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Cyber Security Challenge To Media And Civic Groups

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX: Radio Show Host

It is that time of year again, and I remember what many of you said to me at this time last year. Several of my loyal readers commented a year ago “well if only we knew about it earlier” or some similar sentiment. Now I am giving the local media, civic groups, computer clubs, professional associations, schools at all levels, and colleges ample advance notice that National Cyber Security Day will again occur on October 31. Last year in this column, I mentioned that it was more important than ever that we secure our computers from attack, as it was only a matter of time until we suffered mass attacks on our critical cyber infrastructure.

Regrettably, the cyber attacks have not just started, but are well underway. I attended a national homeland security DACUM (developing a curriculum) in Houston, where a blue-ribbon panel of homeland security experts from a variety of backgrounds, including the FBI, CIA, military, local and state law enforcement and government agencies, DC area think tanks, and academia worked together to determine the competencies required of students seeking degrees in the various areas of homeland security. One of the participants cited a published continuum of terrorism comparing the frequency and intensity of acts of terrorism. At one end of the continuum was high intensity – low frequency “macro event”, such as the dastardly attacks on 9/11; at the other end is low intensity – high frequency “micro events” such as the viruses, worms, crackers, hackers,

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[Ed. Note: this column is from October 2004 — but it’s that time of year again, and the nasties are still with us. Protect yourself! bj]

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Configuring a Basic User's PC

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor, Region 2
Columnist For AARP's Computer And Technology Web Site

Don't be alarmed by the high-falutin word "configuring". It just means deciding what components—otherwise called "parts"—will perform various PC functions. It's like old-days car buying: reviewing a dealer checklist to pick dozens of individual features, from radio to power steering to disc brakes and more.

The good news is that almost any current PC with a printer and Internet connectivity will handle mainstream requirements. That means that a generic Windows PC is usually adequate—but you should upgrade if you'll do anything challenging or exotic.

Just as when buying a car, the first step in buying a computer is deciding what you'll do with it: e-mail, Web searching/viewing, word processing? Financial work with Quicken? Digital photography? Simple games? Ultra-demanding tasks like high-end games and digital video editing?

Just as when making any major purchase, a small investment in learning pays off for years. Before buying a PC, learn the basics: — take a class, buy a book, attend local computer user group meetings, consult Web sites, read technology magazines at the library.

As you look at applications' system requirements (processor speed, RAM size, hard drive storage capacity, video card speed and memory, etc.) note differences between minimum and recommended specifications. Vendors are often too optimistic—and that's being charitable—about what's needed for their software to run productively. It's much safer, and not much more expensive, to buy at least the recommended choices. In fact, I usually buy a little more power than I need. This bumps cost just a little and it avoids future problems and upgrades. Purchasing this way greatly extends a PC's life and makes it more compatible with future innovations, at least for a while.

Remember that as PCs evolve, a range of choices is always available, from bleeding-edge new to borderline obsolete. An equally valid — and more eco-

nomical—approach to configuring is finding the current technology "sweet spot" the point where cost, performance, compatibility, and useful life are in balance.

A key decision is whether to buy a brand-name system or an unknown-brand machine, have a PC built to order, or build it yourself. Choices for laptop computers are much more limited: brand-name systems dominate, trailed by a few off-brand manufacturers. There are no build-it-yourself options, though manufactured systems can be customized extensively.

Each purchasing choice has advantages and advocates. Brand-name systems can be evaluated and compared by consulting references such as Consumer Reports magazine, are available everywhere via catalog or online shopping, and may have better standard or optional warranties (often worthwhile for quick service and peace of mind). But brand-name systems sometimes suffer from using commodity parts vs. best-quality components.

Unknown-brand machines can be reliable money savers or risky acquisitions. I'd only buy such a system from a trusted store with a flexible return policy. I favor having PCs built to order by small local shops with established reputations, offering maximum flexibility and consultation during design. And I've enjoyed watching my PCs take shape as they're assembled from a tableful of parts!

Some people build their own PCs, often with training and mentoring from computer user group volunteers. This demystifies system innards, greatly facilitating diagnosing and repairing problems and upgrading components. Build-to-order and build-yourself allow specifying brand-name parts for improved performance and reliability.

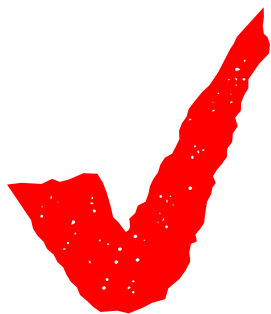
No matter where you purchase, look carefully at monitor choices. Traditional CRT monitors prices have declined, allowing buying larger devices with better resolution. And newer/thinner/lighter LCD

panels offer a powerful—though sometimes less flexible—alternative. Visit stores to compare brands and models and explore settings to match your preferences.

Decide how you'll back up your software and data. Choices include a second—perhaps external or removable—hard drive, writable optical media such as DVD, and tape. The first two are most often used, with each having unique advantages. Follow your backup plan regularly; nothing ruins a day like losing months or years of can't-be-replaced data, not to mention having to reconstruct all your software.

Small choices can make large differences in productivity and comfort. For example, mouse technology has advanced far beyond the traditional two-button wired device. Mouse alternatives include trackball and wireless devices, gadgets with many extra programmable buttons, wheel mice allowing horizontal/vertical scrolling, etc. Considering how much time you'll use your pointing device, it's worth spending a little extra money to have the device that suits you best!

Windows offers many choices for easing use—enlarging type, making keyboarding easier, providing special audible and visual cues, etc. Accessibility options are found in different places—usually via Control Panel or the Start menu. It's worth exploring these to tailor your PC to your individual preferences. Similarly, small add-on programs can greatly improve a PC's comfort factor. Remember that Windows is highly configurable: you can change how it looks and operates. As you become familiar with your new PC, explore options/settings/preferences. Just as you wouldn't insist on driving a car with seats and mirrors exactly as they came from the dealer, don't be captive of Microsoft's initial settings!



Name-brand computers usually include software bundles. Vendors shout about how valuable they are and how much money you're saving on them—but that's only true if you'll use the software provided. As soon as you have your machine, examine pre-installed software and remove anything you know you won't use. Then defrag your disk and then install the programs you'll use. These simple steps will make your machine run better by decluttering it.

Finally, if you understand how to do this, use built-in tools such as MSCONFIG to chop out unneeded services started by default when your system boots.

Software bundles often include junior-grade versions or limited-time trial copies of critical tools such as anti-virus and anti-spyware software. For system reliability and security, upgrade these to full versions and subscribe to update services.

Not much else in modern life besides computers keeps getting faster/better/cheaper. And it's not hard to find or build a computer that meets needs for several years, runs reliably, and doesn't break the bank.

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Election Notice

The NCTCUG Annual Meeting will be on October 5, 2004, at 7 pm at Carlin Hall. Elections will also be held then. Elections for the Board of Directors will also be held then. A combined election announcement and ballot will also be emailed to members.

All officers and four member-at-large positions are up for election. Anyone interested in running for any position, please contact any officer or board member.

Thank you!

Cyber Security In 2005?

By Pim Borman, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc., www.swipcug.apcug.org

As more and more computer users gain fast, always-on, broadband access to the Internet via cable or ADSL telephone lines, computer security becomes a critical issue. This was convincingly illustrated in an article in *USA TODAY* (11-30-2004, thanks to Duane Morrow). The paper teamed up with Avantgarde, a tech marketing and design firm, to see what kind of attacks were attracted by variously equipped computers hooked up to a broadband DSL connection. Relatively unprotected computers, wide open to the Internet, underwent attacks at a sustained rate of 340 per hour, or once every 10 seconds on average. These computers consisted of a Dell Windows XP with Service Pack 1, and an Apple Mac X. Most of the attacks were no more than “door knob rattlers” and did not result in actual penetration. Nevertheless, out of 139 thousand attacks in two weeks nine managed to take over the Windows XP computer and started to tie it into a larger network of hijacked systems. Another computer, equipped with Windows Small Business Server, underwent 25 thousand attacks in two weeks, 61 per hour on average, of which one managed to take over the system. The Apple computer was not compromised, probably because it uses an operating system not targeted by most intruders.

Computers protected by an active firewall underwent far fewer attacks, from 2 – 4 per hour, because firewalls hide the presence of a computer on the Internet from casual passers-by. These computers used Windows XP with Service Pack 2, Windows XP with the ZoneAlarm firewall, and a Microtel Linspire (Linux-based) computer with a basic firewall in the operating system.

Note that these “honey pot” systems were totally passive. Attacks did not depend on users’ actions, such as visiting infected Web sites or downloading email attachments that might cause infiltration by worms and viruses. It is also clear that fairly simple protection measures, such as a firewall, thwarted the vast majority of malicious attackers.

The foremost obstacle to achieving a safer Internet is the ignorance and/or indifference of too many computer users, especially those with a broadband connection; but notice that with an attack rate of once every 10 seconds even Internet browsers using a limited telephone connection can be vulnerable!

Here are the important safety measures once more:

- ☆ A firewall, stand-alone as in ZoneAlarm, or part of a package as in ZoneAlarm Plus, Windows XP SP2, or Norton Internet Security (combined with anti-virus and more). Optimally also a hardware router, even if you don’t need one for a home network, to add additional firewall protection.
- ☆ An anti-virus program, if not already included in the firewall software. Norton is good, or you can use a free program such as AVG from www.grisoft.com. It is essential to update the virus data files weekly or more often.
- ☆ Regular updates of your operating system and Office programs with newly issued patches from the providers (e.g. Microsoft).
- ☆ A spyware blocking/removal program such as AdAware (free) or AdAware Plus (extra features), or the excellent, free Spybot Search and Destroy.
- ☆ Disconnect from the Internet when not needed, or turn the computer off altogether when not in use for a longer period (use Hibernate with Windows XP for faster start-up).
- ☆ Use common sense! Don’t trust e-mail attachments unless you expect them. If you have any doubt whatsoever, ask the sender to confirm that it is OK. Even then, be skeptical. Delete obvious chain mail unread.

Knoppix to the Rescue!

Sooner or later something is likely to go wrong with your computer. A nasty virus or spy program may take over and lock you out, or Windows starts acting weird and refuses to be of service any longer. Maybe the Knoppix rescue disk can help you to recover your precious data files, at least, and maybe to remove a virus or restore Windows to good health.

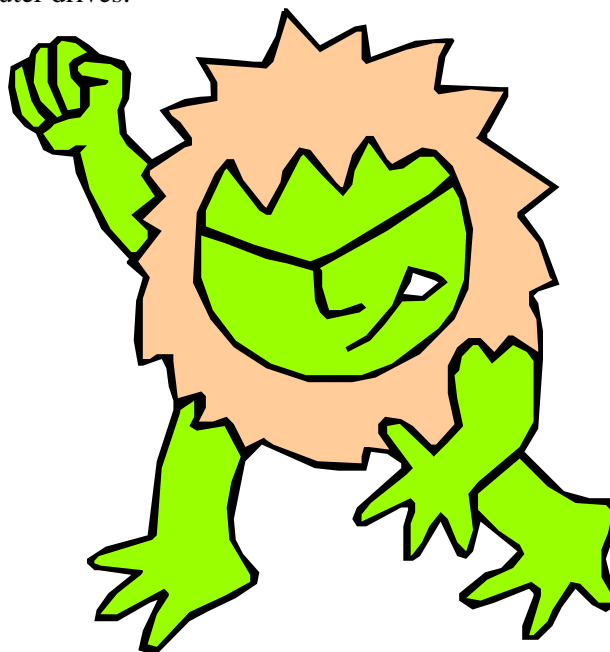
Knoppix is the brainchild of Klaus Knopper, a guy who makes it his business to go around fixing peoples' computers. In doing so he uses a variety of software tools that he carries around on CDs and floppies for use on the affected systems. He also carries a boot CD to start computers that won't start up because of a nasty virus or other problems. Knopper eventually added his repair tools to this boot CD, running Linux. The CD includes programs to detect peripherals, including networks, USB ports, Internet connections, sound and graphics cards, as well as Open Source programs such as OpenOffice and The Gimp to make it possible to access and copy text and graphics data on the infected computer. In the spirit of Open Source programming, he invited others to join in the effort. The resulting CD goes way beyond being a technician's repair tool; with the addition of numerous utilities, games, emulators, sound and graphics programs, the current CD, called Knoppix, is a full-fledged Linux distribution for non-Linux geeks, comparable to Linspire and Xandros. The difference is that the whole program can run from the CD without using the computer drives.

Some 1700 MB of programming is contained in compressed form on a single 700 MB CD. The latest version of the program can be downloaded for free or you can order a CD from a variety of vendors for \$5.00 and S/H. Booting the program takes only a few minutes; as many of the essential features of the program as possible are copied to RAM. As a result, the programs run surprisingly fast. The Linux-based KDE windows program is a clone of MS Windows and easy to use by non-Linux users.

Next time your computer suddenly goes on the blink, you might be able to continue some work and copy your data to a safe location simply by booting from the Knoppix CD-ROM. I have recently received a review copy of the book "Knoppix Hacks" by Kyle Rankin from its publisher (O'Reilly, ISBN 0-596-00787-6, \$29.95, user group member discount available) and I hope soon to discuss more details of this interesting program.

Pim Borman is Web Site Editor and APCUG representative of the SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. (SWIPCUG). The above article appeared in the January 2005 issue of the P-See Urgent, SWIPCUG newsletter. Permission is granted to other non-profit computer user groups to use this article in their publications with credit to the author and the SW Indiana PC Users Group.

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Protecting Your Internet Passwords

By Gene Barlow, User Group Relations

The internet plays an important role in our lives today. Almost everything we do has an internet possibility to it. We can access our bank accounts over the internet. We can pay our bills and loans using the internet. Every business that we have an account with lets us access our account and update our records over the internet. We can purchase airline tickets, reserve hotels, and rent cars over the internet. Each of these offers us personalized accounts to make these tasks easier to do. We can even buy groceries, tickets for movies, and order our prescriptions over the internet. How much easier it is today to do all of these things with our internet access. Of course, having access to these internet accounts requires that we set up a private ID and password for each of them. A typical user may have 20 or 30 of these account IDs and passwords to keep track of. So, while the internet has made our life easier in many ways, keeping track of these security codes has gotten harder to do.

Some users will try to bypass these methods set up to protect their privacy and personal information. To avoid keeping track of many codes, some individuals will use the same ID and password on all of their accounts. This is certainly not very secure. Once these common codes are discovered, they open up the hacker to all of your personal accounts. Others will write their codes down on yellow sticky notes and paste them to their computer display. This is also not very secure. Anyone that walks by your computer will see these codes and be able to get into your private accounts without any problem. The real solution is to set up difficult and different passwords for each of your accounts and keep these in a very secure place. That is exactly what WhiteCanyon's MyPasswordVault helps you do.

MyPasswordVault is a database program that stores its information on your computer in an encrypted format so that nobody can find this file and see all of your codes. You still need to remember a password to gain access to MyPasswordVault, but all of the rest of your codes are guarded safely inside the vault. So, when you need to access an account on the

internet, you simply open up MyPasswordVault, find the ID and Password for that account, and copy and paste it into your account access fields. You will be able to safely and quickly access the many accounts that you have set up on the internet. This is a great software utility that will let you safely and quickly enjoy all of the advantage of using the internet for your financial transactions.

MyPasswordVault is offered by WhiteCanyon software at the list price of \$25. You can purchase this valuable product at the user group discount price of just \$17. Look for it in our User Group Store at www.usergroupstore.com and click on any of the yellow "Buy Now" buttons to get to our secure web order form. Complete the form including the special user group code of UGNL0405 and submit it. *You may share this discount offer with your immediate family and close friends. These prices are not available to others not involved with a user group.*

I hope this month's newsletter has made you aware of an exciting new software offering from User Group Relations to make your computer usage more productive. Let me know if you have questions about anything in this newsletter by sending me a note to gene@ugr.com. Thank you for your attention.

Gene Barlow is the president of User Group Relations, a consulting firm specializing in promoting computer products to the user group community. He has over 40 years of experience with computer systems. He worked for IBM for 34 years in various technical and marketing positions. He managed IBM's user group support organization when IBM introduced the IBM PC till he retired 14 years later. In this role, he helped hundreds of user groups get started and is sometimes called the Father of User Groups for his involvement.

He was the first sponsor of the Association of PC User Groups and was a guiding influence on this organization for many years and funded many special projects for them. When he left IBM, he set up his own consulting firm and has represented many software clients to the user group community the past 9 years. He currently represents Optimal Access, Acronis, WhiteCanyon, and Spearit software companies and their exciting products. He is an outstanding speaker, writer, and helper of end users and loves working with user groups. He may be contacted at gene@ugr.com.

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Search Engine Tips and Tricks

By Richard Johnson, TUGNET, Granada Hills CA www.tugnet.org

Part 1: Google

I don't have to tell you about Google, which has for many years been the search leader. Aside from the quality of its searches, a big plus is that all Google's paid listings are clearly distinguished, and do not even appear in the same part of the page. This is unfortunately not the case with other search services such as Yahoo, which intersperses undifferentiated paid and unpaid listings.

Newbies will want to know they can initiate a Google search at www.google.com. All the services I'm recommending here, most of them from Google but a few from other sources, are entirely free.

Google Toolbar

If you don't already use the Google Toolbar, you're missing a terrific navigational aid. Its features are really too numerous to detail here, but I find especially useful its ability to readily

- bring up a parent Web page
- search within a website
- find pages similar to what you're looking at
- find sites linking to that page
- translate a page into English
- browse by name (if you don't know the URL)
- highlight search terms on the page
- find on the page your search terms or any other terms (more handily than with your browser's "Find" function)
- fill forms, and
- block pop-ups.

(There are better pop-up blockers and form fillers, but Google's may suit you fine.)

The toolbar enables most of the standard Google tasks, including some described in the next section. Not only are all these tasks easily accessible, but also

you won't have to re-type your search terms (for example, when you search for an image after a standard search).

I strongly recommend version 3, which adds many useful tools, the best of which will allow you to

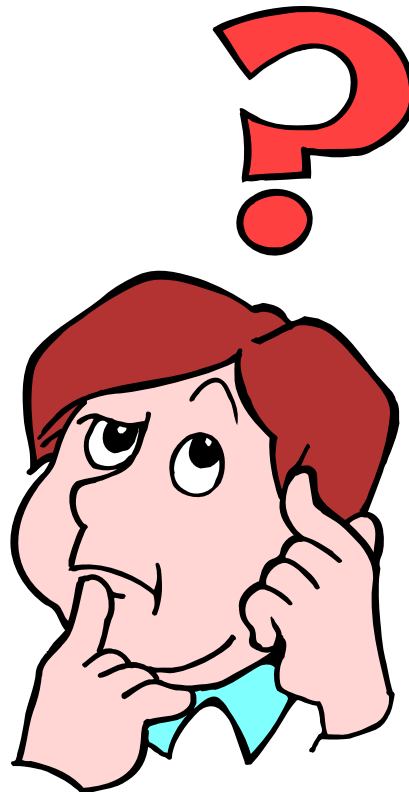
spell-check what you've typed on a Web form by clicking a toolbar button

bring up a map page (using the impressive new Google Maps—see below) just by clicking on an address, and

track a delivery by clicking on its tracking number.

Since it's still in beta, version 3 is not publicized, and won't automatically replace your present Google Toolbar. To get it, go to www.toolbar.google.com/T3.

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Other Google Goodies

Google Maps and Google Local

Google has recently introduced its own map system, that's head and shoulders above the competition. It's available as a stand-alone service at <http://maps.google.com> and as an adjunct to the more established Google Local, at <http://local.google.com>.

Compared to other online maps, the area of a Google map is huge, taking up more than half the screen, and expanding to fill any additional space (for example, if you move to a full-screen view). Zooming (in or out) is very quick, and re-centering is instantaneous. A new feature brings up a birds-eye view if you click on "Satellite."

Google Maps and Google Local are now pretty much the same service: A page brought up by Google Maps has a link to "Local Search," which provides the local data on the same page; and a page brought up by Google Local includes the map (which, although smaller, can be expanded with one click). The local data includes the names, addresses, phone numbers, and websites of businesses, and, often, third-party reviews (like restaurant reviews).

You can now get to Google Maps by typing a location in the standard Google search bar. And you'll find a link to Google Local at the top of every page of Google search results.

The Best Of The Rest

The following are, in my experience, the most useful (or most interesting) of Google's non-standard services. You do not need the Google Toolbar to employ them:

Google's image search at www.google.com/imghp, touted as the Web's most comprehensive, indexes (according to Google) over 880 million images.

Google will give you a business address and phone number. The easiest way is through the ResearchBuzz! form at www.researchbuzz.org/archives/001408.shtml.

Google will bring up one or more definitions for nearly any word. In the Google search box just type "define:" (without the quotes), followed by the word of interest. This service is now multi-lingual.

Reverse phone directory. In the search box type the area code and phone number (with a space between them), and there's a good chance you'll bring up at the top of the results page not only the person or company name for that number, but also the address.

Google offers special searches, limited (for example) to U.S. government or to Microsoft. Go to www.google.com/options/specialsearches.html.

For those who like to purchase through the use of catalogs, Google's catalog search is at <http://catalogs.google.com>.

Google will enable you to view a page that's been removed from the Web. Look for the "Cached" link after the description of the page in a search result. (Or click the Page Info button on the Google Toolbar.) This function will give you access to many closed-down sites not yet available via the Internet Archive. (The Internet Archive—not a Google service—is at www.archive.org.)

The Google Directory at <http://directory.google.com> combines the Open Directory Project (the Web's largest human-edited directory) with Google's proprietary ranking system. Use of the directory is helpful to narrow down what might otherwise be an overly broad search. (This tool is also available from the Google Toolbar.)

Google Answers at <http://answers.google.com/answers> is a paid research service—but users are free to browse previous answers, which can be quite helpful.

Weather forecasts are easily obtained by typing in the Google search bar the word "weather" followed by the city of choice (for example, "weather canoga park.") The forecast will speedily appear at the top of a page of search results.

Froogle, a comparison service for online shopping whose listed vendors pay neither for inclusion nor placement, is at <http://froogle.google.com/froogle>.

Google Print gives you access to books' contents and lets you search within those books. Look for the "book results" entry in standard search results, accompanied by the Google Print logo.

Google Suggest, at www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en, appears and acts like the standard Google search, except that as you start typing your search request, Google types its own suggestions. These could save you time and also point you to related searches.

Google Desktop, to search files on your own computer, can be downloaded from <http://desktop.google.com>. Unfortunately, it's available only for users of Windows 2000 and Windows XP.

Gmail, which on March 31 started offering rich text formatting, has as of April 1 doubled its storage capacity to a whopping 2 gigabytes. Gmail is not yet open to the public, but invitations can be obtained from various sources, including this writer.

Note that without re-typing you can extend your standard Web search not only to Google Local but also to Google Images and Froogle (as well as to Google Groups and Google News), by clicking on links at the top of every results page. Or you can skip the Google entry page and go to Xtra Google at www.xtragoogole.com for a selection of twenty Google tools, all tied to one search box.

Google Toolbar Tips

Use Alt-G to enter search terms in the search box.

For your news search, don't enable the separate news button, but instead use the Search News option in the drop-down Search the Web menu. That

way you'll be able to use the Alt-G shortcut to enter your news search query, and to use the same query for news and general Web searching, without retyping.

When using the word-find function, hold down the control key to find the exact whole word, and similarly use the shift key to move backwards.

Other Google Tips

For academically oriented results (often the most useful), try typing `site:edu` either before or after your search terms. This will eliminate commercial sites, and limit results to those from educational institutions.

Although Google now implements "stemming" (automatically searches for variants of words as well as the words themselves), you can cover still more bases by using the tilde [`~`] symbol right before a search term (leaving no space). This will tell Google to use synonyms as search queries. For example, a search for `~food ~facts` will turn up cooking information.

Don't worry too much about misspelled words. With any search engine, a search query with a misspelling might get you some good results that you wouldn't see otherwise! Google will suggest a corrected spelling along with its search results, but if the initial search comes up empty will correct the spelling on its own and re-run the search.

Google will ignore some common short words (like `a`, `on`, and `by`) in your queries. The best way around these so-called stop words in most cases is simply to enclose the phrase in quotes, which will force Google to search only for the phrase as given. (A phrase search will of course come in handy on other occasions as well.) Otherwise, you can precede a suspected stop word with the plus sign (for example, `+on`).

Google recognizes the OR operator, `or`, in its stead, the vertical line. So if you're seeking search results

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Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization (<http://theskillspool.org>). He is a volunteer with TUGNET HelpContact for assistance with Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, and Gmail. You may reach him at rj@theskillspool.org.

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Beware of SCUMWARE Pretending to be Anti-Spyware

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Board of Directors

One of the most frequent topics in this column in the past has been about the spyware which threatens our computers and the safety and security of our personal information. We should all be aware that spyware is rampant, existing on as many as 80% of our computers, according to media reports. While it has been written here in the past that there are several excellent, reliable, and sometimes free, anti-spyware products on the market, there are also some less reputable products pretending to be anti-spyware software. More than coincidentally, many of these same disreputable products are marketed using methods that users may consider unethical.

On my office computer, which lacks the popup blocker on my home computer, I recently received a popup which gave the dire statement, "WARNING! This computer is infected with dangerous SPYWARE which is stealing your personal information. CLICK HERE to run a free spyware scan." I am not so naïve as to believe a popup ad, but I was intrigued, as minutes earlier I had scanned my computer with two just updated major anti-spyware products, and my machine was free of spyware. Checking to make sure that my antivirus software was updated and running properly, and violating my own premise that I would never click on a popup, I decided to see what this popup would do, so I clicked on it. A rapidly advancing progress meter, too fast to be really scanning my computer, appeared. Moments later, another popup window appeared. "WARNING! This computer is infected with SPYWARE! See the attached list of SPYWARE on this computer." Below, in a small font, was a lengthy list of spyware titles, allegedly on my computer. "CLICK HERE TO REMOVE THIS SPYWARE" appeared in large bold print below the disturbing list of threats. Clicking on the link opened a webpage advertising an anti-spyware product that I knew from

experience had a terrible reputation that was also the subject of complaints of legitimate spyware publishers who alleged that this product was a knock-off using pirated code from the legitimate products. The large headline on the page said that I must purchase this product for \$39.95, download it, and run it, or I would likely be the victim of identity theft, and my bank accounts would be vanquished by predators. To the uninformed, this frightening scenario may result in enough uncertainty to encourage them to become still another victim of near useless software, and imposing a false sense of security, further opening the victim to attack.

In order to detect and prove that their legitimate software is being pirated or otherwise stolen by purveyors of scumware, most of the legitimate companies include some inert dummy entries in their program code and database of spyware signatures. If these unique but inert dummy entries are found in other programs, then there is good evidence of piracy. Regrettably, this is more common than many users realize, and sometimes these users end up paying top dollar for inferior pirated anti-spyware software, that may provide little or no protection. One of the many documented cases involves the very popular Spybot Search and Destroy (published in Germany), and the New York based "1ClickSpyClean". Spybot included some inert dummy entries in its database, and these dummy entries showed up in the 1ClickSpyClean database, according to a news article posted on the Spybot website. Some legal demands and threats crossed the Atlantic, and Spybot recently reported that it appears that 1ClickSpyClean has complied, and purged its database of the allegedly purloined content, reducing its detection capacity by about 60%. Spybot is free software, and 1ClickSpyClean sells on its own website for \$29.95.



Unfortunately, there are many such questionable anti-spyware products being marketed, often by dubious means such as the popup mentioned above, spam mail, multi-level network marketing, and other such means. A comprehensive list of these questionable products is online at “Rogue/Suspect Anti-Spyware Products & Web Sites”, www.spywarewarrior.com/rogue_anti-spyware.htm. According to this site, there are nearly 150 such rogue products being marketed and promoted, as well as several dozen websites containing allegedly helpful anti-spyware information, but are instead promoting rogue products. Several of the rogue products are in reality the same software, but marketed under different titles. If you are using an anti-spyware program, check this list to see if it is legitimate or not.

The rogue anti-spyware software may be worse than useless, because some titles install their own spyware, or pretend to clean the machine but in reality do a poor job or nothing. This could be dangerous because the user may get a false sense of security, and believe that he is protected, when in reality he is quite vulnerable and likely being victimized.

Anti-spyware programs that were once considered reliable, such as the Aluria Spyware Eliminator previously reviewed here, may possibly lose some reliability as they start to deal with companies considered by many to be purveyors of spyware. According to such media sources as Ziff Davis, the Boston Globe, eWeek, and others, it has been reported that Aluria has recently reached a deal with an ad-ware vendor (ad-ware is generally considered as a type of spyware). Aluria will not block its ad-ware, but will also be included in the ad-ware vendor's web page tool bar that is supposed to remove unwanted spyware, but may itself be a type of spyware.

For safety's sake, as well as peace of mind, be absolutely sure of the spyware solutions utilized, and never purchase such software from popups, spam mail, or other questionable means.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

29 Useful Bookmarks Part 1

By Richard Johnson, TUGNET
www.tugnet.org

The Web is a marvelous resource, and most of us come nowhere near tapping its full potential. I've attempted here to list 29 websites that without any necessary downloading provide exceedingly useful free non-specialized services and tools, that require no particular knowledge except how to navigate the World Wide Web.

1. Time Cave www.timecave.com

2. Memo to Me www.memotome.com

Using these two email reminder services you'll never forget another upcoming activity or event. Time Cave allows you to schedule incoming messages by interval (so many hours, days, weeks, months, or even years away) as well as by date and time. Memo to Me allows editing of content and date. With Time Cave you can choose your own subject line and send reminders to others, but Memo to Me will charge you for those features. On the other hand, Time Cave charges for the ability to repeat messages (monthly, weekly, etc.), standard with Memo to Me.

3. Way Back Machine www.archive.org/web/web.php

Is a website you're seeking no longer around? If it was active as late as 1996, you'll probably find it easily in this huge archive.

4. Centerwatch Clinical Trials www.centerwatch.com

Gives information on more than 41,000 active clinical trials in which you could participate. (Some compensate you handsomely for helping, along with free medical monitoring.) Includes a notification service, for trials in areas of your interest. Also describes the newest drug therapies.

5. Objectgraph Dictionary
www.objectgraph.com/dictionary

A combination standard dictionary, technical dictionary, and thesaurus. (There's also a dictionary

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Selections From The DealsGuy

Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer User Group

More On HD Warranties

In response to my comments about misleading HD warranties, Ira Wilsker, APCUG board member, sent me the following: "The federal Magnuson-Moss Warranty Improvement Act, effective July 1, 1976, REQUIRES any seller of an item that has a retail selling price of \$15 or more AND has a warranty, to make a copy of that warranty available on request PRIOR to purchase! In the future, wherever you buy items covered, ASK for the warranty BEFORE you buy it. Under the law the seller MUST let you see a copy prior to any purchase. Look at the FTC web site: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/warranty.htm>" Thanks Ira. I don't know if my readers in Canada have any protection like that for consumers?

Special Rebates For Zio Corp. Products

Chris Allen, Channel Sales Manager, has set up rebates on several Zio Corporation products. This is a special situation and you can download a PDF [coming soon] containing all the rebate forms from my Web site's Announcement page. This rebate is specifically for the DealsGuy column, although a rebate form is also on their own Web site right now. Use the rebate code "DealsGuy" on the form.

This way you can shop wherever you like getting your best price when purchasing the products, then send for your rebate listed below.

CameraMate VideoSafe CM-53000: \$10 MIR
CameraMate Real Time Video CM-50000: \$20 MIR

Dazzle Universal Media Reader/Writer DM-24001: \$20 MIR

Dazzle 990 (Digital Camera/Camera Phone Manager): \$20 MIR

Dazzle 8 in 1 DM-22000: \$15 MIR

MIRs not valid with any other promotion, and one rebate per household.

My Dazzle 990 mini-review is below and the two CameraMate products were written up in the May issue of the DealsGuy column. I have not tried the other products.

I received the Digital 990 (Digital Camera/Camera Phone manager) to try out. It is 4" long by 2 1/2" wide by 1/2" thick and does some neat things. You connect it to your computer's USB port and it goes to work. There are five slots to accommodate popular media cards for a digital camera or phone. It also has two USB slots that act as a hub. They say the Dazzle 990 Hi-Speed Reader/Writer allows you to manage your digital stuff; you can transfer photos, contact lists, ring tones, MP3s, etc. between your mobile phone, digital camera, MP3 player, flash drive, and even any USB flash memory device and your PC. The package lists 17 different types of supported media for your camera phone or digital camera.



Washington Area Computer User Group (WAC) Meetings

WAC Meetings will be held on August 20 & September 17, 2005, 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM. at Micro Center, Nutley Street, Fairfax, VA.

You do not need to be a member to attend. For more information on WAC meetings and events, call the WAC AnswerLine (voice) at (703) 370-7649. Also see WAC's Web Site at

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



Packaged with it are two CDs containing ProPix Sound that enables you to add music or sound to your photos, ProPix on TV that allows creating a slide-show for your TV, and automatic backup on a CD. That CD includes ProPix Address Manager that works with SIM based mobile phones and updates your contact list from your PC. Also included is ProPix Share to share photos with friends easier and faster than using e-mail by using peer-to-peer technology. The other CD contains Paint Shop Photo Album (standard edition). There is more and you can check their Web site at <http://www.ziocorp.com>, although their Web site needs work since I didn't find as much information as on the package.

I enjoyed adding commentary to the photos taken on our Panama Canal cruise and setting up a slide show. Since I don't have a picture phone, I couldn't try those functions. I did move around some of the image files from the media cards to my USB external HD, USB thumb drive, PC, etc. and it worked well. It handles both USB speeds. You need Windows 2000 or XP for this product. An available free download on their Web site is Orb Networks that allows accessing the photos, video and music on your home PC (broadband connected) from your Internet enabled mobile device. As for using it as a USB hub, it normally handles low powered USB devices, but an optional accessory power supply is available. MSRP for the Dazzle 990 is \$49.95.

Dazzle Universal Media Reader/Writer DM-24001: MSRP \$39.99

Dazzle 8 in 1 DM 22000: A high-speed reader for eight different card media: MSRP \$29.95

CameraMate VideoSafe CM-53000 allows you to capture analog video/audio from any VCR or camcorder and burn it to a CD or DVD and includes some hardware: MSRP \$49.99.

CameraMate Real Time Video CD-50000 is an adapter and software for capturing the video/audio from any VCR or camcorder for the purpose of burning to a CD or DVD. However, Real Time Video software also offers Autoedit Wizard, Autoedit Storyboard Wizard, Randomize Wizard and a DVD Burn Wizard. Software and drivers are included on a CD. Adapter cables for RCA audio/video/SVHS plugs are not included, but are easy to obtain and many folks have them lying around: MSRP \$69.99.

An Announcement I Received Back In June And Edited For publishing

Our company, XP-Web-Buttons, would like to announce the release of XP Web Buttons 3.15 for Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003. We'd like to offer your members and subscribers a 25% discount off the regular price.

Design Website Buttons With Style

A large part of a website's appeal and navigability comes from the clever design of menus and buttons. XP Web Buttons is a nifty tool for creating stylish web buttons, navigation bars and menus with fully customizable features in a few clicks of the mouse. Web page designers have a complete palette of XP themes, font faces and styles, shadows, icons, targets and more to choose from. XP Web Buttons generates all images, JavaScript and HTML code automatically. These custom buttons react to mouse activity like rollover and clicking, and each button parameter, including size, color, alignment, word wrap and many more, can be easily adjusted and then previewed to test how each button will respond to mouse events. The latest release of XP Web Buttons sports a new interface, support for .ico files and clear-type fonts, revised help and tutorial functions and more icon selections in .gif and .ico formats. A host of sample projects for inspiration has been included.

Free demo version and product information is available at <http://xp-web-buttons.com/>. A personal license for XP Web Buttons costs USD \$29.95. Windows™ 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003 operating system is required. To get the UG discount, order at <http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=62316&pc=GS198>.

Contact information:

Stephan Boas

XP-Web-Buttons

www.xp-web-buttons.com

E-mail: support@xp-web-buttons.com

Free trial version: <http://xp-web-buttons.com/xpwebbuttons.exe>

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [bobclick@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>].

(Continued from page 1)

and Trojans that attempt to penetrate our personal computers on an extremely frequent basis. During one of the lunch breaks, we had a friendly academic discussion concerning the degree of damage occurring from a single macro attack compared to hundreds of thousands of simultaneous micro attacks, such as happened with the Code Red, Nimda, Sasser and other mass virus and Trojan attacks that crippled much of our cyber infrastructure. Countless billions of dollars in damage was done by these and other cyber attacks that effectively combined millions of vulnerable personal computers into a fearsome weapon that was launched at our vulnerable institutions. In this matter, I proposed that massive and coordinated micro attacks could potentially equal the effect of a single macro attack.

Another participant cited the recent case of a teenager who cracked into the air traffic control system, and had the ability to alter the images seen on controllers' screens. While this miscreant was stopped before there was any serious damage, the potential for catastrophic damage was present. Now imagine a "what-if" scenario of terrorists bent on again wreaking havoc on our air commerce and society in a similar way. Already attacks have been recorded on the critical "SCADA" control systems that are utilized in almost all of our refineries, power distribution systems, pipelines, water works, and many other critical industries. There was a strong consensus that we need to harden our infrastructure from all forms of attack, including cyber attacks.

This is where my challenge comes in. I challenge the local and national media, along with the Rotary Clubs, Lions, Kiwanis, 4-H, Boy and Girl Scouts, schools, colleges, and other institutions to actively promote National Cyber Security Day. There is information and materials freely available on the official website at www.staysafeonline.info (note the ".info"). A variety of guides are available there for both home and business users, on a variety of topics such as computer security fundamentals, beginner's guides to computer security, securing broadband and dialup connections, home network security, network security solutions, and computer security for businesses and other organizations. The ubiquitous "Top 10 Security Tips" is listed there, as well as a variety of packaged "Tech Talks". Among the "Tech Talks" are "The CyberSmart! Curriculum ... an Owner's Manual for chil-

dren's safe, responsible and effective use of technology", Security Fundamentals, and "Protect Your Computer, Protect Your Country's Cyber-Infrastructure". There is also a section linked on the main page that contains teaching materials for grades K through 12, which can be utilized by parents as well as schools.

Please do not let another Cyber Security Day pass without appropriate action, as the threats are very real and frightening. Utilize the resources on the website, as well as other local resources. Speakers may be available from local computer clubs (www.apcug.net), community or technical colleges, universities, law enforcement agencies, and other resources. I know from first hand experience that media, groups and organizations hunger for programs of vital interest and current content. Individuals need secure computers that will not be hijacked by terrorists for nefarious "macro" purposes, or by "micro" terrorists or crackers planting viruses or zombies on our computers to steal our passwords, or drain us financially by committing identity theft. Professional associations, including medical and legal groups, need to let their members know how to secure their sensitive personal data and records.

OK folks, for the third consecutive year I have pleaded with you to take advantage of the computer security benefits promoted by National Cyber Security Day, and its website at www.staysafeonline.info. I have secured my computer to the best of my ability, now the ball is in your court. Security is everybody's business.

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of chemical elements, of rather limited interest). A unique feature is the site's ability to "read your mind" if you're not sure of the word you're thinking of—or its spelling—or if you just want to save typing.

6. Myway email www.myway.com

An excellent Web-based email provider with an exceptionally clean interface (no banner ads or pop-ups). Unlike the case with competitors like Yahoo mail, Myway will respond to support inquiries. (It also has a terrific weather page—see link #7 following.) [If you prefer Gmail, equally clean-appearing, I can get you an invitation—see my article in the March Keywords.]

7. Myway weather weather.myway.com

The best weather page on the Web. Even though its weather information is from weather.com, you'll see when you use it that the interface is much cleaner (and loading therefore faster) than if you were to

bring up either weather.com or one of its competitors. You can personalize the weather according to your home town or zip code; the page you'll want to bookmark is that personalized page

8. Past Weather

www.weather.com/activities/other/other/weather/yesterday.html

Use this site to compare today's forecast with yesterday's weather. There's also interesting historical data and a graph showing the weather for the past seven days. The past weather information can easily be compared with the forecast from Myway weather (link #7), which derives its data from the same source.

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization (<http://theskillspool.org>). He is a volunteer with TUGNET HelpContact for assistance with Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, and Gmail. You may reach him at rj@theskillspool.org.

NCTCUG Information

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Officers and Directors

All officer terms expire 2005

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Fred Cook	2005	703-815-1423
JJ Davies	2005	703-379-9222
Sy Fishbein	2005	703-536-5894
Dean Mires	2005	301-931-2400

Article Submissions

Articles, helpful hints, and other items of interest to readers of the NCTCUG Journal are always welcome and will be published as soon as possible after submission. Priority is given to members' contributions. Items may be submitted via modem to the BBS or on diskette. Submissions to the BBS should be uploaded to the Newsletter Conference and a message left for the Editor. Files should be straight ASCII, unformatted, with C/R only at end of paragraphs; no indents for paragraphs should be used. Preferred format for diskettes is MS-DOS 3½ 720k or 1.44Mb. Diskettes in other formats may be submitted but there will be a considerable delay in processing. If absolutely necessary, items may be submitted in hardcopy only but these will also meet with delay.

Membership Policy

The National Capital Tandy Computer Users Group, Inc. is a non-profit [501(c)(3)] organization founded in 1978 to educate users of all Tandy computers and MS-DOS compatible computers. Membership dues are \$25.00 (U.S. Funds) per year, with a \$5 surcharge for international mail. Membership in NCTCUG includes membership in all SIGs, access to the BBS and software libraries, and subscription to the Journal published 8 times per year. Applications may be obtained at any club meeting, by downloading from the BBS, by calling one of the officers or board members, or by writing to the club. A sample newsletter, membership application and related information may be obtained by enclosing \$1 and mailing your request to Jim Rhodes, 201 S. Kensington Street, Arlington VA 22204.

Advertisement Policy

Members' advertisements: Ads are accepted from members for non-commercial purposes at no charge. Copy should be sent to the Editor in the same format as article submissions. Commercial Advertisements: Ads are accepted from commercial advertisers at the rate of \$60 per full page, per appearance, with discounts for multiple insertions. Smaller ads are priced accordingly. Payment for ads must be made in advance of appearance. Advertisers must supply a permanent address and telephone number to the editor.

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COMPUCENTER BBS

Is no longer in operation. It has been replaced by the 'compucenter' mailing list at <http://groups.yahoo.com/>

If you are moving

Please send your change of address to the club PO box as soon as possible to avoid missing issues.

Thank You!

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concerning cats or dogs (but not both), you could type "cats OR dogs" or "cats | dogs" [without the quotes]. Use the minus sign right before a search term for "not." ("Animals -dogs" [without the quotes] would ignore dogs in the search.) For complicated queries, you can if necessary group search words within parentheses.

Instead of clicking on the main link at the top of each Google search result, try clicking on the word CACHED. The page that will come up will now have your search words highlighted. (Don't use this technique if you need to see the most recent page revisions.)

Google supports word wild cards. That is, you can in your query use the asterisk [*] as a stand-in to represent any word. (This won't work in Google for parts of words.)

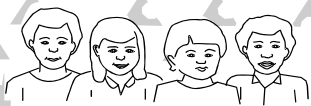
Next Month: Beyond Google

October 2005

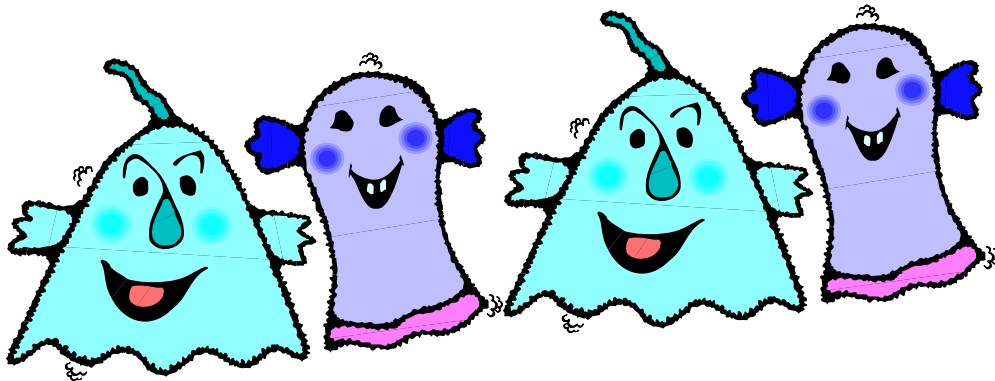
1st Wed. (10/5)
7 p.m. General Meeting

4th Wed (10/26)
7 p.m. Internet SIG

3rd Monday (10/16)
7 p.m. Board of Directors



All meetings are at **Carlin Hall**, 5711 S. 4th St., Arlington VA: East off of Carlin Springs Rd, just south of Arlington Blvd/Route 50.



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First Class

