



The Cursor



Monthly Newsletter of the
Washington Area Computer Users Group

Meeting Location:
Fairfax County
Government Center



Next Meeting:
November 20, 2004



Presidential Bits

November Meeting

By Paul Howard

November Features Two Presentations

Intel's Centrino Mobile Technology will be the featured topic at the November WAC meeting. We'll be back at our usual location in the Fairfax County Government Center. Bill Walsh will host this technology showcase, made available through the APCUG "presentation in a box" program — and there'll be rewards for attendees who complete a survey form.

Find out about Intel's newest mobile technology and the benefits of wireless notebooks for today's mobile lifestyles. Intel® Centrino™ mobile technology features integrated wireless LAN capability and breakthrough mobile performance, while enabling great battery life in lighter, easier-to-carry notebook PCs.

Our second topic for November is file compression and archiving, with emphasis on the commonly used "zip" format. Chuck Roberts will be our guide on this discussion of a commonly used approach to transmitting or backing up files,

that allows savings in required storage space or transmission times. Chuck's primary emphasis will be on Allume System's Stuffit program. Other programs with similar functions will be mentioned, including WinZip and PKZIP.

Thanks Again

Our friends at Micro Center again rolled out the red carpet for WACUG members in October, hosting our second meeting in 2004 at their Fairfax store. We are indebted to Richard Wedge, General Manager, and his staff, for their courtesy and generosity in providing us meeting space when our usual arrangements at the Fairfax County Government Center fell through. Micro Center provided a door prize copy of Quicken, our October meeting topic, and a wonderful spread of snacks and drinks for our members and guests attending. Bill Bailes was our presenter in October, offering members an introduction to Quicken and how he's used it to manage his household finances, including checking and credit card accounts. Bill praised the ease in downloading information from banks and card firms into Quicken as a real time saver.

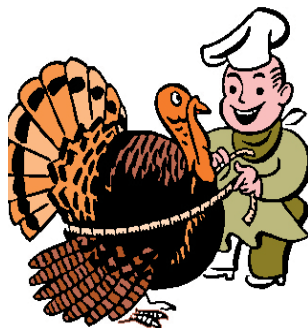
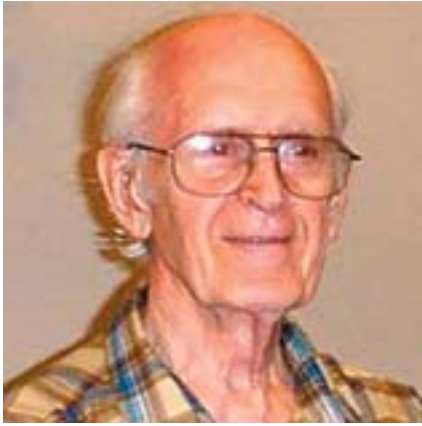


Table of Contents

Lu Spriggs Web Sites	2
GNU / Linux	3
To Zip and Unzip	4
Help, my computer is down and I can't get it up! ..	5
Tech News	7
Understanding USB	8
Do It Now	9



Lu Spriggs Web Sites for November 2004

<http://wacug.org/> – This is the site for the Washington Area Computer Users Group. Visit it for past versions of Spriggs Web Sites with hyperlinks.

1. <http://www.choosetosave.org/> – Whether you are retired, or not, learn how to save for a “rainy” day!
2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/> – Wikipedia is an open content, free, encyclopedia in many languages. Over 344,000 articles, compared to 75,000 for Encyclopedia Britannica. Open content means that any “expert” can update any article, think
3. <http://www.copernic.com/> – Here is a Meta Search program. The free version uses (90) search engines in (10) categories. Version 6.1 is a 3.35 MB download.
4. <http://www.mozillastore.com/products/software/> – New browser from Mozilla: Firefox + Thunderbird mail Client, + Guidebook @ \$13.95 + \$4.50 S&H. Works with Windows, Linux, or Mac. Free downloads: 4.5 MB or 3.5 MB.
5. <http://www.evite.com/> – If you are planning to hold a gathering for an anniversary, birthday, or graduation, etc. and you fear that the invitations’ “R.S.V.P.” may be ignored, consider using this free ‘evite’ service to send your invitations. Not only will you save money on cards and postage, the ‘evite’ invitation has a highlighted R.S.V.P. area, which makes it simple for the recipient to indicate their intentions. You must register for the service, however.
6. <http://www.perverted-justice.com/> – Visit this site for tips to protect your teen age daughter from being seduced by a sexual predator at an online chat room.
7. <http://froogle.google.com/froo:gle> (fru’gal) n. – Smart shopping through Google.
8. <http://www.livingto100.com/> – Are you looking forward to growing old? Think you will make age 100? This site, maintained by Thomas Perles, director of the centenarian study at Boston University has some tips for you, and a questionnaire.
9. <http://www.twinlesstwins.org/> – Are you suffering from the loss of your twin (or other multiple sibling)? visit this support group for solace and advice.
10. <http://www.isa-appraisers.org/> – Do you have any treasures in your attic? Contact this site to find an appraiser to determine its true value!



NCTCUG

Visit our “sister” user group. The National Capital Technology and Computer User’s Group meets the first and fourth Wednesday of the month. They meet in Carlin Hall in Arlington at 5711 South 4th Street. Visit their web site for more information, a map and directions:

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

*** FREE PRINTER ***

Free Epson Inkjet Printer, 1 1/2 yr. old, needs minor repair to Control Circuit in printer.

Installed are (4) full ink cartridges (bk+color) which sell for over \$50. Needs standard 19 pin parallel-port printer cable. Printer is Epson Stylus Color model C80

Please e-mail spriggs1@erols.com, and I will bring it to the next WAC meeting.



GNU/Linux SIG

by Geof Goodrum of The Washington
Area Computer User Group
By Geof Goodrum

Linux CD of the Month

In addition to the CD-R discs described below, I can provide any downloadable GNU/Linux operating system distribution (e.g. Fedora Core, Mandrake, Debian) on CD-R. Note: download versions of commercial distributions do not include official technical support or printed documentation.

Discs are available only to WAC members by pre-order. Contact me by phone (703-370-7649) or e-mail (ggoodrum@bigfoot.com) at least 48 hours before meeting day to order or for more information. Single discs cost \$4 each; GNU/Linux distributions on two or three discs cost \$6 per set. All executable programs are for Intel x86 compatible Linux distributions unless stated otherwise. Your requests and suggestions are always welcome!

November 2004

Doom 3 Demo - v1.1. Free commercial-license executable with demo levels from id Software. Rated M for ages 17 and above. Doom 3 is the long-awaited 3D shooter with some of the most impressive visuals yet seen in a computer

game. A massive demonic invasion has overwhelmed the Union Aerospace Corporations' (UAC) Mars Research Facility leaving only chaos and horror in its wake. As one of only a few survivors, you struggle with shock and fear as you fight your way to Hell and back. Linux client and game server software is included. This software can be used to play levels in the commercial boxed game. The minimum system specifications are 1 GHz Pentium III, 256MB RAM, Kernel 2.4 (2.6 recommended), glibc 2.2, 3D graphics card (NV10 or R200, OpenGL hardware acceleration, 64 MB VRAM), and a sound card with OSS drivers. The game does not work with current ATI video drivers.

GNU/Linux Distribution

Updates - Security and bug fix monthly updates for Fedora Core 2 and Mandrake 10.

Kernel Source - The latest versions of 2.4 and 2.6 kernel source code for all platforms.



To Zip and and Unzip

by Chuck Roberts, WACUG

Most of us have received an e-mail that contains an attachment in a zip or compressed format. Why send compressed files? How does the sender compress the files? How does the receiver “uncompress” or restore the files? How does file compression work?

These are all real good questions. Since I am supposed to provide a demonstration of compressing or “zipping” files, I thought I would attempt to provide some insight to these questions and the corresponding answers. So here goes...

There are many utilities available for making files smaller. PKWare was the first company to produce a utility for compressing files known as PKZip. Once files were compressed using PKZip, the file type became known as a zipped file because the filename extension became .zip. So the file became a zip file.

Why zip files?

The reason files are zipped is to reduce their size. By reducing the file size, the amount of time required to either send or receive the file is also reduced. Just a few years ago, this was important because ISP's charged for your connection time. So anything you could do to use less time on the Internet saved you money sooner or later. I remember some folks would dial into their ISP several times to retrieve their mail, then logoff and read and respond to their mail. Then log back on to send their responses.

Today, most of us have less restrictive ISPs so we aren't so sensitive to the length of time required to send and receive email. But another benefit

also arose from zipping files for transmission. Sometimes it wasn't just a single file. In business, it was not unusual to have a group of files that needed to be sent to several individuals. So it became second nature to construct an archive of multiple files to be sent as a single zipped file.

That made it easier to send the same files to a group of clients, customers or friends. Zipped archives also simplified the reception process because one would receive a single file attachment. I could put that zipped file in a directory and then I could uncompress or unzip the archive into the individual files. Neat huh?

What about unzip?

The only problem was to make sure all the recipients had the utility to unzip the file. Back then, Windows did not recognize a file with a .zip file extension so some application was required that could act on the file to restore or uncompress the contents.

During those days, PKWare also sold a deluxe version that could create a self-extracting zip file. The zipped file became a .exe or executable file. Double-clicking on the file name would cause the file to self-extract and producing the individual files. Windows XP now understands the .zip format and will automatically decompress or unzip the file into the originals. But Windows XP does not have the ability to create zip files — an external utility is still required to create the zip.

How does compression work?

I am sure there are corporate secrets in a really detailed discussion, but that's beyond the scope of this article. So let's keep this discussion simple.

Dual Action

Compression is the process of examining a file, analyzing the data content and creating a short-hand version of the data content.

Archiving is the process of combining multiple files into a single unit that contains unique information about each file that allows it to be reconstructed from the whole.

Digital Information

Every file in the computer contains only ones and zeros (1 and 0). Every character in a file is either a one or a zero. Each document, file and/or image contains lots of information and each “bit” of information is written as either a one or a zero. So the act of compression is simply creating a shorthand notation to use for repeating elements or combinations of ones and zeros.

On a higher plane, how many times is the word “the” used in this article? One way to compress the content would be to replace the word “the” with “th” for example. That would compress each occurrence of the word “the” by one-third.

How many times is the word “compression” used? By replacing “compression” (11 characters) with “cmprsn” (6 characters) each use of compression is reduced by almost half. Now to be meaningful, when the file is unzipped, all the shorthand must be used to reconstruct the file in the original format.

Compression

In images, characters and letters are not meaningful, but pixels or dots are used. To keep the example simple, assume only grey and white dots will be used. It is simple to imagine a row of pixels 8 pixels

➤ See *Zip* on page 6

Help! My Computer Is Down and I Can't Get It Up

by Ira Wilsker, APCUG BOD
and columnist for the Examiner,
Beaumont, TX

I am embarrassed to say this, but I had a major problem with my computer recently. It would only boot to a blue screen that said that it had a problem, and Windows XP stopped to prevent any damage, and gave an error code. It said to uninstall any recent programs or hardware, and recommended starting in safe mode. This can happen to anyone at any time, and has happened to me before. Most of the time, a simple power-off then reboot will resolve the problem, as these blue screens are often itinerant, and may not recur, and a simple reboot may rectify the problem. I turned the power off, waited a few seconds, powered on, and attempted to reboot, and that discouraging blue screen reappeared, instead of my desktop. I rebooted again, and selected safe mode, allowing the computer to fully boot in that manner. As designed, since many drivers and programs do not load when booted into safe mode, it loaded normally. Usually, when I had this problem in the past, exiting from safe mode, and rebooting generally rebooted the computer properly, and I could do my work. Not this time, the computer was being stubborn; now I could better sympathize with some of the callers on my show who express frustrations, and even state that their computer hates them.

I went into safe mode again, and uninstalled the Microsoft Critical Update I had downloaded and installed the previous evening. Confident that this was the problem,

as there are often such complaints posted online after every critical update, I was sure that this would resolve itself, and my computer would then reboot normally. Feeling twangs of anger, my computer rebooted into the now familiar blue screen of boot failure.

While approaching despair, I knew that all was not lost because the previous evening I had performed an incremental backup (only new or changed files since the previous backup are saved) to my external hard drive, so I was certain that all of my critical data could easily be restored if that option became necessary. Still the frustration of being unable to boot the computer was mounting. Fortunately, in addition to a very current backup which could be restored as a last resort, there are other less stressful and viable options to overcome whatever was creating my problem.

Windows XP and ME have a not very well known feature "System Restore" as an integral function. Ideally, the system restore function should take a snapshot of critical system files and settings at each successful boot, and prior to any major changes. I have been certain to make sure that my system restore is always functioning, and also manually create another restore point prior to making any changes in software, registry, or other critical items. It is important to note that those people who leave their computers on 24 hours, may not have new restore points periodically created automatically by the system, making it quite possible that a restore may not use the most up to date information. System restore can be located in XP at Start – Programs – Accessories – System Tools – System Restore.

When opened, two choices will be presented: create a restore point, or restore the computer to an earlier date. By default, unless intentionally changed, XP will save restore information until 12% of the hard drive is used for that purpose. Once the limit is reached, older restore points are deleted using "FIFO" (first in, first out). Other than a few minutes of time, it almost never hurts to create a restore point, unless the hard drive is approaching capacity. Many users are not aware if there has been a recent restore point created, and it is easy to find out by opening the system restore function, and clicking on "Restore the Computer to an Earlier Time". A calendar will appear, and dates that contain restore points will be in bold. Clicking on a date will show the restore points created on that date. To restore the computer to that time, click on the date and time desired, and the automated process will run, rebooting the computer upon completion, and making the computer as it was at that date.

Once created, restore points cannot easily be modified, which may create problems if an unknown virus or Trojan is infecting the computer. When this happens, the virus or Trojan is saved along with the requisite necessary data. If such a restore point is selected, then the malware is restored along with the desired data, re-infecting the computer. This is a surprisingly common way of re-infecting a computer after antivirus software deletes active threats.

A system restore function is not included with Windows 95, 98, NT, or 2000, but there is an excellent alternative, that also works well

➤ See *Computer Down* page 10

wide, as the example to the below.

Row 0	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	2 (1) - 6 (0)
Row 1	□	□	■	■	■	■	□	□	2 (0) - 4 (1) 2(0)
Row 2	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	3 (0) - 5 (1)
Row 3	□	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	

Here is the description of each row (0 - 4) pixel by pixel:

Row zero has two black pixels followed by six white pixels

Row one has two white pixels followed by four grey pixels followed by two white pixels

Row two has three white pixels followed by five grey pixels

Row three has one white pixel followed by two grey pixels followed by one white pixel followed by four grey pixels.

Imagine a shorthand notation to explain each grey box as a "1" and each white box as a "0". With each row numbered, 0 through 3 and each grey pixel is a "1" and each white pixel a "0", the notation for the above "image" could be:

Row 0 = 2(1), 6(0)	Row 0 has 2 grey and 6 white pixels
Row 1 = 2(0), 4(1), 2(0)	Row 1 has 2 white, 4 grey, 2 white pixels
Row 2 = 3(0), 5(1)	Row 2 has 3 white, 5 grey pixels
Row 3 = 1(0), 2(1), 1(0), 4(1)	Row 3 has 1 white, 2 grey, 1 white, 4 grey pixels

So by rows then by pixels:

0, 2(1), 6(0)	Row 0 has 2 grey and 6 white pixels
1, 2(0), 4(1), 2(0)	Row 1 has 2 white, 4 grey, 2 white pixels
2, 3(0), 5(1)	Row 2 has 3 white, 5 grey pixels
3, 1(0), 2(1), 1(0), 4(1)	Row 3 has 1 white, 2 grey, 1 white, 4 grey pixels

The content of the pixels has not changed just the way of describing them. The shorthand just created is very efficient compared to the original description.

Archiving

Imagine having multiple files to compress. How does the compressing application keep the details of each file separate as the multiple files are compressed into a single new compressed file? I have no idea but that is one of the very important aspects of the developers who create these applications. I simply appreciate and use them.

Summary

Beginning with Windows XP, a zipped file will be uncompressed into the directory of your choice. But Windows still does not have the ability to create zipped files. Zipped files are a nice feature to use when you are

sending several files to someone else via email. Since a number of files are compressed into a single file for transmission, only a single file is received. When unzipped, all the individual files are put in the same directory so no files get lost during the restoration process.

There are several utilities for creating zipped or compressed files, I hope the presentation will help you see the differences between the different products and happy zipping.



TECH NEWS

By Sue Crane, Vice President / Editor,
Big Bear Computer Club, California

Finally, Software with the updates included! Microsoft last month started the process of swapping out all of the boxed copies of Windows XP with the updated version, with a triangle in the upper corner touting SP2 and its security enhancements. Over the next month, Microsoft hopes to swap out the bulk of all boxed copies worldwide. OfficeMax is offering a free 128MB flash drive and anti-spyware to customers buying an XP upgrade.

The Visible Light Communications Consortium, a group of 15 IT manufacturers is proposing using light emitting diodes—which will increasingly become common for ordinary light fixtures and outdoor equipment like traffic lights—to transmit data traffic by up to 10 meters at high speeds. With the technology, a person trapped in a building could hold up a cell phone to a ceiling light, and rescuers would be able to pinpoint his or her exact location. Similarly, cars could exchange information through headlights and taillights, and car computer systems could tell drivers if there were major stalls ahead.

The Federal Communications Commission is beginning a new consumer-education campaign to support the nationwide switch from analog to digital TV. Announcing a new Web site to answer questions about digital TV, The Consumer Electronics Association estimates that about 10% of U.S. households currently have digital sets. For those who don't have cable or satellite TV a converter box will be available to receive and decode digital signals at

a cost about \$200 each. <http://www.dtv.gov/>

You probably know that high quality, low cost digital scanning, copying and printing technologies have been used to counterfeit currency, but did you know that the government is fighting back? When you put a document under the glass of your new photocopier or scanner and push the button, it makes a high resolution copy - unless the document is one of the new style twenty or fifty dollar bills. If you do that, you just might see a message pop up informing you that you should visit the Treasury website to become more educated on counterfeit laws

Schools and libraries nationwide have suddenly stopped receiving any new grants from a federal program that is wrestling with new rules on how it spends \$2.25 billion each year to provide high-speed Internet and telephone service. The moratorium at the E-Rate program <http://www.fcc.gov/learnnet/> began two months ago, with no notice, and may last for months, causing significant hardships at schools and libraries.

The FTC is launching an aggressive new strategy to prosecute “spyware” perpetrators, and last week filed a civil lawsuit against former spamming Sanford Wallace and his companies, Seismic Entertainment Productions and SmartBot. Wallace, who was once dubbed “Spamford” for his earlier misdeeds, operates the PassItOn.com Web site, which requires visitors to click through multiple pop-up windows in order to exit.

Install a chip inside your body, and when something goes wrong, it automatically pings your doctor.

Or even simpler, your complete medical makeup and history can be burned into a chip and implanted in your body. The tiny chips, which are embedded under the skin with a syringe, are programmed with a code similar to the UPC codes on retail goods, which releases patient-specific information on such issues as allergies and prior treatments when scanned

Philips' Motiva technology allows patients to use their home televisions to communicate with their care providers over a broadband connection. The pilot program has enrolled 60 patients. The test is designed to gauge how well patients and health care providers use the interactive system when communicating and sharing medical information.

A directory of cell phone numbers will be published soon, opening the door for solicitors to call cell phones using up your minutes. The FTC has set up a National Do Not Call Registry for cell phones. You must call FROM the number you wish to register. The number is 1-888-382-1222, OR you can go to <https://www.donotcall.gov/Register/Reg.aspx> to register your cell phones on line.

Microsoft will count new multicore processors as single units when they debut next year. This announcement puts an end to confusion about Microsoft's policy regarding multicore processors, in which two or more processors are etched onto a single chip. Many of Microsoft's competitors are currently charging more for software that runs on servers equipped with dual or multicore chips. Intel's dual-core

➔ see *Tech News* on page 8

Xeon is due in 2006. Also watch for a competing chip from AMD.

The FBI says your unsecured 802.11 network could be used in the commission of a cybercrime. If you don't want the FBI to come knocking at your door, take steps to secure your wireless network against intruders.

Helen Greiner, co-founder of iRobot, said her company had sold 1 million of its *Roomba* robotic vacuum cleaners—a milestone that drew applause at the RoboNexus International Conference & Exposition. The use of robots to perform household tasks such as lawn-mowing, vacuuming, guard duty and other chores is slated to increase sevenfold by 2007, according to the U.N.'s latest World Robotics Survey.

A federal appeals court struck a blow against Printer manufacturers who want to use Digital Copyright to protect their share of the lucrative printer cartridges market. Judge Gilbert Merritt stated in his summary, "We should make clear that in the future companies like Lexmark cannot use the DMCA in conjunction with copyright law to create monopolies of manufactured goods."

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.



Understanding USB

by Vinny La Bash,
vlabash@home.com

Member of the Sarasota Personal
Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida

Hail USB! Until a few years ago if you wanted to add an external device to your computer, such as a scanner or a Zip drive, it needed your one and only parallel port. The trouble with this was that your printer had already staked out that territory. One way of getting around the problem was installing an A/B switch. However, if you needed more than one device, you had to install an A/B/C/D switch. Sometimes moving among these devices meant having to turn one off before you could use another, and often you had to reboot before your machine would recognize another device on the switch.

Early Palm Pilots and digital cameras sought your serial port. Computers had, and most still have two serial ports, but they were slow and almost always involved installation of controlling software.

There were also devices that came with their own controller cards. This meant you had to open the case and install the card in an expansion slot, provided you had one available. Things could get crazy quickly, and you had to handle IRQ conflicts, more cables, and additional power cords.

Rescue arrived with the introduction of the USB port (Universal Serial Bus) that lets you attach almost anything to your computer quickly and easily. Windows XP is designed to support USB so device conflicts are gone. The standard allows up to 127 devices on a single USB port. In practice, no one uses that many devices. USB connectors

let you attach everything from TV tuners to modems. It's an amazingly flexible technology. If you had a toaster with a USB connection you could hook it up, but it's doubtful you could watch bread turn brown on the screen.

Installing a USB device is incredibly simple. Windows XP senses it through a process called auto-detection, and asks for the driver disk if it's needed. If you have previously installed the device, XP activates it, and it's ready for use. Part of the beauty of USB is that you can connect and disconnect devices at any time without having to reboot your machine or change any options. If a cable is built-in to a USB device it will connect to your computer with its own "A" connector. Otherwise it will connect with a "B" connector. "A" and "B" connectors are of different sizes and shapes so there is never a question of getting them mixed up.

Today, most desktop computers are built with least four USB ports. That is inadequate, but there are relatively inexpensive USB hubs available that act as expansion devices. The number of ports available on an expansion hub can vary from as few as two to as many as seven, depending on your needs and how much you care to spend. Plug the hub into your computer, and then plug your devices into the hub. You can chain hubs together, and build dozens of available USB ports on a single computer.

The USB standard lets USB connected devices draw their power from their USB connection to the PC. This works well for mice, digital cameras, web cams, and other

➤ see *USB* on page 9

devices that use small amounts of power. Printers, scanners, and other high power accessories require their own power supply, and they can be plugged into hubs that do not have their own power supply. If you run out of USB sockets and you have a lot of low power devices, get a powered hub so you don't overwhelm the PC bus.

Inside your computer the USB bus lets the computer act as a host to all USB devices attached to it. If you have the up-to-date USB 2.0 standard, data can be transferred at up to 480 megabits per second. If you were moving text, that works out to about 30,000 pages of documents per second. That's a maximum rate, not typical of actual use. Nevertheless, it's impressive.

USB has other advantages. You can plug in or remove USB devices without having to reboot your machine, and the computer can put USB devices into an inactive state when conserving power. XP queries all USB devices when your machine powers on, assigns each one an address, and determines what kind of data it needs to send or receive. XP keeps track of the total bandwidth of all the attached USB devices. If the combined devices reach 90% of the 480 megabit maximum, XP denies access to any additional devices. The remaining 10% is reserved for transmitting control characters, stop and start transmission codes, error checking, and other overhead.

USB 2.0 encourages the development of innovative products that would be impossible to develop with the older standards. It's the solution for all PC users who want

an instant, no-hassle way to connect new hardware like digital joysticks, scanners, digital speakers, digital cameras or a PC telephone to their computer. Plug and Pray has truly become Plug and Play.

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.



Do It Now

by Elizabeth B. Wright, member of
the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
October 2004 eMonitor

That is not new advice. In fact, it borders on being trite. However, I am talking about getting things down on paper (electronically) before it is too late.

Many of the over-50 group have begun to delve seriously into genealogy. And that is a good idea. However, we are in danger of doing a lot of hard work and then having it completely lost because our children are not yet interested in "roots" things. They give a little lip service to our efforts, but mostly they don't seem to think any more about it than we did when we were younger. And they mostly do not have the programs we use on their own computers.

There is a good range of programs for genealogical research and most of them can be used by beginners rather easily. That is not to say that all of the available features will magically become useful to first-

timers, but most of the essential information can be entered by just about any level of user competence.

That information, however, is going to stay right where it is, on the computer, until something happens to it. That something could even be a computer crash or virus which might wipe out all the hard work put into developing family history. There are options, usually, to save the files to an external disk, CD, or other backup-type media. This should be the very first step after inputting important data into a program.

Then comes the reason for this article. Nearly all of the current programs have choices to output the data into reports of various types. There are always the tree charts which have become so familiar to all of us. Usually there are other types of reports which sort the information in ways other than a typical family tree. Using reports, it is possible to download the essential data into hard printed copy to share with children, grandchildren and other interested relatives. Many programs have very good options for printing books. Most also have the ability to include photographs in the output. And photographs don't always have to be of people. Most serious genealogists include photos of important documents, as well as maps, places, buildings, and objects of interest such as clothing, trophies, jewelry, grave markers, etc. Photographs can greatly enhance the value of the information as well as making it more enjoyable to read.

Our family members who are not yet interested in genealogy have a

➔ See *Do It Now* on page 10

tendency to treat our efforts with some humor, thinking perhaps it is a rather quaint way for “seniors” to spend time on an amusing hobby. Of course, the day usually comes when they wish they had the same information. And the efforts we make now can provide them with a great start. There really is practically no limit to how much research can be done on any family line.

But what if you don't want to get into deep family research? We have such a golden opportunity to use our computers to just put in print our own memories of family. As we age, and we all seem to, some of those memories begin to be hazy. We need to DO IT NOW, while we have the ability and the means to accomplish it. And when we finish writing a particular memory, we need to transfer it to the same external medium, and also print hard copies of it. With a little luck, younger family members will at least put it somewhere for future reference. Worst case scenario is going to the trouble to give someone your hard work only to have it be given a cursory glance and possibly be thrown away.

Using your word processor, simply typing out a story and by including any available photographs in the document, you can begin to build a family history starting with YOU.

My favorite example from my own case is typing the family “lore” of how my grandmother grew up. She was left motherless as a toddler, put in an orphanage and foster homes before finally being taken from her native Iowa to Kansas by her older (by just a couple of years) brother and possibly her father. The story

was always murky, but consistent, told to me by both my mother and my aunt. When I finally began doing serious family research, I came across enough information to confirm the story, almost word for word the way the “lore” had passed it down to me. Both my mother and my aunt had been dead for many years before I began the search for my grandmother's family, and had I not finally written it down, it would have ended with me. No one else has ever been remotely interested in my grandmother except my mother, my aunt and me. Now I am hoping my son and my daughter and their children will keep the information and expand it someday, along with the other branches of their family tree.



with ME and XP. WinRescue, available at <http://www.superwin.com>, creates a separate registry backup each time the computer is booted. With WinRescue, the system registry can be easily restored if problems occur.

Now I have to get back to work, and restore my computer.

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.



Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!



The Cursor

Copyright ©2004 WAC

Monthly Circulation: 100

A monthly publication of the Washington Area Computer Users Group (WAC), a Virginia membership corporation serving the entire metropolitan DC area.

The WAC Board of Directors, SIG Leaders and other Volunteers

President:..... Paul Howard, 703-860-9246, plhoward@verizon.net
Vice-President:..... Jim Brueggeman, 703-450-1384, bigjimo1@aol.com
Secretary:..... Jorn Dakin, 703-534-8691, ldakin@alumni.uchicago.edu
Treasurer: Bob Rott, blbob1@erols.com
Internet Support: Lu Spriggs, 703-361-0014, spriggsl@erols.com
Vendor Contact: Chuck Roberts, 703-876-9787, chrobe@cox.net
PC SIG Leader/Disk Librarian:..... Bob Mason, 703-503-9324, Bob.Mason@remjem.com
Linux SIG Leader, Membership Chair: . Geof Goodrum, 703-370-7649, ggoodrum@bigfoot.com
Meeting Setup/APCUG Liaison: Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141, bill.walsh@cox.net
Web Site Team: Paul Howard and Chuck Roberts
Newsletter Editor:..... Chuck Roberts
Scanning, photography:..... Don Miller, 703-405-5916, donmiller@airbridge.net
BOD:..... Kathy Perrin, 703-369-6511, 4k4@4purple.com

Reprints/Article Submission

WAC encourages reprints of *Cursor* articles. Reprints must not be abridged or modified, and must identify the author, *The Cursor*, and the Washington Area Computer Users Group. Please contact the WAC Secretary about downloadable articles and article submission procedures. Products or brand names mentioned may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

If Your Address Changes or is Incorrect:

Call Geof Goodrum, 703-370-7649 evenings or mail change of address to:
WAC, 30 Fendall Ave, Alexandria, VA 22304-6300

2005 WAC Membership/Renewal Application

2005 Dues are for the Calendar Year and include Disk Library Discounts, and WAC's monthly newsletter, *The Cursor*, by 1st Class mail to your home.

Individual/Corporate/Family Dues: \$25.00

Remit payment in person at the WAC Membership table on meeting day, or by mail to:

Washington Area Computer Users Group
30 Fendall Ave.

Alexandria, VA 22304-6300

Make checks payable to WAC. Please do not send cash by mail. *Thank you for joining WAC!*

Complete if you name and address do not appear on the reverse side. Include E-mail Address

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: () - _____

E-mail: _____

Membership Survey: Help us to help you by completing this survey.
List the computer systems you own / use (in order of preference)

Operating System(s): _____

Modem(s): _____

Printer(s): _____

Other Hardware: _____

Favorite Software: _____

Connection: (circle one) Dial-up or Broadband

Circle Your Interests: Word Processing Databases Games

Telecommunications Internet Access Education Music

Graphics/Animation Spreadsheets Video Finance

Programming Language(s) _____

Hardware Upgrades/Repair List others below

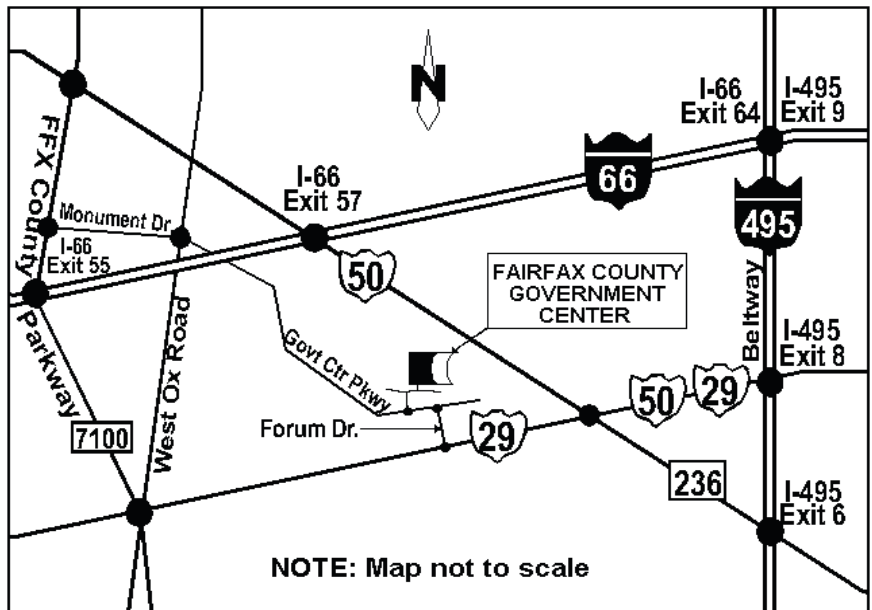
Next WAC Meetings: • Nov 20 • Dec 18 • Jan 22 • Feb 26 • Mar 19

Call (703) 370-7649 for the latest meeting information or Visit our Web Site at:
<http://www.wacug.org>

Meetings are held at the
Fairfax County
Government Center

Through Front Entrance to
the Left Hallway, Past the
Elevators to:
Conference Room 2-3

Service Desks Open at
12:30 Meeting Starts at
1:00 PM
FREE ADMISSION
BRING A FRIEND!



Washington Area Computer Users Group
30 Fendall Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22304-6300
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Stamp

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL
Please Deliver By
Tuesday, November, 11

Label