



# *The Cursor*

*Monthly Newsletter of the  
Washington Area Computer User Group*



Meeting Location  
OLLI, 4210 Roberts Road,  
Fairfax, VA



Next Meeting:  
January 17, 2009



## **Presidential Bits January 2009 Meeting**

by Paul Howard

**H**appy New Year !! WACUG is about to embark on a series of new adventures, as we hold joint meetings with OPCUG, the computer club of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University (OLLI). We'll be meeting at OLLI's Tallwood campus, at 4210 Roberts Road in Fairfax. See our web site's meeting page for maps and more details of the new location, such as the parking arrangements: <http://www.wacug.org/meetings.html>

OLLI has excellent AV facilities for these meetings, and an adjoining social room and annex for snacks and other activities - providing a venue for computer troubleshooting, for instance. Refreshments will be available on an honor system basis - a "refreshment fund" jar will be placed on a table in the social room, with a suggested donation of \$1.00. (If you're really hungry or thirsty, a larger donation would be appreciated <grin>!)

January's joint meeting will include a "Learn 30" session on email, with demonstrations of five important email tasks by a collection of WAC presenters. Future "Learn 30" (a

phrase coined by WAC's Neal Grotenstein) sessions will be half hour training / demonstrations on the basics of a variety of computer skills, techniques, and application program usage.

Our January 17th meeting will feature WAC (and OLLI) member Lorrin Garson, discussing Amazon's Kindle. The Kindle is an electronic book reader for which approximately 190,000 book titles and a dozen magazines and newspaper subscriptions are available from Amazon.com. The device is about the size and weight of a paperback and sells for \$359. Books are priced, on the average, at about \$9.00 per title, although many are available for considerably less. The device itself holds approximately 200 books and a SD memory card, which can be added, will hold about 750 books per gigabyte capacity (a 32 GB card would hold 24,000 books!). Books, newspapers and magazines may be purchased online using the Kindle itself or a computer. Purchases are delivered wirelessly to the Kindle generally within 1-2 minutes employing a cell-phone technology called Whispernet. The device uses E-Ink electronic paper technology on a 6" diagonal display with 600

See *Prez bits* page 6

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Lloyd's Web Sites for January.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>GNU/Linux .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Directions to the OLLI Meeting Room.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Keeping Up .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Advanced System Care Free .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Plus Bonus Articles in the Download Edition</b>	

# Lloyd's Web Sites for January, 2009

by Lloyd Johnson, WACUG Member

<http://www.wacug.org/> is the URL for the Washington Area Computer User Group. Visit it for past issues of Web Sites with hyperlinks

## January's Sites:

1. Foreign Language Translator – [www.babelfish.altavista.com](http://www.babelfish.altavista.com) Just type your letter hit the translate button.
2. ZIP Code Lookup – <http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.jsp> – Look up postal abbreviations, search for ZIP codes, and browse other information about the U.S. Postal Service.
3. When traveling in US or abroad, take along this list of ATM's at your destination– [www.visa.com/atms](http://www.visa.com/atms) or [www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)
4. Mymoney.gov – [www.mymoney.gov](http://www.mymoney.gov) The U.S. government's website for teaching the basics about financial education
5. The Pew Research Center – <http://people-press.org> – Polls, public opinion research, national surveys on public attitudes toward press, politics, public policy issues; funded by Pew Charitable Trusts. Pew Research Center tracks trends in values, political and social attitudes.
6. The World Factbook, 2008 – [www.bartleby.com/151](http://www.bartleby.com/151) – The U.S. government's complete geographical handbook, featuring full-color maps and flags of all nations and geographical entities. Each country profile tracks such demographics as population, ethnicity and literacy rates, as well as political, geographical and economic data.
7. Print what you like – <http://www.printwhatyoulike.com> – Slice and Dice any web page before printing it. Simply past the URL of the site you'd like to format for printing into the text box.
8. Get Home Values & See Comparable Home Valuations – <http://real-estate.yahoo.com/Homevalues> – Find your home value on this site by Yahoo Real Estate. Get free instant home values and see comparable home valuations for millions of houses. No personal information is required and no one will contact you.
9. Credit Conditions in the United States – [www.newyorkfed.org/regional/subprime.htm](http://www.newyorkfed.org/regional/subprime.htm) – These maps display the 60+ day delinquency rates for credit cards issued by banks and the 90+ day delinquency rates for mortgages as well as the percentage point change in the delinquency rates from one year ago, by county.
10. Ask Jeeves Kids – [www.ajkids.com](http://www.ajkids.com) – Ask Jeeves for Kids is a fast, easy and kid-friendly way for kids to find answers to their questions online.



## 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 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Visit their web site for more information, a map and directions:

<http://www.nctcug.org/>  
Meetings start at 7:00 PM

**Washington Area User  
Group Partners  
Working Together For  
Our Members**

**CPCUG**

**NCTCUG**

**WACUG**

**OPCUG**



## GNU/Linux SIG

By Geof Goodrum, WAC

### Alan Cox Leaves Red Hat for Intel

Alan Cox, considered to be one of the most influential developers of the Linux operating system kernel after Linus Torvalds, announced on December 23<sup>rd</sup> that he was leaving employment with Red Hat, Inc. to work for Intel Corporation. Alan said that the change provides “an opportunity to get even closer to the low level stuff that interests me most.” Most readers viewed the change favorably, and Alan himself reassured the community that his departure from Red Hat would have no effect on Red Hat engineering.

Alan lost some public visibility in the United States when he stopped attending meetings in the US, citing provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) that the FBI used to arrest Russian programmer Dmitry Sklyarov, who was an invited guest speaker at the Def Con convention in 2001. More information about that case is on the Electronic Frontier Foundation’s web site at <http://www EFF.org/cases/us-v-elcomsoft-sklyarov/faq>.

A copy of Alan’s letter and user comments are posted on the Linux

Weekly News web site at <http://lwn.net/Articles/312631/>.

### More Electronic Voting Failures

The 2008 elections provided more examples of problems with electronic voting systems. The Humboldt County, California Election Transparency Project (<http://humboldtcountyelectiontransparencyproject.com/etp/>) found that the Premier Election Solutions Global Election Management System (GEMS) failed to register 197 ballots in a June 2008 election. Premier is a subsidiary of Diebold, which makes bank ATM systems. The failure was due to a bug in the system. The company was aware of the bug, but had not notified officials directly.

During the November 2008 election, officials in Montgomery County, Ohio discovered that five votes failed to register in a Premier Election Solutions system.

User comments on such stories usually question how such bugs can exist in software for such a simple process as counting votes, or argue that proprietary software used in voting machines must be replaced with Open Source software to allow independent review by third parties. Others have pointed out that there is additional overhead in training poll workers on how to use e-voting systems, and such systems require additional maintenance and protections against tampering.

What follows are my opinions on the subject.

While just counting votes is a simple process for software, there also must be software to ensure integrity in the process. In my recent experience voting in the City of Alexandria (which now uses touchscreen voting systems, to my great dismay), each voter is assigned a unique code

that must be entered at the voting machine first and within a fixed period of time to allow a vote to be cast. This helps ensure only one vote per registered voter. In practice, there should also be code to ensure that votes aren’t changed after they are cast. Is there? I don’t know, because I can’t look at the vendor’s software.

While only permitting Open Source software in voting machines may seem like the answer, it does not ensure that someone doesn’t change the executable code on the voting machines. Open Source is not perfect, either, and can still be affected by bugs.

What seems to be at fault is the entire premise behind electronic voting systems. There was a rush to field these systems after the “hanging chad” fiasco in Florida’s 2000 Presidential election. However, there seems to be a priority of getting results out quickly over getting correct results. Everyone is anxious to see the final tally, but that should not compromise the process. The examples above show that the process is already compromised, and the problems may be much greater as detection in these cases resulted from unusual audits. Losing just one vote is unacceptable, and it is unclear just how many votes have been lost, particularly with systems that do not keep a paper record of each vote cast.

While electronic touchscreen systems can prevent ambiguous votes (e.g. hanging chads and multiple selections, either by punch card or filled-in circles), the voter must be able to review a paper record of their vote before it is cast, and the paper record must be the official record if

See *Linux* page 4



Linux from page 3

the final tallies differ from the electronic vote.

The Register web site has articles about the two cases cited above at [http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/12/09/diebold\\_software\\_glitch/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/12/09/diebold_software_glitch/) and [http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/12/13/diebold\\_loses\\_votes\\_again/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2008/12/13/diebold_loses_votes_again/), as well as links to related articles. The Electronic Frontier Foundation also reviews e-voting issues on its web site at <http://www.eff.org/issues/e-voting>.

## GNU/Linux Distribution Releases

GNU/Linux distributions are complete GNU/Linux operating system and application software collections. Many are freely downloadable or can be ordered on CDs or DVD at low cost. DistroWatch.com lists the following distribution release announcements for the period December 4, 2008 – December 28, 2008.

Distribution
<a href="#">ASPLinux 14</a>
<a href="#">Bluewhite64 Linux 12.2</a>
<a href="#">Clonezilla Live 1.2.1-23</a>
<a href="#">CRUX 2.5</a>
<a href="#">EnGarde Secure Linux 3.0.22</a>
<a href="#">Finnix 92.1</a>
<a href="#">iMagic OS 2009</a>
<a href="#">K-DEMar 4.7</a>
<a href="#">Kiwi Linux 8.12</a>
<a href="#">Linux Mint 6</a>
<a href="#">Litrix Linux 9.0</a>
<a href="#">Lunar Linux 1.6.4</a>
<a href="#">Magic Linux 2.1</a>
<a href="#">Musix GNU+Linux 1.0R6</a>
<a href="#">openSUSE 11.1</a>
<a href="#">Parted Magic 3.3</a>
<a href="#">Puppy Linux 4.1.2</a>
<a href="#">Sabayon Linux 4</a>

<a href="#">sidux 2008-04</a>
<a href="#">Slackware Linux 12.2</a>
<a href="#">Slax 6.0.9</a>
<a href="#">SystemRescueCd 1.1.3</a>
<a href="#">TinyMe 2008.1</a>
<a href="#">Trisquel GNU/Linux 2.1</a>
<a href="#">ZevenOS 1.0</a>

## Linux Software of the Month

The software described below is downloadable at the links provided or may be requested on CD, or copied onto a USB flash drive at the WAC meeting. In addition, WAC can provide CD-R and DVD±R media for any downloadable GNU/Linux operating system distribution (e.g. Fedora, Mandriva, Ubuntu, Debian, Knoppix). Please note that download versions of commercial distributions do not include official technical support nor printed documentation.

Discs are available only by pre-order. Contact Geof Goodrum by e-mail ([linux@wacug.org](mailto:linux@wacug.org)) at least 48 hours before meeting day to order or for more information. Single CD-R discs are available with a \$3 donation; GNU/Linux distributions on multiple CD-Rs or single DVD±R are available with a \$6 donation.

## January 2009

Ecofont – v2.00. [http://www.eco-font.eu/ecofont\\_en.html](http://www.eco-font.eu/ecofont_en.html). Free GNU General Public License TrueType font by SPRANQ creative communications. Ecofont™ is a modified version of the Bitstream Vera Sans typeface designed with small circular holes to reduce ink/toner usage by up to 20%. The holes are unnoticeable in typical applications, only evident when the font is scaled to headline or larger sizes.

Linux Documentation Project – v20090113. <http://tldp.org/>. GNU

Free Documentation License and other free licenses by various authors. A large collection of HOWTOs, mini-HOWTOs, Guides, and FAQs related to Linux and related technologies in HTML (web browser) format. Examples include introductions to Linux and writing Bash scripts. Not all are maintained or current, but still contain useful information on a wide variety of topics.

POSTNET for OOo – [http://jroller.com/santos/entry/openoffice\\_envelopes\\_with\\_bar\\_code](http://jroller.com/santos/entry/openoffice_envelopes_with_bar_code). Free Academic License OpenOffice.org (OOo) 2.0 macro and document template by Michel Santos and free TrueType font by unknown author. After a one-time setup procedure described in the OOo User's Guide, this envelope template and font file automatically adds USPS POSTNET barcodes below envelope addresses to improve automated mail sorting and delivery.

Python – v3.0. <http://www.python.org/download/releases/3.0/>. Free Python License C source code by the Python Software Foundation. Python 3.0 is a fast, powerful, and

See *Linux* page 5



dynamic programming language that is available and portable for all major Operating Systems. Python is also extensible and modular, with easy interfaces to other major programming languages. Python 3.0 is intentionally incompatible with some features in 2.x releases. The language is mostly the same, but many details, especially how built-in objects like dictionaries and strings work, have changed considerably, and a lot of deprecated features have finally been removed. Also, the standard library has been reorganized in a few prominent places.

Robombs – v1.0. <http://jpct.de/robombs.game/>. Free open source Java code and executable by Egon Olsen. Robombs is a free Bomberman inspired multiplayer game in 3D. It takes the basic concept of Bomberman and transfers it into the 3rd dimension. It's free, fun, easy to grasp and a nice addition to your next LAN-party. Although designed as a multiplayer game, it also offers a basic single player mode for you to have a little bombing fun even when none of your friends are available. Robombs requires Java 5 or later and a hardware accelerated 3D graphic card. A network connection is required for multiplayer games.

Kernel Source – <http://www.kernel.org/>. 2.6 kernel source code for all platforms (stable 2.6.28).



## Directions to the OLLI Meeting Room.

The Tallwood Campus of OLLI, is located at 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, Virginia and can only be accessed from Roberts Road

Handicapped parking spaces are available in the OLLI parking lot, close to the building, for those with appropriate plates or hang tags.

### Meeting Room directions:

From the parking lot adjacent to Roberts Road, follow the sidewalk to the covered walkway area between buildings. Follow the exterior corridor to the right (rear of building) and proceed to the TA1 classroom at the end of the corridor. You'll be passing the social room (3rd door on the right), where refreshments will be available.

From the pool parking lot - walk to the south, and bear left to the front of the building, following the directions above. Or, if you have no problem negotiating stairs, bear right and follow the drive to the rear of the building. There is a short flight to the left of approximately 12 stairs from the drive to the mid-point of the exterior corridor, or proceed south to the end of the covered walkway, and turn left up a three step stairway.



---

***Please Note that the annual meeting and the Election of the Officers of the Board will be held at the January Meeting. You must be a current member to vote (paid membership).***

## Cloud Computing

by Sister Dorothy Robinson,  
Editor, OMUG News, The  
Olympia Microcomputer User  
Group, WA

[www.oly mug.org](http://www.oly mug.org)  
Newsletter (at) oly mug.org

When did you first hear or see the term “cloud computing”? I’m usually the last to know anything, it seems, so I’ve only recently started noticing this term on the Internet. I did some research, and some say it’s the greatest thing since sliced bread—but others think it isn’t such a hot idea. In very simple terms, cloud computing is this: rather than having programs and files on your computer, you would store files online and also access applications (programs) online (think Google Docs or MS Office Live; think Flickr or Buzzword). Your computer really wouldn’t need to have much on it, and you’d have to have an Internet connection in order to run applications or access your files. Not only individuals, but also companies would be doing this (and in fact, are doing it now). One of the major benefits is that a company (or an individual, for that matter) has the use of combined server resources they might not otherwise be able to afford “in house.”

The ever-vigilant Richard Stallman warns against the use of cloud computing: “Somebody is saying this is inevitable—and whenever you hear somebody saying that, it’s very likely to be a set of businesses campaigning to make it true... One reason you should not use web applications to do your computing is that you lose control,” he said. “It’s just as bad as using a proprietary

See *Cloud Computing* page 6

program. Do your own computing on your own computer with your copy of a freedom-respecting program. If you use a proprietary program or somebody else's web server, you're defenseless. You're putty in the hands of whoever developed that software." Food for thought.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).



x 800 pixel resolution at 167 ppi with 4-level gray scale. Text size is adjustable in six sizes. Graphics are displayable in black and white only.

The device can be fully recharged in about two hours. With wireless access turned off, a charge lasts 20-30 hours and if wireless access is turned on about half that time. The Kindle can be attached to a computer via a USB port and Kindle documents can be backed-up on the computer. Amazon also stores items purchased as a backup. Word documents and photos can be e-mailed to the Kindle at an extra charge. Many blogs from numerous areas-of-interest can be downloaded.

The Kindle is full-text searchable across the device itself as well as the installed SD card. Searching can be done across documents on the Kindle, in Wikipedia, and across the World Wide Web as well. Bookmarks and annotations can be made, which are stored for future use. The device comes with a built-in English dictionary that provides for easy look-up.

The Kindle will not be the ultimate electronic book reader or even the penultimate, but it is an outstanding technical accomplishment that is gaining wide acceptance in the marketplace.

If you are unable to attend the January 17th meeting, Lorrin will also offer this presentation at January 28th's NCTCUG meeting, at 7 PM in Arlington.



---

## Keeping Up

by Paul Howard (WACUG)

**H**appy New Year! By this time, rather than heading for the store for the second or third round of

batteries for the new toys that Santa left under your tree, you're probably shopping on the 'net for accessories to go with whatever technological marvel your spouse, kids, or Santa-self, left for you this year. Time may pass, but little really changes!

### Interference with X10 Controls

Over the years, many computer users and technology buffs have tried out the various home automation and security products offered by X10 Wireless Technology, Inc. - web site at [X10.com](http://X10.com). My first units were purchased under a Heathkit label, but I've used units with GE, RCA, and Radio Shack branding. While their on-line marketing has morphed into the realm of a Victoria's Secret catalog, the underlying products are still useful for remote control operation of lights and appliances around the house. At user group meetings, we've seen demonstrations of various remote control products, heard warnings of inherent weaknesses of their security products, and learned about the use of their wireless cameras to get a "passenger's eye" view of train trips on HO model railroads. How neat is that?

I've used X10 technology for years, to avoid stumbling into a darkened house on returning from work or shopping. Similarly, I've used wireless control to dim lights around the house in the evening, keeping lights at a low level for safe walking without the need for full illumination. I control a fan in my computer work area that helps overcome the heat generated by several computers, monitors, printers and other accessories. The technology is great for security lighting purposes, and I've gone thru several different computer controller programs, as the X10 technology has evolved with various versions of PC operating systems.

See *Keeping Up* page 7



Recently, I've noticed some interactions with other technology devices that can impair X10 control operations. I often use my laptop while sitting in our living room. I have a lamp illuminating the couch, under X10 control, and discovered I couldn't turn it on, off, or dim it, when using the laptop - apparently the "power brick" puts too much RF hash on power line (the lamp's plugged into the same outlet) to allow the control signal to get through.

For a long time, I noticed that the lamp in our bedroom controlled by an X10 unit would fail to work intermittently, and I thought it was because of distance between the remote control transmitter and receiver. But one evening, I was really perplexed, because it had worked earlier in the evening, and apparently stopped working - what was different? I finally realized that my wife had turned the hall light on before going into her office, where she often works on her computer in subdued light from the hall. The hallway is illuminated by a compact fluorescent lightbulb in an overhead fixture - and again, the RF hash from the compact fluorescent electronic drive circuitry was overpowering the X10 control signal. If I turned out the overhead light, the X10 controllers worked flawlessly.

Recently, our fourteen year old bedroom TV displayed evidence of burning remote control relay contacts, so we replaced it with a new flat panel model. The bedroom lamp, previously controlled via X10, now wasn't - and the overhead hall light was off! I was able to remedy this source of interference by plugging the TV into a Tripp-Lite Isobar premium surge protector. The Isobar product line contains special filters for each bank of outlets that prevent power line noise from

reaching the device, device generated noise from reaching the power line, or other equipment plugged into a different outlet bank. However, the Isobar also filters out the X10 signals, so an X10 control device can't be placed behind the Isobar surge protector. Isobar units also provide greater protection from electrical surges than most similar products on the market. I've found Tripp-Lite products difficult to acquire locally, but web sources such as Provantage ( carry a broad selection of Isobar units.

### **Mystery of the Self-Installing Program Guide**

My Vista desktop system has a Hauppauge TV card, and includes Windows Media Center software. TV signal is provided by Verizon FiOS service, connected to a "digital adapter" set-top box. This outputs a signal only on channel 3. Several weeks ago, I noted that the Media Center software was taking a long, long time updating the built in TV program guide. It is apparently updating the guide with the hundreds of channel options available from FiOS TV, even though, when there was a setup option, I selected off-the-air antenna, since that's what the computer was connected to at the time. Somehow, the computer has figured out it's connected to FiOS — cue the spooky music!



---

## **Advanced System Care Free V3 – Improve PC Performance**

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director;  
Columnist, The Examiner,  
Beaumont TX; Radio Show Host  
iwilsker (at) apcug.net

This article has been obtained from

APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

### **WEBSITES:**

<http://www.iobit.com>

<http://www.iobit.com/advanced-windowscareper.html>

One of the most frequently asked questions on my weekly radio show (KLVI 560AM, Mondays, 6-7pm) has to do with improving the performance of a sluggish computer. One of the utilities I most recommended was the free version of IObit's Advanced Windows Care – Personal Edition, version 2. Recently IObit released an upgraded and updated utility renamed Advanced System Care Free V3, which IObit claims has over 10,000 improvements and updates. Being a fan of system improvement utilities, I had to download and install this new version, replacing the older version 2 that I have been happily using for about the past 18 months.

Going to the IObit website at [www.iobit.com](http://www.iobit.com), and downloading the new software was an easy experience, as I was given the choice of multiple download sites. I selected one of the Texas mirrors of MajorGeeks, a major download service, where the download counter of this new version indicates that over 1.5 million copies of this new version 3 have been downloaded from MajorGeeks alone. The download was about 7.6 megs in size, and downloaded remarkable fast for a download that size, to the credit of the bandwidth available at the Texas MajorGeeks website. Once downloaded, I clicked on the file to install it, and it recognized my older

See *Advanced System Care* page 8

version 2, which it replaced. I was given the choice of language, and “skin” (background color scheme), and selected the white (really a soft light blue) as the easiest to read.

Once the install was complete, I chose to run the program. I was displayed a clean fresh graphical interface that on the left of the window gave the choices “Maintain Windows”, “Diagnose System”, “Utilities”, and “Home”. Which-ever icon is selected opens the right half of the window. For my first test of the software, I chose to Maintain Windows. I was offered a checkbox selection of “Spyware Removal”, “Registry Fix”, “Privacy Sweep”, and “Junk Files Clean”. I selected all of them and clicked on “Scan”. In just a few minutes, Advanced System Care Free V3 detected 20 items it labeled as spyware (all were tracking cookies), 66 correctable errors in my registry, 29 privacy issues, and 394 megs of junk files that could be deleted. I prefer to not blindly follow what is found, so I clicked on each of the findings to review what was found. After some minor tweaking, I decided to accept what was found, and clicked on the “Repair” icon. In just seconds, all of the corrections and deletions were carried out.

Selecting the “Diagnose System” icon, I was given the now familiar check boxes for “System Optimization”, “Security Defense”, “Disk Defragment”, and “Security Analyzer”. I checked all except Disk Defragment, as I had just recently defragged my hard drive using IObit’s free standing and excellent disk defragmentation utility, and wanted to save the time, despite IObit’s claim that the integral defragmentation utility is up to 10 times faster

than some other competing products. System Optimization detected about two dozen “system bottlenecks” and corrected the system settings to improve performance. The Security Defense feature can immunize the computer against thousands of malicious websites, illicit tracking cookies, browser hijackers, dialers, and other malicious software. Security Analyzer examines running programs to detect and disable any malware that may be currently running on the computer.

The Utilities selection offers 20 distinct utilities to tune-up the computer and its applications; examine the security settings and backup critical system files and settings’ and “Admin Tools” which includes an uninstall utility, as well as my personal favorite, a startup manager to identify and control what programs startup when the computer is booted. By cleaning up the startup, the computer will run faster, boot quicker, and have fewer conflicts, because fewer programs will be automatically loaded. Under the Tune Up tab, I found that Firefox (my preferred browser) can be optimized for maximum performance.

The “Home” icon displays program version, database updates, most recent scan, user account (free or paid “Professional” account), and the cumulative results of the scans that had been performed. The center “Care” icon automatically runs the system optimization utilities, as a one-click performance improvement function.

As is to be expected, IObit has a comparison chart that compares the features of Advanced System Care Free V3 with its software competitors, both free and commercial. The features listed on the chart are “All-

in-one secure, repair, clean, and optimize”, “Optimize and speed up PC and Internet”, “Complete registry care”, “Security features”, “1-click solution”, and “Price”. This software is compared to seven major competitors (1 free and six commercial), and comes out feature rich compared to the competition. To be fair, some of the products listed have features and capabilities not included with Advanced System Care Free V3, but comparing system utilities and clean up programs, this program compares very well.

It is inevitable that users will ask why IObit would give away software this powerful; the reason is that IObit clearly wants the satisfied user to upgrade to the Pro version, which has more features and capabilities, and is currently on sale online for \$19.95 (regularly \$29.95) directly from IObit. The Pro version has additional performance improving features, a deep registry scan that roots out many more useless registry entries (the Pro version detected over 3000 useless registry entries on my computer, compared to only 66 in the free version), additional tune-up features to both improve hardware performance and web speed, and free technical support.

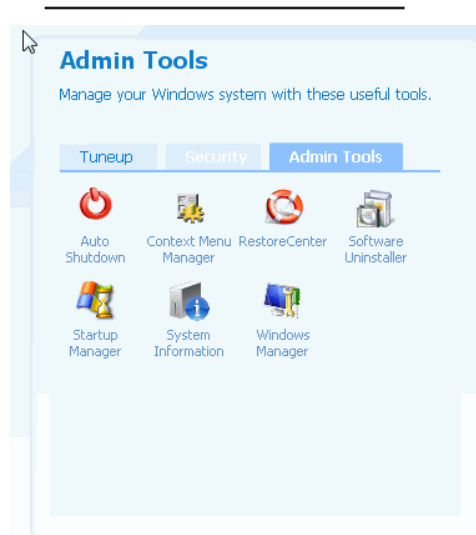
The excellence of Advanced System Care Free V3 has been recognized in the media with several awards, including high ratings from ZDnet, Tucows, Softpedia, Download.com, PC World, PC Magazine, and other publications. Download.com claims that Advanced System Care Free V3 is its number one most downloaded system utility, with about 9.5 million downloads, even though it has only been available for the past several weeks.

See *Advanced System Care* page 9



Advanced System Care from page 8

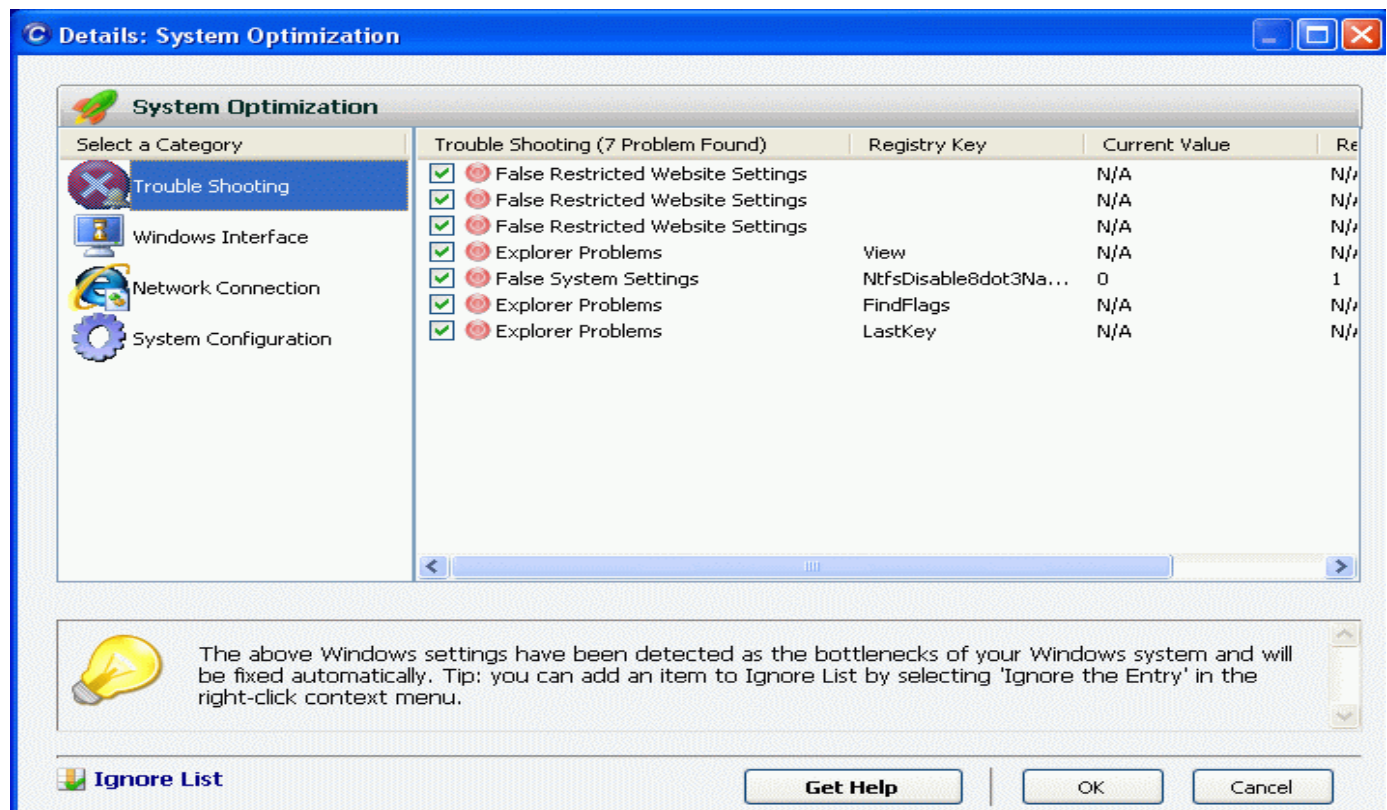
For those wanting a powerful, and feature rich utility to improve computer performance, the free version of Advanced System Care Free V3 would be a very good choice. For those who want additional features and capability, the Pro version, currently on sale for \$19.95, would be a very good choice.



Initial Maintain Screen ↑

← Admin Tools

System Optimization Screen ↓



## Advanced System Care Screen Shots



Above, Diagnose System ↗

Below, Security Screen ↘



**The 2008 WAC Board of Directors, SIG Leaders and other Volunteers**

**Directors:**

**President:**..... Paul Howard, 703-860-9246, plhoward(at)verizon.net  
**Vice-President:**..... Geof Goodrum, 703-370-7649, ggoodrum(at)bigfoot.com  
**Secretary:**..... Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141, bill.walsh(at)cox.net  
**Treasurer:**..... Bob Rott, blbob1b(at)cox.net  
**Newsletter Editor**..... Chuck Roberts, 703-876-9787, chrobe(at)cox.net  
**Registered Agent:**..... Jorn Dakin, 703-534-8691, Idakin(at)alumni.uchicago.edu  
**PC Software Team:** ..... Jim Brueggeman, 703-450-1384, bigjimo1(at)aol.com  
**PC Software Team:** ..... Bob Mason, 703-503-9324, Bob.Mason(at)remjem.com  
**Member at Large:**..... Mel Mikosinski, 703-978-9158, melvin22003(at)aol.com  
**Member at Large**..... Lorrin R. Garson, 703-938-7907, garson9929(at)yahoo.com

**Volunteers**

**Linux SIG Leader, Membership Chair:** ..... Geof Goodrum, 703-370-7649, ggoodrum(at)bigfoot.com  
**Internet Columnist:** ..... Lloyd Johnson, lloydhj(at)aol.com  
**Vendor Contact:** ..... Chuck Roberts, 703-876-9787, chrobe(at)cox.net  
**Web Site Team:** ..... Paul Howard and Chuck Roberts  
**Meeting Setup/APCUG Liaison:** ..... Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141, bill.walsh(at)cox.net

---

*The Cursor* is the official publication of the Washington Area Computer User Group (WACUG), a Virginia membership corporation. WACUG is a tax exempt organization under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are encouraged and are tax deductible. All material is Copyright © 2009 by the Washington Area Computer User Group unless otherwise specified. Products or brand names mentioned may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The contents of articles herein are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the Washington Area Computer User Group, the Board of Directors, or its members.

*The Cursor* provides news, commentary and product information to members of the Washington Area Computer User Group.

---

**Send membership inquiries and address changes to: [membership@wacug.org](mailto:membership@wacug.org)**  
**Send article submission and reprint requests to the Editor: [cursor@wacug.org](mailto:cursor@wacug.org)**

---

**WAC Membership/Renewal Application**

---

Dues are collected on an Annual basis and includes: downloadable links for WACUG Selected Software (formerly DOM), and WAC's monthly newsletter, *The Cursor*, plus Bonus Pages in PDF format

Individual/Corporate/Family Dues: \$25.00 a \$5 annual surcharge for delivery of the Cursor basic edition by 1st Class mail is special for 2009.

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

**Washington Area Computer User 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:**   Photo Printing   Investing   Games

Digital Photography   Internet Access   Education   Music

Graphics/Animation   Genealogy   Video   Finance

Programming Language(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Hardware Upgrades/Repair   List others below



Next WAC Meetings: • Jan 17 • Feb 21 • Mar 21 • Apr 21 • May 09

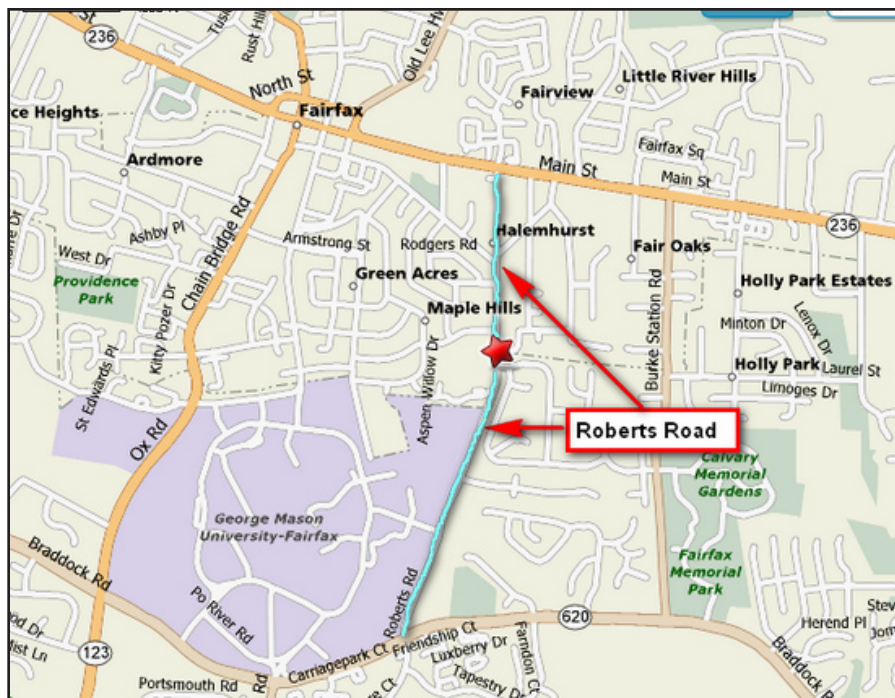
Call (703) 370-7649 for the latest meeting information or Visit our Web Site at:  
<http://www.wacug.org>

January Meeting will be held at the *Osher Lifelong Learning Institute* Fairfax, VA. Detailed directions are located on page 5

FREE ADMISSION

BRING A FRIEND!

Service Desks Open at 12:30  
Meeting Starts at 1:00 PM



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

FIRST-CLASS MAIL

Stamp

TIME-SENSITIVE MATERIAL  
Please Deliver By  
January 9, 2009

Label

---

# Circuit Writer

## Version 6.4

by Jim Scheef, Director, Danbury  
Computer Society, CT  
www.dacs.org  
jscheef (at) yahoo.com

### It's Over – And So It Begins

As we all get used to the prospect of President Obama, some with trepidation, others with jubilation, the one thing we can be sure of is that change is coming. Trite as that sounds now, his presidency will be historic in more ways than we can possibly know right now. But how will it affect us, the computer-using public, is more important – well to us anyway. For instance, the White House will have its first CTO (chief technology officer) recognizing the role of technology and information systems in everything we do. Hopefully, the White House will no longer need to worry about losing emails as it seemed to be such a problem for the outgoing administration.

### A Future in Chrome

Will Chrome steal the plating off Microsoft's shine? This topic could be more complex than why the Republicans lost the elections. Fortunately, there are far fewer pundits talking about it so I will point you to two eWeek articles that get into some depth. Google Chrome Could Nuke Microsoft From the Internet Market ([tinyurl.com/6pkkue](http://tinyurl.com/6pkkue)) (for web: <http://www.eweek.com/c/a/Application-Development/Google-Chrome-Could-Nuke-Microsoft-From-the-Internet-Market/>) and Google Chrome Keeps Pace with Web App Advances ([tinyurl.com/64xjz4](http://tinyurl.com/64xjz4)). [for web: <http://www.eweek.com/c/a/Search-Engines/A-Technical-Overview-of-Google-Chrome/>] The second is more

technical and shows Flash crashing in a Yahoo webpage rendered in Chrome. With the 800-pound gorilla of Google pushing Chrome, it will become a player in how we interact with the web. Whether it will become Google's "web operating system", only time can tell.

### Two Lists of Ten

Before we leave Chrome, here are 10 things to love (and hate) about Google Chrome from TechRepublic (<http://tinyurl.com/4z97lu>). (for web: <http://blogs.techrepublic.com/10things/?p=422>) Read thru this article and perhaps you'll see why I think Chrome will be important – or at least a good browser.

The second list is 10 ways you might be breaking the law with your computer (<http://tinyurl.com/5f8r89>) from the same blog. (<http://blogs.techrepublic.com/10things/?p=356>) This one shows how insidious the intellectual property laws have become with the inference that these laws need to become more rational and reflect the needs of consumers as well as owners.

### Does Search Really Work?

Why is it that when I search for 'man bites mosquito', I get 400,000 hits for exactly the opposite? But, if I search for 'man bites grasshopper', the third and fifth items are articles about a man biting a dog? If first generation search was either simple word indexes built by web crawlers like Alta Vista or indexes built by hand like the initial Yahoo. Google brought in the second generation where search ranking is based on other criteria – like other links to the site or consistency of information within a site, etc.

Some people, like those who design new search engines or who write ar-

ticles about it ([tinyurl.com/5qkyql](http://tinyurl.com/5qkyql)), (for web: <http://www.eweek.com/c/a/Search-Engines/The-Only-Problem-With-Google-Yahoo-Microsoft-Search-is-That-Theyre-Awful/>) think the coming generation of search will be based on semantics and the "social graph". Semantics, of course, involved the meanings of words and thus their order becomes significant. Current search treats your search arguments as keywords and the order you give them has little significance, hence the results to man bites dog are really for dog bites man (unless you search for the string in quotes which is still a different search). I started to use this as my example but there is a movie out called "Man Bites Dog" so that search found many references to the movie but none to what I really meant. So semantics sounds great, right?

Social graph refers to the Google Social Graph API ([code.google.com/apis/socialgraph/](http://code.google.com/apis/socialgraph/)). This application programming interface allows developers of web sites that rely on users to build content, to use links that people have already made public to create links between social sites like Facebook and Classmates, to pick a couple that you have probably heard of. At least that is what the article implies.

I had to do some searching to find this as the article doesn't really explain it. Searching for the string "social graphic" returned forty results out of 135,000. Using my eyeballs on these results I found a reference to a gawker.com article ([gawker.com/tag/social-graphic/](http://gawker.com/tag/social-graphic/)) about "Six Degrees Of Separation Between George W. Bush and Parker Posey." We know who the first guy is and

See *Circuit Rider* next page

*Circuit Rider* from previous page

Parker Posey is some kind of musician or something (I don't really care but apparently everyone agrees that the relationship strains credibility). According to the diagram in the article, these two people are linked by two chains of six or less "degrees". A diagram of social relationships is what does this and social web sites like LinkedIn and Facebook could be a source for such information – maybe. In the immortal words of the excellent motivational speaker Dr. Richard Byrne, "It will if it does, and it won't if it doesn't." (Don't bother searching for Dr. Byrne as he passed away before the advent of the search engine.)

So why isn't search better? There is actually an incentive for current search engines to not get any better. If it takes you four or five tries to find what you want, Google or Yahoo get three or four additional opportunities to show you advertising. Remember, that's what pays for all this.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).



---

## Copying Information from Your Screen

By Richard Kennon, Amador  
Computer Users Group, Jackson,  
California

<http://www.acug.net/>  
drtrdguy (at) volcano.net

Dick Carricato, member of the Tri County Computer User Group in Florida wrote a good article about copying pictures from

your computer screen. Sometimes there are other things you may want to copy from your screen that may not lend themselves to the PrtScr method. This is especially true of lists in drop down boxes that require a scroll bar down the right side. PrtScr will only show the portion of the list that shows. For instance, I write a (almost) monthly newsletter on the web and usually include a bunch of pictures. I like to have a hard copy of the picture thumbnails at hand to remind me of things to say. This is always a scrolling window. Often I want a hardcopy of a menu, too.

I have found FastStone Capture to be a perfect answer to my needs. You can try it free by going to <http://www.faststone.org/>. Then, if you like it, as I do, you can purchase a lifetime license for \$19.95.

You can capture and annotate anything on the screen including windows, objects, menus, full screen, rectangular/freehand regions and scrolling windows/web pages. Editing tools include annotating, resizing, cropping, sharpening, watermarking, edge effects and many more. Of course, you can transfer the image to any editor of choice. You can either print the copy or save it in one of eight different formats. I choose JPEG. Further, you can choose the resolution of the saved image. I don't know if it actually improves the resolution or just resizes to more pixels.

Of course, it features a bunch of hot key combinations but, with my memory, this is not useful. Instead I rely on the small box of choices at the bottom right of my screen. I find it extremely useful and use it almost every day.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

*Editor's Note: I personally used this product based on the review provided by Dick Carricato. I also highly recommend it. A 30-day trial is available.*



---

## XP SP3-Access Denied

By Bob Elgines, President &  
Editor, Colorado River Computer  
Club, AZ

[www.crrc-az.org](http://www.crrc-az.org)  
[elginesz \(at\) rraz.net](mailto:elginesz(at)rraz.net)

I tried installing the Windows XP SP3 upgrade several times and, after talking with Microsoft reps, I shut off my anti-virus, updated my BIOS, but nothing seemed to work. Then I decided to do a search and found "Access Denied" information and over 340,000 other people had used this same area. For some reason a changeable entry in the Register is locked and will not allow SP3 to change it.

First, do a right click on "My Computer" icon and select "Properties" to see if it has been installed.

Here is what you need to do, if the Error message read "Access Denied" or "Service Pack Installation Did Not Complete". First read your Svcpack.log, located under the Windows folder in case you forgot what the error message said, it should be at the bottom of the log.

Next Backup your Register, then download and install "Subinac.exe" from [www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=e8ba3e56-4a91-93cf-ed698Se3927b&displaylang=en](http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=e8ba3e56-4a91-93cf-ed698Se3927b&displaylang=en)

Start Notepad, then enter the fol-

See *SP 3 Denied* next page



lowing text:

```
cd /d "%ProgramFiles%\Windows
Resource Kits\Tools"
subinacl /subkeyreg HKEY_
LOCAL_MACHINE /
grant=administrators=f /
grant=system=f
subinacl /subkeyreg HKEY_
CURRENT_USER /
grant=administrators=f /
grant=system=f
subinacl /subkeyreg HKEY_
CLASSES_ROOT /
grant=administrators=f /
grant=system=f
subinacl /subdirectories
%SystemDrive% /
grant=administrators=f /
grant=system=f
subinacl /subdirectories
%windir%\*.* /
grant=administrators=f /
grant=system=f
secedit /configure /cfg %windir%\
repair\secsetup.inf /db secsetup.sdb
/verbose
```

Save As "Reset.cmd". Now double click on this file. It will take a while to complete its job.

Reboot your computer, you are now ready to install Win 'XP SP3. Go to windows update if you need to find SP3 upda

This article  
CUG with  
publication  
all other us  
author (see e-mail address above).



l from AP-  
mission for  
ber groups;  
ission of the



## Why security precautions are necessary

By Bob de Violini, a member of the Channel Islands PCUG, California  
[www.cipcug.org](http://www.cipcug.org)

rjddev (at) gmail.com

First off for the holidays, there's a story that illustrates just why you should always enable encryption on your wireless router (for those who use one) AND why you should be leery of any public computer for Web sites you need a password to access. A college student in Kentucky has been charged with identity theft, among other crimes, for planting malware on computers in his school's library. The malware was a keystroke logger that captured usernames and passwords for any pages fellow students logged into. He then used this information to access their e-mail accounts and send out e-mails attempting to extort these same fellow students. He also used an unsecured wireless router to access these accounts, making it look as if someone else were actually sending the e-mails. The attempted extortion took the form of a threat to divulge personal information the thief had stolen from the compromised e-mail accounts. That leads me to our next item, WPA encryption.

As of the beginning of November, a pair of computer security researchers in Europe disclosed a technique they'd developed to partially hack WPA encryption used by a great number of wireless routers today. Before anyone thinks the sky is falling, rest assured it isn't. Their hack involves only the traffic being sent from the router to a computer and only a small number of data packets can be cracked before the router resets its encryption. However, it is enough to be able to send just enough rogue data to a computer to compromise it with any number of known vulnerabilities. Specifically, it involves the TKIP protocol that WPA and WPA2 are allowed to use.

The specifics of just how this trick is accomplished have been made available to hackers in many areas of the Internet, so it's just a matter of time before it begins spreading. TKIP and AES encryption are selectable by the user in many wireless router configurations, and some have WPA with TKIP selected by default. I strongly recommend you check your wireless router's encryption configuration, and if it's set to use WPA with TKIP, you switch to WPA2 with AES if at all possible. This is especially important if you use a wireless router to run a network for a business. I have my Linksys wireless router set to use WPA2 with AES encryption. AES is significantly harder to crack than the older TKIP protocol. One final note on this, however. For AES encryption to work, both the router and the network adapter in the computer must be able to use it. Some older hardware may not support AES encryption, so an upgrade may be needed. If you'd like some more information, please drop me a line at the email address at the top of this article, and I'll gladly send you a link or two.

### Scare of the month department

Even though Halloween has already passed, we have the Scare of the Month Department chiming in with some news. There is a new phishing e-mail making the rounds disguised as a warning from the U.S. Federal Reserve. The message bears the usual dire warning of a scam and contains links for readers to follow to get more information. However, there are a few clues that give the message away as a hoax, the biggest one being poor grammar. The links in the e-mail lead unsuspecting readers to a fake site that will redirect them to a search page for porn, which will download a PDF file with malware to their computer.

See *Security Precautions* next page

er. The malware comes in various forms, including one that attempts to make your computer a member of a botnet. A brief notice can be had here, courtesy of USCERT: <http://tinyurl.com/66lzv9>. The link does go to the US-CERT site; I just used TinyURL to shorten the URL's length.

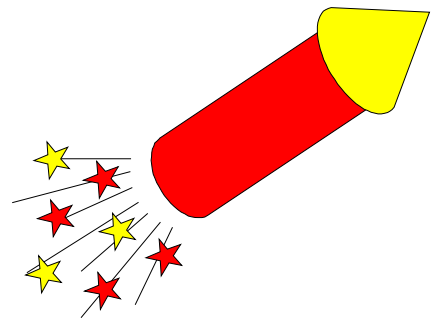
### Patches Galore Department

As I mentioned above, there have been some exploits on the loose for a bit for Adobe Acrobat, and the full program and the reader have been updated as a result. The latest versions are 8.1.3 and 9.0. Adobe has also updated its Flash player, standard fare in most browser installations, to version 10.0.12.36 to patch publicly reported vulnerabilities last month as well. Not to be outdone, Mozilla has also issued a patch for its Firefox browser and Thunderbird e-mail client. These patches address several bugs that have been brought to light in the past month to month and a half. The latest iterations of Firefox are 2.0.0.18 and 3.0.0.4. The latest version of Thunderbird is 2.0.0.18. I have read reports of some problems with version 3.0.0.4 and 2.0.0.18 of Firefox, with most of the reports being about version 3.0.0.4. The solution for those having problems after upgrading to 3.0.0.4 has been to go back to 3.0.0.3. I have updated my version to 2.0.0.18 and have had no problems. Some patches take longer than others to develop and test, however. One of the patches issued by Microsoft on November's Patch Tuesday took them seven years to develop and test. The bug it patched was first reported by a security researcher in March 2001. Microsoft claims that it tried patching it when it was first reported but wound up killing off most networking applications with the patches when they underwent testing. However, they didn't give

up and finally found a way to patch the vulnerability earlier this year.

While we're speaking of Microsoft, it has announced plans to abandon its One Care concept of computer protection service and develop free anti malware applications for release in 2009. The new concept is code named "Morro." As usual, folks are coming down on both sides of pro and con when it comes to this development. Microsoft hasn't given a firm release date for the new software, but has said that One Care will come to an end on June 30. Well, that's all for now. Here's wishing everyone a joyous Holiday season and a Happy New Year! Always practice safe computing by keeping your applications and your anti-malware applications fully up to date. Make sure to run your anti-malware scanner(s) once a week, even if they don't flag anything in between scans.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).



---

## HAPPY NEW YEAR 2009!

