The Cursor

Monthly Newsletter of the
Washington Area Computer User Group

Meeting Location
OLLI , 4210 Roberts Road,
Fairax, VA

APCUG
Member of

Next Meeting:
May 9, 2009

Presidential Bits

by Paul Howard, President WACUG, president@wacug.org.

April's meeting made up in attendee enthusiasm what it lacked in number of folks in the audience. Weather of great beauty caused an outpouring of yard work, grandparent duty, and suspicious excuses (Imagine - dog ate my thumb drive!) along with a range of other commitments resulting in empty chairs. Be careful: attendance at an insufficient number of WAC meetings can seriously reduce your required intake of technology geek vitamins!

A lively Q&A session was followed by an introduction to spreadsheets by Mel Mikosinsi. Alternate web browser software was the principal topic of the day. Bill Walsh opened with a discussion of the Opera web browser, known for its page rendering speed. Geof Goodrum demonstrated the spare interface of the Google Chrome browser, and offered a exciting look at Firefox, a full-featured browser from Mozilla. There's an amazing following of Open Source developers producing add-ons that enhance the capabilities of Firefox. There are more than 5000 of these additional tools and tweaks, available at: *https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/*

May 9th Meeting - Second Saturday !!

May's meeting is scheduled on the second Saturday of the month to appease the aerospace technology buffs of our group - the diehards who head to Andrews AFB on the 3rd Saturday of May for a full course of screaming jets, Thunderbird aerobatics, sore necks, and sunburn <grin>!

Our May 9th meeting will feature our PC Clinic in the Social Room annex, offering our members the opportunity to get assistance from WAC experts with troubleshooting problems with their systems, as well as installation of new or replacement components. Advising the group of what you'd like help with is essential. Be sure you read the document on the web site regarding the clinic, at: *http://www.wacug.org/clinic.html*

In a simultaneous learning session in TA1, as a perfect tie in with the PC Clinic session, we'll be hosting APCUG regional rep Gabe Goldberg, who'll be presenting **A Little PC Cleaning Pays Off.**

In addition to physically cleaning your PC, a little occasional effort scrubbing

Lloyd's Web Sites for May, 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

May Sites:

1. Want to see a bunch of writers that have called Mississippi home? John Grisham, William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, others. www.olemiss.edu/depts/english//ms-writers

2. Earth Image of the Day A NASA Visible Earth Image and archive. http://modis.gsfc.nasa.gov/gallery/index.php

3. CIA: The World Factbook Updated as of 5 March 2009, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook

4. HubbleSite — http://hubblesite.org. Public education site from the Space Telescope Science Institute, featuring a showcase gallery of images, the latest news, technical facts and figures, and more. Related site: Official Site: Hubble Space Telescope.

5. To contact elected officials Enter your zip code, www.congress.org

6. Top 100 funniest films from American Film Institute – www.afi.com – (Put Funniest Films in search box)

7. Free Classical Music – www.musopen.com8.

9. State of the Birds: 2009 Report – http://www.stateofthebirds.org – Site from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

10. U.S. ZIP Code Lookup – http://zip4.usps.com/zip4/welcome.js

11. April was National Financial Literacy Month. Basics about financial education – www.mymoney.gov. For parents and teachers how to teach personal finance—most of it is free – www.jumpstartcoalition.org

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/

Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Washington Area User Group Partners

Working Together For Our Members

NCTCUG

WACUG

OPCUG

GNU/Linux SIG

By Geof Goodrum, WAC

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 April 2 – April 20, 2009.

Distribution	Distribution
AsteriskNOW 1.5.0	Clonezilla Live 1.2.1-53
Easy Peasy 1.1	Epidemic GNU/Linux 3.0
gNewSense 2.2	Kwort Linux 2.4.1
Linux Mint 6 "Fluxbox"	Linux Mint 6 "KDE"
Parted Magic 4.0	Sabayon Linux 4.1 "GNOME"
Slax 6.1.0	SliTaz GNU/Linux 2.0
SystemRescueCd 1.1.7	Tiny Core Linux 1.3
Untangle Gateway 6.1.0	VectorLinux 6.0 "Light"
xPUD 0.8.9	

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) 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.

May 2009

DBAN – v1.0.7. http://www.dban.org/. Free GNU General Public License CD/DVD and floppy/USB disk images by Darik Horn. Darik's Boot and Nuke (DBAN) is a self-contained boot disk that securely wipes the hard disks of most computers. DBAN will automatically and completely delete the contents of any hard disk that it can detect, which makes it an appropriate utility for bulk or emergency data destruction.

GCompris – v8.4.12. http://gcompris.net/. Free GNU General Public License source code by Bruno Coudoin et al. and executable package for Fedora 9. GCompris is an educational software suite comprising of numerous activities for children aged 2 to 10. Some of the activities are game orientated, but nonetheless still educational. Gcompris offers in excess of 100 activities, including the following activities by category:

- Computer Discovery: keyboard; mouse; different mouse gesture; …

- Algebra: table memory; enumeration; double entry table; mirror image; …

- Science: the canal lock; the water cycle; the submarine; electric simulation; …

- Geography: place the country on the map

- Games: chess; memory; connect 4; oware; sudoku; …

- Reading: reading practice

- Other: learn to tell time; puzzle of famous paintings; vector drawing; cartoon making; ...

Minimum system requirements: Pentium 2 166Mhz processor; 48 Megabytes RAM. A 3D video card is NOT required.

OpenOffice.org – v3.0.1. http://www.openoffice.org/. Free GNU Lesser General Public License RPM (e.g. Fedora, OpenSUSE, Mandriva) and DEB (e.g. Debian, Ubuntu) package executable installers and source code by the OpenOffice.org community. OpenOffice.org (OOo) is an integrated office productivity application suite including a word processor (Writer), spreadsheet (Calc), presentation manager (Impress), relational database (Base),
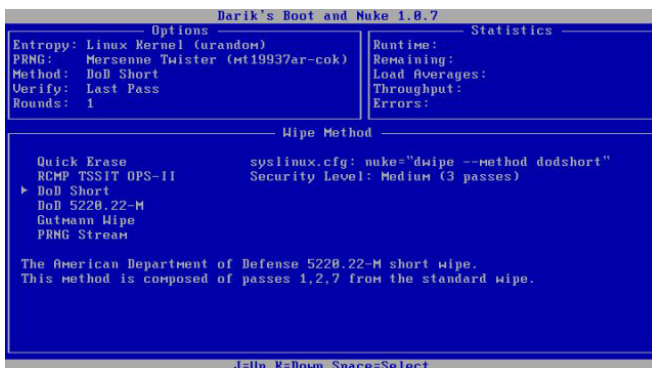
equation editor (Math), and graphics editor (Draw). This release adds grammar checking in Writer. Other features include support for OpenDocument Format (ODF) 1.2, Microsoft Office 2007 XML formats, Solver for spreadsheet optimization problems, spreadsheet collaboration, display of multiple Writer pages while editing, and native tables in presentations. OOo requires Linux kernel version 2.4 or higher, glibc2 version 2.3.2 or higher, Java runtime environment 1.5 or later, 256 Mbytes RAM (512 MB recommended), 400 Megabytes available disk space, X-Server with 1024 x 768 or higher resolution with at least 256 colors.

VLC Media Player – v0.9.9. http://www.videolan.org/vlc/. Free GNU General Public License source code by the VideoLAN Team. VLC media player is a media player, streamer, and encoder for Unix, Windows, Mac OS X, BeOS, QNX, and PocketPC. It can play from many inputs like files, network streams, capture device, desktops, or DVD, SVCD, VCD, and audio CD. It can play most audio and video codecs (MPEG 1/2/4, H264, VC-1, DivX, WMV, Vorbis, AC3, AAC, etc.), but can also convert to different formats and/or send streams through the network.

Kernel Source – http://www.kernel.org/. 2.6 kernel source code for all platforms (stable 2.6.29).

Screenshots of OpenOffce Apps are located at the top of page 8

Screenshot of Darik's Boot and Nuke Utility, DBAN

Screenshot of GCompris educational software

its operating system, hard drive, applications, and data files will pay off with improved performance, reliability, and system life. Gabe will describe and demonstrate easy cleanup steps and highlight two books about PC housekeeping. Gabe's presentation will be broadcast (video and audio) to the folks participating in the PC Clinic.

Don't forget the program that allows WACUG members to sign up for a variety of telecommunications services from Verizon, including FiOS. Using a special phone number and a numeric code identifying WAC, your order will result in Verizon's sending a contribution to the group. An order for a full range of FiOS services - TV, internet and telephone - will result in a $65 donation to WAC, for example. The fine print notes that some other promotional offers may not be available through the donation program

- but we hope you'll try this approach if you require telecom services. Call 1-888-695-5299, and use WAC's code - 12426.

Do you have a computer or related technology interest you'd like to tell your WAC colleagues about? We're looking for additional presentations for the remainder of year - please contact president@wacug.org.

June, July and August meetings will be held at the Fairfax County Government Center!!

Broadsides

Written by Ron Broadhurst, Space Coast PC Users
Group, FL
www.scpcug.com
shiron (at) cfl.rr.com

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).

Dear friends,

These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites, and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various "tips, "tricks", & "hints" in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users. Enjoy and use as you will.

HOW TO HAVE WINDOWS REMIND YOU ABOUT PENDING UPDATES

• Click Remind Me Later in the Automatic Updates dialog box before you download or install the update.

• In the Reminder dialog box, you can specify the amount of time Windows should wait before reminding you.

• If the reminder is for downloading, Windows reminds you only when you are connected to the Internet.

If the reminder is for installing, Windows reminds you according to the schedule that you specify.

AND HOW TO DOWNLOAD AVAILABLE UPDATES

If you configured automatic updating to notify you before downloading any updates, an icon is displayed in the notification area each time new updates are found.

• Double-click the icon in the notification area.

• Do either of the following steps:

If you want Windows to download an update, make sure that the check box beside it is selected.

-or-

If you do not want Windows to download an update, click to clear the check box beside it. Your selected updates are downloaded in the background; this behavior allows you to continue working uninterrupted. Downloading does not interfere with or slow down other network activity, such as Internet browsing.

When downloading is finished, the icon is displayed in the notification area to notify you that updates are ready to be installed.

CUSTOMIZE THE START MENU

The Start menu gets more real estate in XP than in previous versions, and it's more customizable. To make the Start menu display only the applications you want, rather than the default determined by Microsoft:

- Right-click in an empty section of the Start menu's left column.

- Select Properties > Start Menu > Customize. Here you'll find a list of your most frequently used programs. (XP keeps track of what you use and what you don't, then updates this list dynamically).

Don't want your boss to know that Pinball, Solitaire and Quake all make your list?

Go to the General tab, click Clear List, and set the counter to zero.

HOW TO PERFORM DISK ERROR CHECKING IN WINDOWS XP

This describes how to check the integrity of the hard disk drive in Windows XP. After you install Windows XP, the Scandisk command is not available.

- Double-click My Computer and then right-click the hard disk drive that you want to check.

- Click Properties and then click Tools.

- Under Error-checking click Check Now.

- Click Start.

ADD FAMILIAR ICONS BACK TO YOUR DESKTOP

It's the case of the missing icons. Many of you may be wondering where all the icons from your desktop are in Windows XP? You can place at least My Computer, My Network Places and My Documents on the desktop.

- Right-click on the desktop and then click Properties.

- Click the Desktop tab and then click on Customize Desktop.

Put a check mark in the box next to My Document, My Computer, My Network Places or Internet Explorer, to add those familiar icons to your desktop.

HOW TO FIND YOUR IP ADDRESS IN WINDOWS XP

Start and click Run

Type "cmd" (without quotes) and hit enter

Once the box opens type "ipconfig /all" (without quotes) and hit enter.

🖱

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) (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). [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.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.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 articles about it (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?
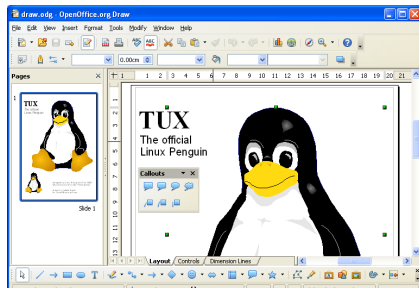
Social graph refers to the Google Social Graph API (code.google.com/apis/socialgraph/). This application programming interface allows developers of web sites that rely on users to build content, to use links that people have already made public to create links between social sites like Facebook and Classmates, 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/) about "Six Degrees Of Separation Between George W. Bush and Parker Posey." We know who the first guy is and 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).
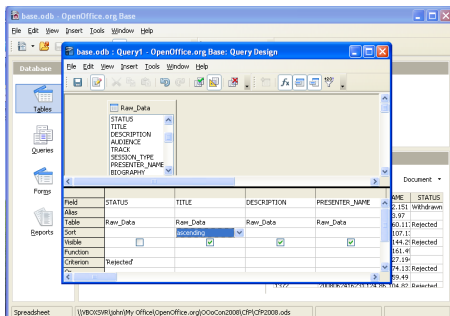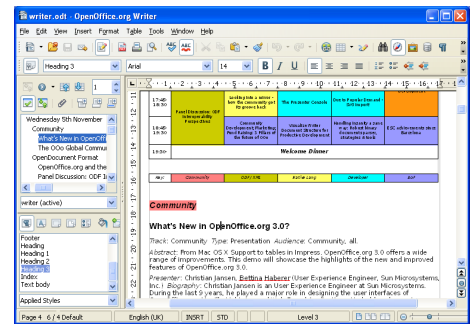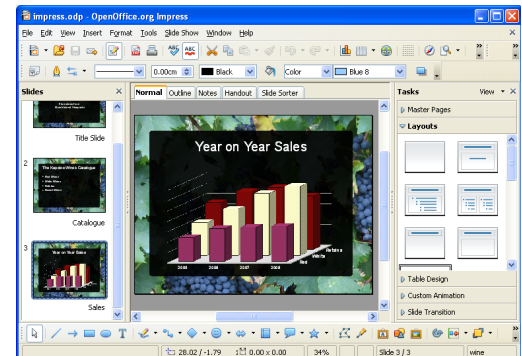
Screenshot of OpenOffice applications in the OpenOffice Suite

Draw

Writer

Base

Calc

Freebies!

by Dave Bilcik, a member of the STPCC (Southern Tier Personal Computing Club), New York dlbilcik (at) yahoo.com

This past Holiday Season! Home & hearth, good food and lots of presents, those banking and Wall Street executives had a fine time last year (Santa Claus made a special ***bonus*** trip just for them... Ho-Ho-Ho!). Now, what are you going to do for the Holiday? Be creative and "Have Yourself A Freebie Little Christmas." People may thank you. Discover (again) why it is called Christmas and not "Santamas" (http://www.e-sword.net/). You might find that you really like the story.

You have technology at your fingertips so think about what is important to the special people in your life and give something meaningful to them. The best part; it doesn't have to cost much to be meaningful. CD-Rs cost less than a first-class stamp, the most expensive 8 ½ x 11 photo-paper you can get is under $1.00 per sheet while regular paper is under a penny. Put something on that paper or CD that interests the people you are interested in.

Pictures, sound, movies and even free software are all good candidates if it means something to your special person. Picasa (http://picasa.google.com/) will help you with your pictures and slide shows. Print up a nice 8x10 of that "creative" place where you hung the mistletoe for your significant other.

If you have a crafter on your list, print up a collection of cross-stitch or quilting patterns; one spot to try is http://www.alitadesigns.com/index.php another is http://www.freepatterns.com/. Grandma might be happy to get your custom x-stitch collection but don't send her your mistletoe picture by mistake. However, be ready for some "cute" overload when prospecting for freebies on the crafting sites.

If music or video is your passion then cdburnerxp (http://cdburnerxp.se/) will help you with either one. It is a full featured burner that will let you make a custom CD or DVD any time you wish. Like classical music? A site that will point you to lots of free music is http://www.classiccat.net/index.htm. Don't violate any copy-rights and fire up your CD/DVD drive. That custom-mix lute CD is right at your fingertips.

Don't forget your web-cam or digital camera with movie mode. Give a CD or DVD with a video message telling that special family member what they really mean to you. If you are lucky, they will avoid you completely at the next family reunion.

The fact that you are reading this shows you have exquisite taste and a level of computer literacy way above

the average. Help those friends who are less fortunate by cleaning up their sluggish computers. Advanced WindowsCare Personal Edition (http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html) when installed and run on their machine, will give them back the performance that they have been missing.

The software is free, it helps a friend, costs only a little of your time, and proves your computer kung fu is much stronger than theirs. Everybody wins!

Now that you have saved so much cash on creative, meaningful gifts for your friends and family, you can now reward yourself for all your efforts. Try http://www.thinkgeek.com/ for loads of intriguing stuff. Check out the Ion USB Turntable that will help your turn your vinyl music collection into digital goodness... the turntable outputs files in either mp3 or WAV format.

If the good will, optimism and hope of the season gets to be too much, try http://despair.com/ for a big steaming cup of cynicism. It will help you to get back to work after the holidays.

Review - magicJack

by Constance Brown, President, Canton Alliance
Massillon Users Group, Ohio
www.camug.org
constance (at) mystepco.com

Do any of you recall the poem by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet stating that no place on earth is more than 60 hours away? The authors were awed by the idea that distance was no longer measured in months but in hours. What would they think now that people have circled the world in spaceships and repaired orbiting space stations? On the other hand, my friends who boarded the plane last month found that it can take 60 hours and more to arrive at a destination in our own hemisphere — if it happens to be Bolivia!

What does travel have to do with computers? Most trips begin with a call to a travel agent or visiting a travel web site to check prices and availability of flights. Then a flight is booked and paid online either by the purchaser or an agent. An e-ticket is sent to the traveler who then checks in via a computer terminal at the airport. Computerized controls are used to guide the plane.

My personal email address is dlbilcik@yahoo.com if you want to send me comments, questions or cash. Please put "Freebies" somewhere on the subject line so I will have some idea about its contents. Tell me about your best free software experience or your best cookie (... ever!) and I will pass it on.

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).

⌐🖱

Computers, computers everywhere. Great when they work. Annoying when they don't! They are here to stay and will be performing more and more of our communications. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could travel internationally and communicate with folk back home without paying those ridiculous international calling fees! How about staying in touch with friends who do not live in the USA? Guess what! You CAN!!

Several of us in CAMUG have phone service using VOIP (voice over Internet Protocol). Last week I ordered something immediately after hearing about it. I have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to test it and now I can hardly wait to share it. Perhaps some of you have seen the ads for the magicJack. What is it? Well, let me quote from PC Magazine online: "So simple it's almost perfect, the magicJack is the best home voice-over-IP gadget I've seen to date. Excellent call quality, a workable set of calling features, and an amazing price make this little box the VoIP wonder to beat."

Yes, in two minutes a little USB device about 2 inches by 1 inch by 5/8 inches that I plugged into the powered hub that I run through my USB port was giving me the capability of placing my calls via the Internet. I called Canada and Colorado, spending about 1/12 hours on the phone.

It worked well except when I looked up information on the internet at the same time.

I talked to customer service and they said I can connect to the powered hub that runs directly to my router. I will have to restart the modem, most likely. That means that I don't have to have the computer turned on to make calls,.just like my current VoIP service. This is great.

What do I like about the magicJack?

• The price. The gadget is $40, and that includes one year of service! The renewal service price is $20! Not $200. Just $20. In fact, we paid $60 for five years!

• The price. Calls are free to US & Canada and reasonable to other parts of the world. Bolivia ranges from 12-14 cents. Guatemala was a little less. I didn't check farther.

• The price. Register your magicJack with a US phone number and travel anywhere in the world. Place calls back to the US or Canada and the call is free! Purchase a magicJack and register it with a number in the USA, send it to your friends elsewhere in the world, and they can call to any place in the US or Canada for free — almost. Remember, you receive one year of service with the device.

• Convenience. You can use the magicJack with any computer,.not just the one you registered.

• Convenience. The magicJack is so small that it will travel extremely easily.

• Convenience. You can use the magicJack to place calls over Wi-Fi, cable, or DSL. Even light high speed is fine as it requires only 80 kbps of bandwidth.

• Services. You get all of them: voicemail delivered to you via email and also available by calling your number and entering your pass code, conference calling, 3-way calling, caller ID, do not disturb – have I forgotten anything?

• Quality. The quality compares with other VoIP services. The calls pass over a private network.

• Customer Service. Customer service was good, but busy. The online chat took a little time as the service person moved between customers. But it was good. He didn't have time to tell me about the Outlook add-on, so I am still waiting to discover what that is. Customer service apparently is improving, based on evaluations I read.

The US News and World Report had an interesting article online dated September 27 about the magicJack. Here is a part of it.

"The colorful and wealthy Borislow, who also raises, races, and wagers on racehorses, has launched magicJack fast out of the gate. The startup has sold more than 400,000 devices just six months after its official unveiling. It's selling about 7,000 a day, the company says, adding twice as many net new accounts over the period as Vonage, an Internet phoning pioneer. MagicJack's appeal is not only the price, which falls to just $20 for a second year of calls, but sound quality that's consistently good. And it's flat simple to install and use."

Who is the inventor behind the magicJack? Dan Borislow. Here is information about him taken directly from the magicJack web site.

• Dan Borislow is the founder of YMAX Communications Corporation, a modern phone company with the largest competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC) network in the U.S, and inventor of the magicJack™.

• Borislow has been in the telecommunications industry for over twenty years and is recognized in the industry for pioneering the development of breakthrough technologies. He previously held the position of CEO and founder of publicly-held Tel-Save, Inc. At Tel-Save, Borislow revolutionized low-cost long-distance for more than four million America Online (AOL) customers. While with Tel-Save, he saved customers over 40% on their phone bills and also received the prestigious J.D. Power and Associates Award for Customer Satisfaction. After a brief attempt at retirement, Borislow returned to the telecom industry and invented the magicJack. By eliminating the expense of local and long distance phone charges - and saving the average customer around $1000 a year - magicJack is positioned to be the fastest growing telecom company in the world.

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

Send membership inquiries and address changes to: membership@wacug.org

Send article submission and reprint requests to the Editor: cursor@wacug.org

WAC Membership/Renewal Application

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

Individual/Corporate/Family Dues: $25.00
$5 annual surcharge for delivery of the Cursor by 1st Class mail

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: • May 9   • Jun 20   • Jul 18   • Aug 15   • Sept 19

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

May Meeting will be held at the *Osher Lifelong Learning Institute* Fairfax, VA. Detailed directions were provided in the January Cursor on page 5. ***Please remember, June, July, and August meeting will be at the Fairfax County Government Center.***

FREE ADMISSION

BRING A FRIEND!

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

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

Label

Windows Recovery or Restore Disks: Problems and Alternatives

By Vic Laurie, Princeton PCUG, New Jersey
victor@vlaur.com

Once upon a time you received a copy of a full Windows installation disk when you bought a computer. This allowed you to reinstall individual system files or Windows components if anything went wrong. But no longer. These days the best you can hope for from many vendors is a so-called "recovery" or "restore" disk". And many major vendors do not even provide that much. Instead they put stuff on a hidden partition on the hard drive. This is all the backup that you get, and if the hard drive crashes, the hidden partition goes too. Then you have no way of reinstalling Windows on a replacement hard drive without getting a disk from the original PC vendor. From what I read on the Web, this last process can take some time and effort, if you succeed at all. If you are out of the warrantee period, you may be completely out of luck.

Some vendors may provide a Windows disk when you buy a PC if they are prodded hard enough. However, there may be some kind of "handling and shipping" fee. Note that, if you do finally get a disk, it will probably be an OEM (original equipment manufacturer) version and may lack some features of a full-fledged version. Also OEM versions of Windows are often not eligible for upgrades.

The failure to provide an actual Windows installation disk with new computers is convenient for Microsoft and the computer vendors but can be a real problem for the PC user. There are many problems that can be fixed by copying a single system file or reinstalling small portions of the Windows operating system. Without an installation disk, PC users need to have some other source for these files. If you put a recovery disk into your CD drive, it will want to reformat your hard drive and reinstall an image of your computer that is a replica of the way your system was on the day you bought it. Any changes that you have made will be wiped out. All those programs you installed, all those Microsoft patches, XP SP2, all of it will be gone. The same thing applies when you restore from one of those hidden partitions.

Therefore, an alternative is needed. At the very least,

a source of files for adding and removing Windows components and restoring corrupted files should be available. Sometimes the vendor will have put the Windows installation files in the root of your hard drive or in the Windows folder. In Windows XP look for a folder named "I386" (without the quotes). If you do have one of these folders, burn a copy to a CD for backup. This CD will not have all the functions of an installation CD since it will not auto-run nor will it boot. However, reinstallation can be initiated by clicking the file Winnt32.exe (assuming that you can get your system to boot). If you have a FAT32 disk and can use DOS, Winnt.exe is the appropriate file to access from a DOS boot disk.

A problem is that you will have a disk that lacks any of the multitudes of patches and updates that will have come out since you bought your computer. Therefore, you need to "slipstream" with the XP SP2 update. Slipstreaming is a way of merging updates with the original files so that everything is updated. This is not a quick job but it is worth doing. An excellent detailed step-by-step procedure is given at the Elder Geek site. If you can borrow a Windows XP installation disk (almost any version will do) you can extract the image that is needed to make the CD bootable and add that to the disk. Details for using common CD burning software to do all this is given at the reference cited above.

One more problem can be getting the Windows XP product key for your system. It may be pasted or written somewhere in the documentation that came with your computer. Be sure to make a permanent record of it. If you cannot find the product key, there are several free applications that will retrieve it from your system. One is ViewKeyXp and is available here. Another is Keyfinder, which is available here. Also, system information applications like Belarc Adviser can reveal the key.

At the end, you will still have something that provides backup only for the Windows operating system. Since I want to be able to restore everything, including software that I have installed, I prefer to spend a few dollars and use disk imaging software. It makes keeping up-to-date backups on CDs or other external media very easy. Norton Ghost, BootIt Next Generation or Acronis True Image are all reasonable choices.

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.

Microsoft Releases Internet Explorer 8

Written by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director;
Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio
Talk Show Host
Iwilsker (at) apcug.net

WEBSITES:

http://www.microsoft.com/ie

http://www.ieaddons.com/en

Microsoft has released the latest iteration of its ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer version 8 (IE 8). This browser is for all versions of XP and Vista, and is a 16.1mb download for XP.

I had tried one of the early beta (pre-release) builds of IE 8, and was impressed by its features and speed, a substantial improvement over what I felt was a lethargic Internet Explorer 7. Now I have downloaded and installed IE 8 on all of my computers, and my first impressions of it are quite positive. I have been using Firefox, IE's major competitor, almost exclusively for several years. I was not alone in using Firefox instead of IE, as Firefox has been taking market share from IE for years as it has generally offered more speed, features, and security than IE. Now with IE 8, Firefox has a worthy competitor which has added features, speed and security to challenge the gains made in the marketplace by Firefox.

Within minutes of its release, I downloaded the new version of IE 8 on my work computer. I went directly to Microsoft's IE website at www.microsoft.com/ie to download IE 8. Microsoft identified my operating system, and proceeded to connect me to the proper variety of IE 8, which I downloaded. The installation process was smooth, with several informational windows appearing with install options. One of the first windows to appear was a statement that the IE 8 install utility was going to download the latest version of Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool, and scan my computer for malware

prior to the installation of IE 8. My computer was free of any detected malware, and the installation continued. A reboot was required in order to complete the IE 8 process, which I allowed. After the reboot, a small window appeared displaying the setup sequences of the new software. Subsequent windows offered me the opportunity to install add-ons, and select default search engines. IE 8 imported my selections from IE 7, and asked if I wanted to keep my IE 7 defaults and use them in IE 8, which I did. The final window displayed correctly identified that I had other browsers installed on my computer, including Firefox, Opera, and Safari, and asked if I wanted to import bookmarks (favorites) and feeds from them; I selected yes, and data was imported from my other browsers into IE 8, making them immediately available on that platform. IE 8 did indeed load faster than IE 7 ever loaded, and web pages appeared to load faster, but I have no empirical data to corroborate that.

IE 8 is more feature rich than IE 7, and in many ways appears to emulate the finer points available in Firefox. One feature in IE 8 that offers improved possibilities is "Accelerators" which provide quick access to information by simply highlighting a word, phrase, address, or other item on a webpage. If the proper accelerators are installed, then appropriate information in the form of maps, web searches, translations, email, blogs, and other relevant resources and outputs are immediately displayed.

Another interesting feature in IE 8 that may be of interest to many users is "Web Slices", where the user can automatically monitor desired information, displaying updated information as it becomes available. Web Slices can monitor auctions, sports scores, weather, stock quotes, and other dynamic content, and can directly provide that updated information, without user intervention. If a Web Slice is available on a web page, a green icon will appear in the top right corner of the page; clicking on this icon will add the "slice" to the favorites bar, enabling real-time tracking of the selection. When new information is available about the selected web slices, the relevant web slice will be highlighted.

Clicking on the highlight will take the user directly to the updated information.

IE 8 offers a "Smart Address Bar" which displays recommendations as a web address is typed in the address bar. The suggestions are distilled from the browsing history, favorites, and previously selected feeds, as well as Windows Live Search. If a single word is typed in the address bar, the Smart Address Bar will reach out and try to match the term against domain names, making web surfing faster and more efficient.

I frequently go online to show my L.I.T. students information on the web. Sometimes the fonts on the web pages are so small, that students in the back of the classroom can not view the displayed content. IE 8 solves that problem with its enhanced zoom feature, "Improved Zoom". This feature improves the resolution and readability of a webpage, while maintaining the desired layout. Clicking on VIEW – ZOOM allows the user to zoom in or out on a webpage, from 50% (zoom out, smaller text, more information displayed) to 400% (zoom in, larger text, less information displayed).

Web surfers are often concerned about their personal privacy while browsing on the net. IE 8 offers a feature, "InPrivate" that allows the user to control the protection of his personal information while online. When selected, InPrivate deletes the browsing history, temporary internet files, filled forms, cookies, usernames, and passwords when closing the browser, leaving no traces of browsing or search history on the computer.

Sometimes a website appears to crash the browser while being viewed, shutting down all of the opened tabs, and requiring a reloading of the browser. IE 8 offers "Automatic Crash Recovery" where if the content in a tab crashes, the other opened tabs are unaffected, such that other opened pages are not closed or lost unexpectedly. IE 8 will attempt to recover the lost tab once it has identified and resolved the problem.

Phishing, identity theft, and web-borne malware have become endemic, and a threat to web users. IE 8 includes a "SmartScreen Filter" which incorporates anti-phishing tools to protect the user from imposter websites designed to trick the user into entering his personal information. The SmartScreen Filter also incorporates sophisticated anti-malware capabilities to help prevent web-borne adware, spyware, and other dangerous software from installing itself on the users' computer. If a dangerous website is opened and detected, the address bar and window will turn red on the page, and a prominent warning will be displayed on the red background. Other protection is provided by a cross site scripting (XSS) filter, which can detect and protect from malicious code execution while online, providing additional protection. A cute feature, which can help protect from phishing and identity theft is "domain highlighting" which highlights the domain name in the address bar, with the remainder of the address string in gray, displaying the true identity of the website.

Internet Explorer 8 is much improved over version 7, with improved security and enhanced features. Users of earlier versions of IE should upgrade to IE 8. Users of other browsers should give IE 8 a try, as they may be pleasantly surprised. Even though I have been a loyal Firefox user for several years, I will be using IE 8 far more than I ever used IE 7.

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).

Screenshots and Graphics from Internet Explorer 8

Internet Explorer 8: Home page

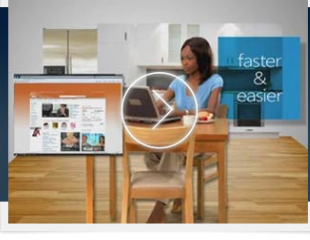Making your web even better...Faster, Easier, Safer

Internet Explorer 8

Download now

For Windows XP

United States
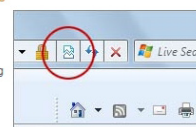Other locales and versions

- Tour Internet Explorer 8.
- Why you should download Internet Explorer 8.
- Get the facts on browser performance.

Information for:
IT Pros | Developers | Business | Partners

faster & easier

Stay safer online

Browse with more confidence knowing Internet Explorer 8 helps protect you from evolving online threats right out of the box. The new SmartScreen filter and other built-in security features help you stay safe by protecting against deceptive and malicious websites which can compromise your data, privacy, and identity.

View sites with ease

Get things done faster

Stay more secure

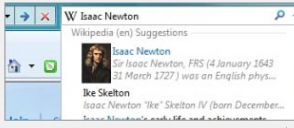- Learn more
- Watch the video

View any site with ease

Now you can quickly display websites that were designed for older browsers. If you're looking at a page and the text or images aren't lined up right, just use the new
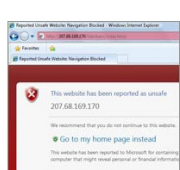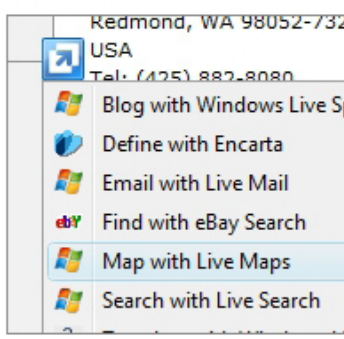
View sites with ease

Live Sear

W Isaac Newton

Wikipedia (en) Suggestions

Isaac Newton
Sir Isaac Newton, FRS (4 January 1643 31 March 1727) is an English phys...

Ike Skelton
Isaac Newton "Ike" Skelton IV (born December...

Get visual search suggestions from Wikipedia

Get things done faster with Accelerators

View sites with ease

You're just a few mouse clicks away from driving directions, word translation, sharing your web discoveries with friends and more. Accelerators help you do the things you do all the time without having to open up a new window. So you can speed through everyday browsing tasks, like getting a map to a business address or forwarding a link to a friend.

Get things done faster

Redmond, WA 98052-7329
USA
Tel: (425) 882-8080

- Blog with Windows Live Spa
- Define with Encarta
- Email with Live Mail
- Find with eBay Search
- Map with Live Maps
- Search with Live Search

Stay more secure

- Learn more
- Watch the video

Set Up Windows Internet Explorer 8

Welcome to Internet Explorer 8

Internet Explorer 8 helps you use the Internet even faster than before.

New features like search suggestions retrieve information as you type, and Accelerators let you preview online services just by pointing your mouse at them.

Learn about these new features and how to manage their settings

Read the Internet Explorer Privacy Statement online   Next   Ask me later

Set Up Windows Internet Explorer 8

Turn on Suggested Sites

Do you want to discover websites you might like based on websites you've visited?
- ⊙ Yes, turn on Suggested Sites
- ○ No, don't turn on

Suggested Sites is an online service that uses your browsing history to make personalized website suggestions. You can turn off Suggested Sites at any time.

Read the Internet Explorer Privacy Statement online   Back   Next   Cancel

Add-ons Gallery

Find add-ons that enable you to personalize Internet Explorer instantly.

Most Popular
Newest
Blogging
Bookmarks
Dictionaries and Reference
Email
Finance
Mapping
Music
News
Photos and Videos
Search
Sharing
Shopping
Social Networking
Toolbars
Translation
Travel
Weather
Other

Internet Explorer 8 only
Accelerators
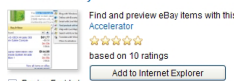Web Slices
Search Providers

Featured Content

MSN Headlines

Get MSN News Headlines with this Web Slice
⭐⭐⭐⭐☆
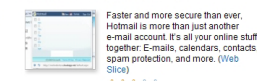based on 4 ratings

Add to Internet Explorer

Find on eBay

Find and preview eBay items with this Accelerator
⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
based on 10 ratings

☐ Preview Enabled

Add to Internet Explorer

Windows Live Hotmail web slice

Faster and more secure than ever, Hotmail is more than just another e-mail account. It's all your online stuff together: E-mails, calendars, contacts, spam protection, and more. (Web Slice)
⭐⭐⭐⭐☆
based on 3 ratings

Add to Internet Explorer

Set Up Windows Internet Explorer 8

Turn on SmartScreen Filter

SmartScreen Filter can help protect you from malicious software, fraudulent websites, and online phishing scams.
- ⊙ Turn on SmartScreen Filter (recommended)
  Some website addresses will be sent to Microsoft to be checked. Information received will not be used to personally identify you.
- ○ Turn off SmartScreen Filter
  Website addresses will not be sent to Microsoft unless you choose to check them.

Read the Internet Explorer Privacy Statement online   Back   Next   Cancel