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# DATA BUS

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**Google Crisis Response  
Provides Critical Info  
During Disasters  
By Ira Wilsker**

During the recent natural disaster known as Isaac I was busily tracking the progress of the storm and attempting to determine the potential threat it had to my community near the Gulf coast. Thirsting for information, I was always searching for additional tidbits of information that may potentially be of practical use. During my continuous search, I found a most comprehensive resource that had information available about Isaac and its effects, and also included evacuation routes and traffic information, graphically displayed evacuation shelters, sources and locations of assistance, local weather warnings, radar and satellite images, user generated YouTube videos, live webcams from the impacted areas, and a variety of other valuable information and data. This most important online resource was Google Crisis Response at <http://google.org/crisisresponse>.

According to Google, the explicit purpose of its Crisis Response service is, "Making critical information more accessible in times of disaster. When disaster strikes, people turn to the Internet for information. We help ensure the right information is there in these times of need by building tools to collect and share emergency information, and by supporting first responders in using technology to help improve and save lives. ... When a disaster strikes, the Google Crisis Response team assesses the severity and scope of the disaster, and the relevance of our tools for the situation to determine whether and how to respond. ... Google Crisis Response

seeks to make critical information more accessible around natural disasters and humanitarian crises. Google's contributions can include: updated satellite imagery of the disaster area, charitable donations to organizations on-the-ground, outreach through Google web properties, and engineering tools, such as Google Person Finder and Landing Pages, designed to organize and coordinate critical response resources and information."

While responding to Isaac and its aftermath was one of the most recent projects for Google's crisis team, it is not its first major response. The Google Crisis response service started in response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005 by posting information including shelter locations, emergency numbers, and information for those willing to donate to disaster assistance services such as the Red Cross. California based, Google is a truly international organization, with facilities around the globe. This international scope also influences the crises that it covers, including recent past events such as the October, 2011, earthquake in Turkey; the October, 2011, floods in Thailand; a multitude of hurricanes including Irene, Ike and Gustav; Japan's devastating earthquake and tsunami (March, 2011); earthquakes in Christchurch, Haiti, Italy, Chile, China, and Pakistan; floods in Brazil, Australia, Pakistan, and North Dakota; massive fires in California; and Pacific cyclones. Not all of the crises covered are natural disasters, as the Google Crisis Response service also covered the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Google Crisis Response offers a variety of tools to responders and emergency management agencies, as

well as the general public. One of the tools is Google Public Alerts at <<http://google.org/publicalerts>>. The heading on the webpage says, "Important alerts from across the web when and where they are needed most." These public alerts are superimposed on a fully scalable Google map and continuously updated in real-time, with the most important or relevant warnings placed at the top of the list by default. As I type this, the public alerts include tornado warnings, severe thunderstorm warnings, and flood warnings. An example of the usefulness of very timely information on Public Alerts, which may also be life saving, includes a pair of tornado warnings announced by the National Weather Service just two minutes before I opened the alerts page. Curt and to the point, with a corresponding icon locating the danger area on the map, "Tornado Warning in North Carolina - Severe thunderstorms, tornadoes sighted or on radar. Seek shelter. 2 minutes ago - National Weather Service; Tornado Warning in Northern Mississippi - Severe thunderstorms, tornadoes sighted or on radar. Seek shelter. 2 minutes ago National Weather Service." In addition to weather and storm information, local and regional emergency management officials can register with the Google Crisis Response team and post their emergency announcements on the Public Alerts website. For mobile use on Android devices (Android is a Google product), a new app "Google Now" is incorporated into the recently released Android 4.1 "Jelly Bean," and automatically displays appropriate alerts from the Google Crisis Response team and Public Alerts. These Public Alerts

can also be viewed in any browser on any computer, tablet, or smart phone.

As often happens in times of crisis, evacuations, and other serious events, people and families are often separated, which can create emotional and logistical issues. As an integral component of its Crisis Response system, Google has created Google Person Finder at <<http://google.org/personfinder>>. This Person Finder service is, "... an open platform for individuals and organizations to let people know who they're looking for and to enter updates about missing persons." Organizations can embed the code for Person Finder in their websites to allow for people to utilize the service. Emergency management personnel and other responders can download the lists from Person Finder, as well as upload names to the system.

Many of us use the online Google Maps (or similar competing products) instead of a published road atlas, and are well aware of the power and flexibility of Google Maps. Responders and emergency management officials can create customized Google Maps to provide current information to the public or response teams. Among the types of information that can be graphically displayed includes, "Mark crisis information such as road closures and resources such as emergency medical stations; Draw lines and shapes to highlight paths and areas that are covered in debris; Add your own text, photos, and videos to provide context." Customized Google maps may be available to the general public, or restricted to designated users such as the media or co-workers.

Other Google services that can be utilized both by the general public and officials in times of crisis or disaster

include Google Earth, Google Fusion Tables <<http://google.com/fusiontables/Home>>, Google Docs, and Google Sites. Google Fusion Tables can be used to, “Visualize your data from shelter lists to power outages instantly as a map or a chart. Identify data patterns to aid in crisis decision making; Show the world your work in real time by embedding your map or chart in a web page; Collaborate with other responders by merging your data, allowing you to see all important related information in one place.” Google Docs can be used to host and display a quantity and variety of documents in virtually any major document or spreadsheet formats, access to which may be controlled, restricted, or made public. Google Sites can be used to quickly create and upload websites with current and relevant information.

Google Crisis Response and its components already are a valuable resource in times of crisis and disaster. Google already integrates current real-time data provided by major federal agencies into its crisis services maps and information resources; it would be a great benefit if more local, regional, and state emergency management agencies participate and provide appropriate data to the service. Being on the Gulf coast, a readily available centralized repository of critical crisis data and information could literally be a real life saver.

#### **WEBSITES:**

<<http://www.google.org/crisisresponse>>.  
 <<http://www.google.org/crisisresponse/response.html>>.  
 <<http://google.org/publicalerts>>.  
 <<http://www.google.org/personfinder>>.  
 <<http://www.google.org/crisisresponse/howwerespond.html>>.

<<http://google.org/crisismap/2012-tropical-system-isaac>>.  
 <<http://www.google.org/crisisresponse/resources.html>>.  
 <<http://www.google.org/crisisresponse/faq.html>>.  
 <<http://www.google.org/crisismap>>  
 (MOST RECENT CRISIS MAP)

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Almost all newer laptop computers as well as tablets, smart phones, video game consoles, and home entertainment systems utilize WiFi as a primary or secondary method of connecting to the Internet or some other network. According to published reports from several sources, the majority of home Internet users have some form of WiFi in their homes, and WiFi is very commonly used in business, commercial, and academic environments. While the basics of WiFi security apply to almost all WiFi networks, home users have become especially vulnerable because many have never implemented anything more than the minimum default security settings when installing and setting up the hardware.

The Wi-Fi Alliance <<http://www.wi-fi.org>> defines WiFi as any “wireless local area network (WLAN) products that are based on the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers’

(IEEE) 802.11 standards.” WiFi is a fancy radio device that sends and receives streams of data through the air, just as any other 2-way radio device. As consumers, we often see the presence of WiFi in terms of its standard designations, such as 802.11b, g, or n (as in 802.11n), each of these terms indicating the speed, bandwidth, and channels available under those industry standard protocols. While new speeds and protocols are always being developed and tested, the fastest and most powerful of the current widely available standards is 802.11n, which is capable of a theoretical speed of 540 Mbps. A portion of the standard provides for downward compatibility, meaning that devices made for one of the newer standards, such as the “n” standard, must also be capable of communicating with lesser devices, such as the “b” and “g” standard devices.

For home use, most of us have some form of WiFi access point, typically either a free standing device directly connected to the Internet, integrated with a wired (Ethernet) router, integrated with some form of modem (common with cable and DSL Internet services), or as a combination unit of “all of the above.” In my home I have a major name-brand integrated unit that combines a broadband modem, 4-port router (four Ethernet ports for Ethernet cable connected devices), a USB port to connect a printer or other USB devices to the network, and an 802.11n wireless WiFi with MIMO (Multiple-Input-Multiple-Output technology) for improved performance. Purchased from one of the big box electronics stores for about \$70, my multi-function device replaced the less-capable modem supplied by my Internet service provider

(ISP), and offers more features, speed, and security than the one provided by my ISP.

For me, enhanced security was one of the primary reasons for replacing the older technology modem provided to me from my ISP just a few years ago. This older broadband WiFi modem from my ISP incorporated the mid-speed 802.11g wireless access point, with archaic security and encryption capabilities. Being fully cognizant that home (and business) WiFi networks are common targets of hackers and crackers, I wanted to harden my system from attack, and the newer integrated WiFi access point offered far superior protection than did my ISP provided unit.

One of the first requirements of a reasonably secure WiFi network is to implement the best encryption available on that particular device, such that unauthorized individuals who pick up the WiFi signal will only find random garbage, rather than a useful stream of data. Since only WiFi devices with the proper encryption key can exchange readable data, enabling the best type of encryption compatible with both devices (access point and remote device) will help protect the personal WiFi network from intrusion. Unencrypted WiFi leaves the entire network open to attack which can be used to steal personal data, passwords, user names, credit card information, and other information that can be illicitly used for a variety of malevolent purposes, including identity theft. At a minimum, an unencrypted home WiFi network works like a free open network at a coffee house, where anyone can “leach” (steal or otherwise use) your Internet access, slowing your connection, as the crooks are using your bandwidth. This “leaching” or theft of

Internet service may lead to unintended consequences, as it is not unknown for illicit drug dealers, pedophiles and child pornographers to use an innocent persons unprotected WiFi in order to conduct their evil enterprises; if law enforcement tracks the bad guys, it typically leads to the innocent WiFi owner, rather than the miscreant who purloined the system.

A common game of hackers and crackers is “War Driving” <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_driving](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_driving)> where people with WiFi computers and some readily available software drive around an area picking up and recording the locations of all detectable WiFi networks, and posting the locations on a GPS coordinated electronic map. Even Google compiled a massive listing of WiFi networks as its specialized vehicles travelled up and down virtually every street in the country for its Google Maps “Street View” service, creating a massive firestorm with privacy and security specialists. While Google has graciously removed public access to its “war driving” database, there are a myriad of websites that post the maps and data found by amateur War Drivers, such that anyone can easily locate and tap into an unencrypted WiFi system. Parallel to war driving is war chalking, war walking, war jogging, and war bicycling, which is common in densely developed urban areas. The simplest iteration of these is to use chalk on the side of a building or sidewalk to show the presence of a vulnerable WiFi system, telling anyone on the street about the unfettered broadband Internet access, compliments of an often unwilling provider. There is actually a standardized list of chalk symbols indicating the type and availability

of WiFi signals, these symbols being available from <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_chalking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_chalking)>.

Virtually all WiFi access points offer some form of encryption. During the initial setup of the WiFi system, the user is often requested to select an encryption method, or else “no encryption” is often the default setting, making the network accessible to anyone within range. The most common forms of encryption for WiFi access points are WEP, WPA, and WPA-2. WEP (Wireless Encryption Protocol) is the oldest and least secure of the common encryption methods; while only having slight degradation in performance and speed, it is virtually useless against all except the least sophisticated hackers, with instructions on how to crack and defeat WEP being readily available on the Internet. WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access) is better than WEP in terms of security, but degrades performance a little more than WEP. On most contemporary home WiFi access points, WPA-2 is the best of the commonly available encryption methods, but is slower and requires more computing resources than WPA; except for the most bandwidth intensive uses, the majority of users will not really notice the slightly slower performance of WPA-2.

Another security trick embodied in almost all WiFi access points is the “Hide SSID” setting. SSID means “Service Set Identifier,” also called “Network Name.” At a minimum, the user should change the network name to some meaningless name that is not readily connected to the particular system. The reason for changing from the factory default name (often the name of the manufacturer, such as “Linksys”) to a nondescript name is that



there are online directories with default encryption and password settings for unmodified WiFi access points; hackers can easily break into networks that are only using the factory default settings. An even better trick, if available on the WiFi access point, is to totally hide the SSID, meaning that the network name is not openly transmitted, and only those in range who know the network name can connect to it. While not foolproof or totally secure, hiding the SSID is a simple way to make it more difficult for hackers to find your network. If war driving through your neighborhood, hackers may likely miss networks with a hidden SSID, while picking up the other, possibly more vulnerable neighborhood networks.

Another feature that can be enabled to restrict unauthorized access to your home network is “MAC address filtering” (Media Access Control). Every device that can connect to the Internet has a unique MAC address, usually a series of about six two-digit alphanumeric characters separated by periods. While MAC addresses can be counterfeited or spoofed, filtering only allows selected devices, as indicated by their individual MAC addresses, to access the network. By entering the authorized MAC addresses into the filter, and enabling the filter, only those approved devices can connect to the network. Likewise, the filter can prevent specific devices from accessing the network.

On my laptop computer and on my smart phone I can see several nearby homes that have WiFi, some of which are not properly encrypted and accessible to anyone within range for any purpose, including illegal or other illicit activities. I cannot easily

see networks with a hidden SSID. The unprotected household WiFi networks are so vulnerable, when one neighbor had his home broadband connection out of service, and was waiting for the ISP to come and repair it, he illegitimately used another neighbor’s WiFi until his was repaired. Do you really want someone else using your network without your permission or knowledge? Secure your WiFi, or face the possible consequences.

#### **WEBSITES:**

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/7-important-features-wireless-router>>.

<http://compnetworking.about.com/od/wirelesssecurity/tp/wifisecurity.htm>>.

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How\\_do\\_I\\_change\\_my\\_wireless\\_network%27s\\_security\\_settings](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_do_I_change_my_wireless_network%27s_security_settings)>.

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

<http://www.wi-fi.org>>.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_chalking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_chalking)>.

[http://www.blackbeltjones.com/warchalking/warchalking0\\_9.pdf](http://www.blackbeltjones.com/warchalking/warchalking0_9.pdf)>.

(Pocket War Chalking Card)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_driving](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_driving)>

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## **To “Cloud” or Not To “Cloud” That is the Question By Joan Frerichsis**

I’d heard of saving computer files to the “cloud,” but I really didn’t know very much about it until our April CIACUG meeting when David Williams provided members with a great deal of helpful information about how it works.

If you have never had your computer “crash,” be destroyed in a fire or flood, be struck by lightning, or stolen, you have been exceptionally fortunate, or, perhaps, you haven’t been computing very long. After spending many painstaking hours of inputting data, contact lists, medical histories, financial information, etc. on our first computer, we experienced a crash that lost all of that data forever. Many times you toss or shred the paper trail thinking your information is safe forever. How naive can one be? It can be an “oops moment,” or it can be devastating. We had to consider ours an “oh phoo moment” and move on with life and start over, and that is disconcerting, to say the least. If you have business information and customer lists on your computer, it can put you out of business temporarily, at the very least.

If you’ve been backing up your files to an external hard drive, what if that is destroyed in a fire? If you’ve been religiously backing up your data to disc times two, putting one in the fire safe (not very safe) and taking one to an off-site location, that gets time-consuming and cumbersome. The easy solution.... back it up to the “cloud.”

If you are a non-business user, there are several cloud servers that give you a certain amount of free storage, and it

was pointed out that it is a good plan to review the sites to see what they have to offer and then choose a couple that you feel fit your needs and you are comfortable with probably being around for the long-term. There have been servers that have “disappeared” in the past without ample warning for users to recall their data. Thus, it’s a good plan to save the same data on more than one cloud server. If you are a business user or require more space than the free allotment, there will be a charge. With some servers you can increase your allotment by “recommending” their service to others, and if they should decide to sign on with that service, you may then be allowed additional storage space.

The next step is to set up your accounts, organize your files, save your files to the clouds and then synchronize your PC, your laptop, your iPad, etc. so that any changes you make to any of your saved files will automatically be updated on all your devices. That’s a time-saving plus. Also, you are able to access those files in the cloud from any web-based hardware that has access to the Internet. You can also share data files, photos, etc. with friends and family. Be sure to remember, or write down, your user names and passwords.

Following are some links to websites for comparison purposes:

20 Clever Apps and Services That Make Great Use of the Cloud: <<http://bit.ly/JydzYV>>.

Comparison of online backup services: <<http://bit.ly/5P003Z>>.

Cloud Drive Comparison: <<http://rwww.to/j2FUHl>>.

The “Top Best Cloud Storage Companies” Reviewed!: <<http://www>

[thetop10bestonlinebackup.com/cloud-storage/](http://thetop10bestonlinebackup.com/cloud-storage/).

15 Best Free Online Data Storage & Backup Services: <<http://bit.ly/rQGblp>>.

Listed below are some of the free cloud storage servers and the amount of free storage:

DropBox—2 GB—<<http://www.dropbox.com>>.

Windows Skydrive—7 GB—<<http://skydrive.live.com>>.

BOX—5 GB—<<http://www.box.com>>.

Google Drive—5 GB—<<http://drive.google.com>>.

SugarSync—5 GB—<<http://www.sugarsync.com>>.

ASUS Webstorage—2 GB—<<http://www.asuswebstorage.com/>>.

Wuala—5 GB—<<http://www.wuala.com/>>.

Apple iCloud—5 GB—<<http://www.icloud.com>>.

Amazon Cloud—5 GB—<<http://www.amazon.com/cloudrive>>.

Google Music—<<http://play.google.com/music>>.

You might also be interested in checking out the following:

TonidoSync—<<http://www.tonido.com>>.

Live Mesh—<<http://tinyurl.com/9a7be3f>>.

Social Folders—<<http://socialfolders.me>>.

Insync—<<http://www.insynchq.com/>>.

Teradesk—<<http://www.teradesk.net>>.

Now, get organized and SAVE, SAVE, SAVE (TO THE CLOUD). It can keep you safe and sane.

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## **Get Your Photography on the Web By Donna Kamper**

Review: “Get Your Photography on the Web” Author: Rafael “RC” Concepción Publisher: Kelby Media/Peachpit Press. <<http://www.kelbytraining.com>>, <<http://www.peachpit.com>>. ISBN-10: 978-0-321-75393-9. ISBN-13: 0-321-75393-3. Price: \$39.99, \$23.99 @ Amazon.

The only reason you need this book is if you’re looking for a quick, inexpensive and easy way for people to see your photos on the Internet. If you prefer time-consuming, difficult and costly you need to keep looking. This book was a complete revelation to me and inspired me to revamp our long-neglected (cob)web site <<http://kamper.com>>. Instead of working in HTML and Dreamweaver, I simply downloaded and installed a free program – WordPress. Following the guidelines in the book, I literally had my new site up and running in minutes.

Completely finished? No! No website is ever “finished,” they’re always (read: should be) in transition. But was it ready for viewing? Yes. Get Your Photography on the Web targets photographers who want to showcase their work. While WordPress is primarily a blogging software, as the author, Raphael (RC) Concepción shows you, it can be so much more.

With this book, an Internet connection and basic computer skills you can literally create a showcase website in a matter of hours for next to no cost—totally free, if you don’t want a domain name and in less than an hour if you have all your ducks in

a row ahead of time. And RC tells you exactly what those ducks are and how to line them up.

He quickly discusses that all-important “Getting a Domain Name,” and then moves into hosting. He recommends <<http://GoDaddy.com>> and walks you through the procedure. As with most Kelby Training books, this is done very clearly with screen-shots on the outside margins and brief descriptive text to the inside.

Since our website has been active since 1992, hosted locally through <<http://dakotacom.net>> (with whom we’re incredibly pleased), I skipped this chapter. However, from reading I did outside this book I discovered a WordPress site must be hosted on servers supporting PHP and MySQL. So if you have your own domain and are thinking about revamping it using WordPress, check that first.

What good is a website without content? The next chapters are “Getting Your Images Ready” which encompasses a lot more than retouching. Color Space, Sharpening, Size, Watermarks, Copyright—all in 27 pages.

Then we really start to rock, setting up your first pages and adding content. More than images, even slide shows, right off the bat! Then RC moves us into how to get our site looking the way we want it to. After all, it’s important that it be the proper frame for our work. To that end, he introduces us to Themes and Plugins.

It turns out WordPress is a bit of a blank slate, ready for anyone to write over it. “Themes” are overlays, if you will, for the basic WordPress installation. By changing the Theme the entire look of a site can change just by clicking “Activate.”

If a global rework isn’t sufficient there are Plugins, little applets that nestle inside your WordPress installation ready to spring to action. These can do anything from popping out an image in a shadowbox to creating custom menus for your site navigation. There are literally hundreds of these, and the list keeps growing. Oh, and they’re all free. See my WordPress note at end of this review.\*

The more I read the more I was inspired by what could be done. Then I discovered WordPress can be used for more than blogging. That’s when I really snapped to attention. Blogging is not for me. I was never a diarist, I never kept a journal, and I will not keep to a blogging schedule.

But WordPress is so plastic, so malleable, so pliable that it can be used as a content management system (CMS), meaning it can hold static pages that don’t change regularly if at all, and pages with other content. In fact, with a little judicious juggling and a friendly Plugin, it’s even possible to run an e-store right out of my website. Oh really!?

All those years of writing materials for front-of-class instruction have left me with manuals and workbooks. Coupling that with Camtasia’s on-screen recording, and I just may create a little business niche for myself. All I have to do is get it done.

This is a great book. Clearly written, visually-assisted step-by-step instructions and an attainable result. What’s not to like? Now, back to my WordPress Dashboard. There are edits to be made!

\*What’s this about free? WordPress is Open Source Software, as are its Themes and Plugins. These are created

by users and uploaded for people to use. WordPress itself is free for the download. Thousands of Themes are also freely available, and there are also multiple sites devoted to custom or for-pay Themes. As of the writing of this review there are 19,064 free Plugins available at <<http://WordPress.org>>.

There are two WordPress sites: <<http://WordPress.org>> is where you download the WordPress software, its Themes and Plugins and learn how to use the software. <<http://WordPress.com>> is a free hosting service begun by some of the original WordPress developers. It's "a hosted version of the open source package where you can start a blog in seconds without any technical knowledge." <<http://en.WordPress.com/about/>>. It is "financially supported via paid upgrades, "VIP" services and advertising."

*Donna Kamper is a member of the Tucson Computer Society, AZ. Article is from the April 2012 issue, of the "TCS eJournal." Web: <<http://www.aztcs.org>>. E-mail: <[donna \(at\) kamper.com](mailto:donna(at)kamper.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>>.

## **The Problem: Muffled Sound By Steve Baer**

Lately when I'm with groups of friends there is an increasing chance that some subset of people will complain to me about how bad TV and DVD sound is getting, and how hard it is to at times understand the dialog. I have been noticing this myself and decided to try to understand what is happening. There are several things going on, all of which conspire against us.

1 – As we get older our ears become less able, especially at higher frequencies. This is called Presbycusis, and there is good information on it on the web. Coming from Bell Labs, I learned about this almost 50 years ago, but I never thought it would apply to me!

2 – Many of the newer flat-screen TV's have very small bezels, and hence have small speakers or worse, put them at the sides or rear. When we put these sets in cabinets, or bookcases, the sound – especially the high frequencies, gets absorbed in the cabinets.

3 – Many DVDs have a very large dynamic range, the difference between the softest and loudest parts. Hence, in order to avoid being blown away during a car chase or explosions, we lower the volume overall. Then at the dialog passages, the sound is too low for our older ears.

4 – Many new DVDs are encoded with multi-channel sound. When you play the DVD, you probably have seen the setup menu where the multi-channel options are labeled with terms such as: 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, DTS, THX, etc. This refers to the number of channels of sound that are in the film, if you have the equipment



to decode and the right number of speakers. (The .1 represents the subwoofer channel.) One of these channels is the center channel that usually carries most of the dialog.

If you have made an incorrect selection on the DVD setup menu or an external amplifier, and are trying to play back multichannel sound through a system without all the multi-channel speakers, you will miss a lot of the audio. If you are watching a movie through an ordinary TV without multi-channel sound capability, be sure to pick the appropriate audio option on the movie setup menu.

### **Some Solutions**

There are some ways around these problems:

1 – Many people use a product such as “TV Ears” which wirelessly puts the sound into stethoscope type earphones that they wear. I have tried these, and they work extremely well. However, they are expensive and I have found them to be mechanically fragile. I have already had to repair two sets for friends – both failing in the same way. (Perhaps newer models are better made.) Two people would also require two sets. Be sure that you understand where the base station will plug in to your system in order to broadcast the audio to the stethoscope part.

2 – Several of my friends have supplemented the flimsy and poorly aimed speakers in their TVs with sound bars such as shown in the figure below. This is a Vizio model available from Wal-Mart for about \$100. This does not solve the multi-channel problem, but for one or two channel sound, with the speakers facing the listener, they work amazingly well.

In my experience, good one or two channel sound is far superior to poor multi-channel sound. I heard this particular sound bar unit a few nights ago and I was amazed at the clarity. It is an active speaker, meaning that it has its own small amplifier built in. It can receive audio input from your DVD player or your TV set via red (right) and white (left) type of standard RCA cables. Some sound bars also have digital inputs for more complex setups.

3 – If you use an amplifier to drive a multi-channel speaker system, make sure that the center channel speaker is aimed, directly firing at the listener. Also raise the treble to make up for your possible high frequency loss from Presbycusis.

Finally, many amplifiers will have a compression setting that minimizes the differences between loud and soft passages. Make sure that you engage that feature. I recently did these three things in my system, providing a large improvement in intelligibility.



*Steve Baer is a Feature Writer for the Hilton Head Island Computer Club, SC. Article is from the May 2012 issue, of “Island Computing.” Web: <[www.hhicc.org](http://www.hhicc.org)>. E-mail: <[Baer\(at\)ieee.org](mailto:Baer(at)ieee.org)>.*





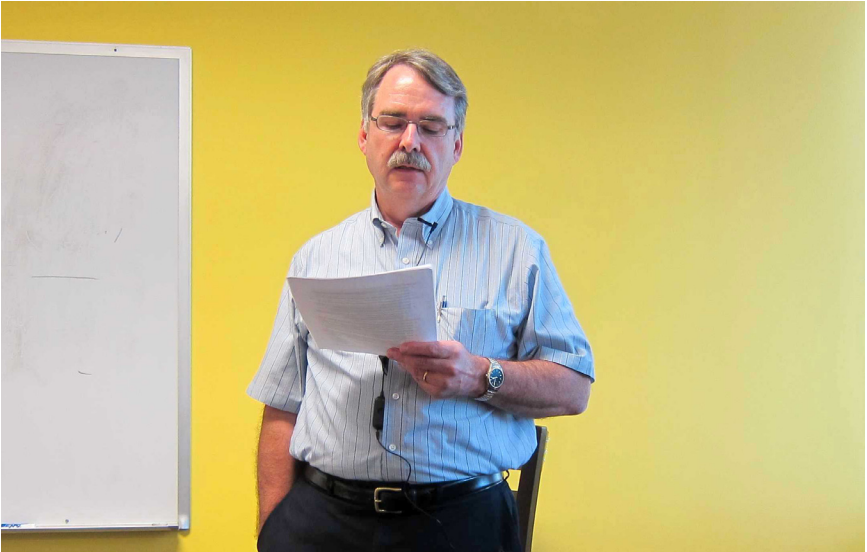
# ***SEMCO Meeting Pictures***



(Above) President Mike Bader leads the business meeting. (Below): Greg West, Region 6 APCUG Representative, talks about APCUG.



## ***SEMCO Meeting Pictures***



(Above) Tom Callow gives the computer news. (Below): Tom Callow talks about Microsoft Office 2013.





## *SEMCO Meeting Pictures*



Bob Clyne discusses hard drive partitioning.



## *SEMCO Meeting Pictures*



Members during refreshment period.





**BOARD MEETING**  
**9/9/2012**  
**Carol Sanzi**

**Board Members Present**

Present: President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Treasurer Bette Gay, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow, SIG-Advice Chairman Franz Breidenich, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, SIG-Programming designated representative Sikander Rashid and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Brian Brodsky. The board meeting was called to order at 12:09 p.m.

**Old Business**

Bette Gay reported that the current treasury amount equaled a total of \$9,063.05 with \$4,305.65 in the checking account and \$4,757.40 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership currently is 71. It is time for Gerry Delong and Edward Zaremba to renew their memberships.

Mike Bader researched an offer from Webucator to give gift certificates for free on-line training in exchange for placing their links on SEMCO's website. After a discussion, Richard Jackson moved to make the gift certificates and procedure available to all SEMCO members and add the three Webucator links to the Useful Links page on SEMCO's website. Brian Brodsky seconded the motion, and it passed with one vote in opposition.

Warner Mach reported that Focal Press is transitioning to a new publisher and as a result we are temporarily not receiving the complimentary door prize books.

**New Business**

Richard Jackson reported on an offer from Pluralsight. They would give us one free Annual subscription to the Pluralsight training library and 25 free Monthly subscriptions that could be given away in any way we like. In return, we would have to place a link and their logo on our website and mention Pluralsight as a SEMCO sponsor. A discussion followed. Richard Jackson moved to accept their offer and requirements. Warner Mach seconded the motion. The motion failed to pass, with 3 in favor, 4 opposed, and 2 abstentions.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn at 12:47 p.m. Mike Bader seconded the motion and it was carried.

**Bob Clyne: Correction to lecture  
of 9/9/2012.**

Mr. Clyne notes that, in his talk concerning "Partitioning" that references to "Partition Magic" should have been to "PartedMagic."

**SEMCO**

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

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

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



**SIG-COMPUTING**  
**Tom Callow**

**Oct. 14: 1:45 p.m.: OFFICE 2013:** OFFICE 2013—A First Look: Part 2—The Individual Applications: SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will continue his talk about the next generation of Microsoft's office suite, Microsoft Office 2013, focusing in on the individual programs included in the consumer preview of Office 2013.



**SIG-ADVICE**  
**Franz Breidenich**

**Nov. 8 (Thurs): 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 are located in the back of the library. Topic: General discussion.



**SIG-TECHNIQUES**  
**Warner Mach**

**Oct. 14: 3:45 p.m.: Security:** SEMCO President Mike Bader will discuss how to make your Internet connection faster, more reliable, and safer, using free software tools. Also: (1) A system for classifying the relative safety of web sites. (2) OpenDNS. (3) Phishing. (4) Other security issues.



**SIG-PROGRAMMING**  
**Richard Jackson**

**Oct. 20:** At the home of Richard Jackson. Contact Mr. Jackson for full details: (248) 546-3694. Topics: Sprites and a menu system.



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



**Oct. 23 (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.

**NOV. DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)**  
**SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., Oct. 21, 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)**

Nov. 7, Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: <[bwcompinfo@gmail.com](mailto:bwcompinfo@gmail.com)>. 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>>. See web sites for details. Pre-registration required.

**HUG (Holly User Group)**

Oct. 13, 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**

Oct. 21, 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: “iFixit.” SIGs: 2:00 PM.

**MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)**

Oct. 20 (See web site); See web site for meeting time and location., <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300.

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

Oct. 13, 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)**

Oct. 9, 6:30 p.m., (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday): Farmington Community Library-Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. <<http://www.mug.org>>. Topics: “Aludra Fuse-based Filesystem and Raspberry Pi.”

**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>>.

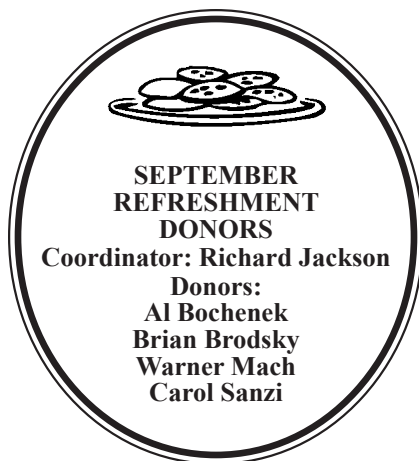
**SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)**

Nov. 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: “Wireless and Other Wonders of Home Networking.”





**He Who Watches.**



Note: For the Key Word to get a 40% discount (increased from 30% shown below) see Warner Mach - Editor.



**User Group Members SAVE 30%**

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### 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—586-447-6683, 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**

**Oct. 14—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.:** **OFFICE 2013:** OFFICE 2013—A First Look: Part 2—The Individual Applications: SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will continue his talk about the next generation of Microsoft's office suite, Microsoft Office 2013, focusing in on the individual programs included in the consumer preview of Office 2013

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

**SIG-TECHNIQUES, 3:45 p.m.:** **Security:** SEMCO President Mike Bader will discuss how to make your Internet connection faster, more reliable, and safer, using free software tools. Also: (1) A system for classifying the relative safety of web sites. (2) OpenDNS. (3) Phishing. (4) Other security issues.

**SIG-PROGRAMMING, Oct. 20:** At the home of Richard Jackson. Contact Mr. Jackson for full details: (248) 546-3694. **Topic:** Sprites and a menu system.

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**SIG-LINUX, Oct. 23 (Tues): 6:45 p.m.:** At Motor City Free Geek, 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. **Topic:** TBA.

**Nov. 11 - SEMCO Sunday.**

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

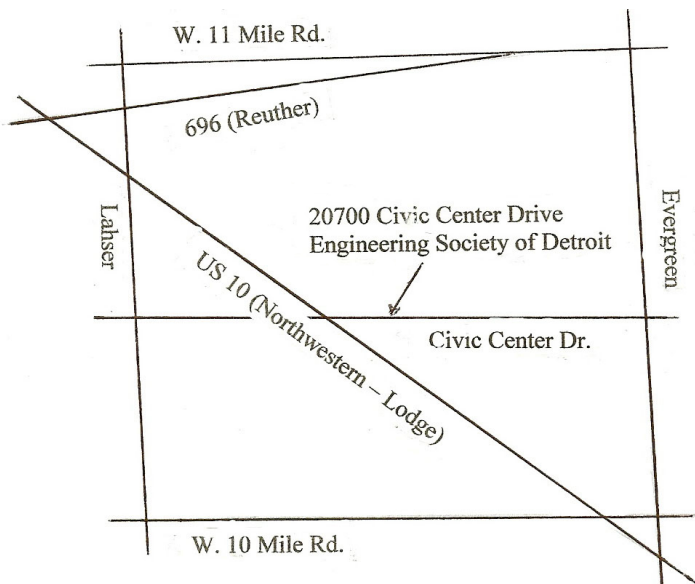
**PUBLIC INVITED**

**(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)  
October 14  
November 11**

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Helping People for the 21st Century**