installation of one or more of these free programs into a “Windows XP” machine: “VMware Player,” “Oracle VM VirtualBox,” “Windows Virtual PC,” and “Microsoft Virtual PC.”



SIG-LINUX
Michael Rudas
Mike Bader



Note: At the March 27 SIG-Linux meeting, Mike Bader and Mike Rudas were elected co-chairmen of the group.

May 22 (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: TBA.

June 2012 DATABUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)

SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., May 20, 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)**

June 6., 7 p.m., (1st Wednesday) Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen
E-mail info: <compinfo@greatlakes.net>. Web: <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>.
Topic: TBA.

DITUG: Detroit IT User Group (Formerly Focus: Hope IT User Group)

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

HUG (Holly User Group)

May 12, 9 a.m.-noon (2nd Saturday) Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Holly, MI. 48442. Ron McCauley 810-629-9683. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup-Detroit

May 27, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 248-569-4933. <<http://www.macgroup.org>>. Topic: Adobe Photoshop CS6. SIGs: 2:00 PM.

MacTechnics. (MAC User Group)

May 19, (3rd Saturday); See web site for meeting time and location. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: Late Breaking News from Apple by Dave Ginbey.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

May 12, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (2nd Saturday); MDLUG meetings will be at The Gaudior Academy located at 27100 Avondale Avenue in Inkster. Web: <<http://www.mdlug.org>>. 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>. Recycling & Open Source.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

May 8, 6:00 p.m., (2nd Tuesday): Farmington Community Library-Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. <<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)

June 5, 7:30 p.m. (1st Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>>. Topic: The Birth of the Modern Internet — A Personal Recollection by Steven Gold.

Continued from Page 18

the way this app has corralled all the Google products for ease of use. They call this the “utility” app and rightfully so as there are levels, app for flashlight mode on your phone, path finder so you never get lost, night vision, password keeper, parking meter reminder with alarm, police scanner for many cities, and many more I haven’t tried but sure will. I give this app a 10+.

Gregory West is an APCUG Advisor for Region 6 and International, VP of Sarnia Computer Users’ Group (<scug.ca>. Can be contacted at: <gwest@apcug.org>. Visit the free website

for 50+ learning computers: <<http://alternatcloud.com>>

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>>.

Note: For the Key Word to get a 40% discount (increased from 30% shown below) see any SEMCO officer or member of the board.



User Group Members SAVE 30%
learn · master · create

www.focalpress.com

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

This is a list of people willing to be resources for other members to call when they have hardware or software questions.

Are you willing to help members learn?

Which software programs are you familiar enough with?

It is not necessary to be an expert, but just have some familiarity with the program and be willing to help someone starting to learn it. Please give this some thought and volunteer at the next group meeting.

Almost Anything: Vander-Schrier

AutoCAD: Comptois

Genealogy: Cook

IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Yuhasz

Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz

MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz

Security: Bader

MS Office for Windows: Callow

MS Word: Clyne

Networking: Callow

Novell Netware: Yuhasz

Quicken: Clyne

Geocaching: Cook

Relational Database Programming: Lis

Bader, Mike—586-573-7330, 9am–8pm.....	mdbader@flash.net
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770, 9am–5pm.....	tcallow@monaghanpc.com
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm.....	clyne@mich.com
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime.....	
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves.....	scook48227@ameritech.net
Lis, Bernie—248-669-0101, 10am-8pm.....	BerLLis@comcast.net
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm.....	jvanders@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
42°29'7" N by 83°14'29" W**

May 13—SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

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

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-COMPUTING, 1:45 p.m.: iPad and Best Apps for your iPhone and iPad:
SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will demonstrate his new 3rd generation iPad and demonstrate some of the best apps available for the iPad and/or iPhone.

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

SIG-TECHNIQUES, 3:45 p.m.: Virtual Machines: Francis Chao will give a virtual presentation on how to Install a "Virtual Machine Program" into Your "Windows" Computer. Mr. Chao will demonstrate the actual installation of one or more of these free programs into a "Windows XP" machine: "VMware Player," "Oracle VM VirtualBox," "Windows Virtual PC," and "Microsoft Virtual PC."

SIG-Programming, May 19: At the home of Richard Jackson. Contact Mr. Jackson for full details: (248) 546-3694. **Topic: A review of chapter 8 — "Working With Text Files."**

SIG-ADVICE, June 5 (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-LINUX, May 22 (Tues): 6:45 p.m.: At Motor City Free Geek, 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. **Topic: TBA.**

June 10 - SEMCO Sunday.

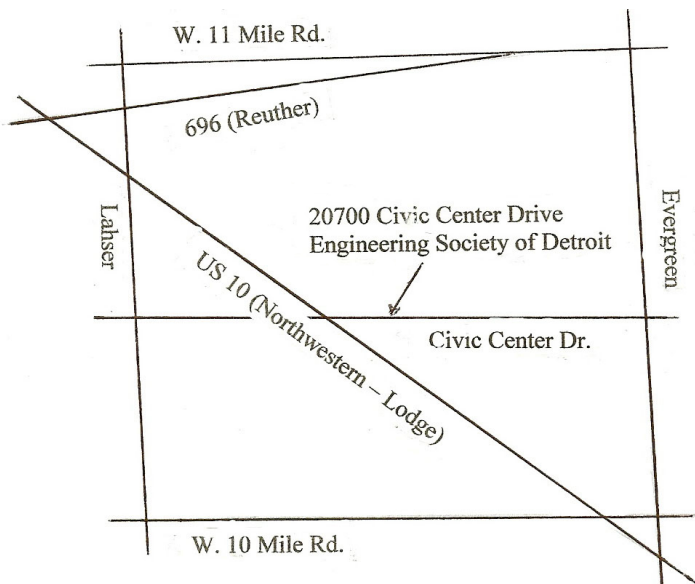
<http://www.semco.org>

PUBLIC INVITED

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

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

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)

May 13

June 10

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