



# *The Cursor*

*Monthly Newsletter of the  
Washington Area Computer User Group*



Meeting Location  
OLLI, 4210 Roberts Road,  
Fairfax, VA



Next Meeting:  
May 22, 2010



## Presidential Bits

by Geof Goodrum, President WACUG, [president@wacug.org](mailto:president@wacug.org)

**A**t the WAC meeting on April 17th, Lorrin Garson gave a detailed review of current readers for electronic books, including the popular Amazon Kindle (Lorrin brought his family's Kindle 2 and Kindle DX), the Barnes & Noble Nook, the Sony eBooks, and a long list of others. One point that Lorrin made was that his wife prefers the older, lighter Kindle 2 over the additional features of the Kindle DX, and the additional memory to store 3,500 ebooks (vs 1,500 on the Kindle 2) isn't really a practical difference. There is a wealth of information with active web links in Lorrin's briefing slides, which are posted under Recent Meetings on the WAC web site (<http://www.wacug.org/recmtgs.html>). The April meeting was also the debut for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute's new DocuCam system, which captures digital video of items on the tabletop that can be recorded on a PC and displayed with the digital projector. This was very handy for Lorrin to show the controls and display of the Kindles to the entire audience. For the Learn 30 tutorial session, Neal Grotenstein talked about disk file fragmentation in Microsoft Windows, with why and how to defragment the hard disk.

On May 22nd, Chuck Roberts will host a Learn 30 session with a quick review of useful but often overlooked keyboard shortcuts (described on the WAC website) and a free, easy to use utility to keep Microsoft Windows running smoothly. For the main presentation, WAC member Kurt DeSoto will discuss various options and recommendations for storing and converting your VHS tapes to DVDs on your own for as little as 50 cents a copy. He will also give a live demonstration of one option using a combo VHS/DVD recorder so that you can become a movie producer practically overnight... or at least in time for next year's Oscar nominations. And for those who are interested, Kurt offered (threatened?) to show his own family's 2,400-hour movie marathon right after the presentation, starting with the first videos he shot when his son was a toddler over 23 years ago. Bring your own popcorn, though!

See you there!



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# Lloyd's Web Sites for May, 2010

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

1. Pew Research Center: 4 out of 5 Americans Don't Trust Washington – <http://people-press.org/report/606/trust-in-government>. Public confidence in government is at one of the lowest points in a half century, according to a survey from the Pew Research Center. Nearly 8 in 10 Americans say they don't trust the federal government and have little faith it can solve America's ills, the survey found.
2. [www.blackanddecker.com/energy](http://www.blackanddecker.com/energy). Find out if you are wasting electricity. Black and Decker says a typical household can save 20 per cent using their (\$100) product. Click on Power Monitor
3. <http://grin.hq.nasa.gov>. GRIN: Great Images in Nasa. "The Great Images in NASA (GRIN) system provides a database of photos documenting NASA. Photos include: aircraft structures, aircraft design, aircraft models, wind tunnel tests, materials research, space programs, astronaut training, robotic planetary exploration and images taken by NASA spacecraft such as the Hubble Space Telescope and Mars Global Surveyor."
4. Financial calculators for retired or about to be retired people. Click on full retired then click on financial calculators; [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)
5. Daily Top Ten Books By Subject. Get the Top 10 Bestsellers for more than 300 Book Subjects - Updated Daily: [www.barnesandnoble.com/bestsellers/top10everything.asp?z=y](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/bestsellers/top10everything.asp?z=y)
6. Scientific America: Science News. "Latest news and features on science issues that matter including earth, environment, and space. Get your science news from the most trusted source!" [www.scientificamerican.com](http://www.scientificamerican.com)
7. All Famous Quotes. "All the famous quotes and sayings in one place!" [www.allfamousquotes.net](http://www.allfamousquotes.net)
8. Debt to the Penny: U.S. Treasury. "To find the total public debt outstanding on a specific day or days, simply select a single date or date range and click on the 'Find History' button. The data on total public debt outstanding is available daily from 01/04/1993 through 03/23/2010. The debt held by the public versus intragovernmental holdings data is available. A U.S. Treasury Department website. [www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/BPDLogin?application=np](http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/BPDLogin?application=np)
9. Human Anatomy Online. Study the anatomy of the human body. It's fun, interactive, and an ideal reference site for students or those who just want to know more about the medical descriptions used by doctors and nurses. [www.innerbody.com/htm/body.html](http://www.innerbody.com/htm/body.html)
10. Forgotten treasurers; [www.unclaimed.com](http://www.unclaimed.com)



## 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  
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## GNU/Linux SIG

By Geof Goodrum, WACUG

### GNU/Linux Distribution Releases

GNU/Linux distributions are bundled collections of software including a set of applications and an operating system built on the Linux kernel. Some distributions include general applications such as office suites, music players, and web browsers, while others may have specific purposes such as computer system recovery, network firewall, media center, or gaming. Individuals, community projects, or businesses create distributions. While some distributions are commercial and include fee-based technical support, other distributions are freely downloadable or can be ordered on CDs or DVD at low cost.

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 downloadable distributions do not include official technical support nor printed documentation. 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. 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.

DistroWatch.com lists the following distribution release announcements for the period April 1 – May 5, 2010.

Distribution
<a href="#">antiX MEPIS 8.5</a>
<a href="#">Calculate Linux 10.4</a>
<a href="#">CDlinux 0.9.6</a>
<a href="#">DEFT Linux 5.1</a>
<a href="#">Dragora GNU/Linux 2.0</a>
<a href="#">EasyPeasy 1.6</a>
<a href="#">Edubuntu 10.04</a>
<a href="#">grml 2010.04</a>
<a href="#">IPFire 2.5 Core 37</a>
<a href="#">KahelOS 05-01-2010</a>
<a href="#">Kubuntu 10.04</a>
<a href="#">Lubuntu 10.04</a>
<a href="#">Macpup Opera 2.0</a>
<a href="#">MOPSLinux 7.0</a>
<a href="#">Mythbuntu 10.04</a>
<a href="#">MythDora 12.23</a>
<a href="#">Oracle Enterprise Linux 5 Update 5</a>
<a href="#">Parted Magic 4.10</a>
<a href="#">PCLinuxOS 2010.1</a>
<a href="#">Puredyne 9.11</a>



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<a href="#">Quirky 1.0</a>
<a href="#">Sabayon Linux 5.2 “CoreCD”</a>
<a href="#">Salix OS 13.0 “Live”</a>
<a href="#">StressLinux 0.5.111</a>
<a href="#">SystemRescueCd 1.5.2</a>
<a href="#">Tiny Core Linux 2.11</a>
<a href="#">Ubuntu 10.04</a>
<a href="#">Ubuntu Rescue Remix 10.04</a>
<a href="#">Ultimate Edition 2.6</a>
<a href="#">VortexBox 1.3</a>
<a href="#">Xubuntu 10.04</a>
<a href="#">Yoper Linux 2010</a>

### Linux Software of the Month

The software described below is downloadable at the links provided or copied onto a USB flash drive at the WAC meeting.

May 2010

**Entangle** – v0.1.0. <http://entangle-photo.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and Fedora executable package by Daniel P. Berrangé. Entangle is a desktop application for interacting with digital SLR cameras. With a suitably capable camera, it allows for full manipulation of the camera settings, remote triggering of the shutter, live preview of scenes, and download of captured images. It supports use of monitor colour profiles for accurate on-screen rendering of images. Integration with the GObject introspection framework allows third party extension plugins to enhance the core functionality. Entangle requires libgphoto, available in most GNU/Linux distributions.

**FET** – v5.13.2. <http://lalescu.ro/liviu/fet/>. Free GNU General Public License C++ source code by Liviu Lalescu. FET is software for automatically scheduling the course or activity timetable of a school, high-school or university. It uses a fast and efficient timetabling algorithm. Usually, FET is able to solve a complicated timetable in 5-20 minutes. For simpler timetables, it may take a shorter time, under 5 minutes (in some cases, a matter of seconds). For extremely difficult timetables, it may take a longer time, a matter of hours.

**free awale** – v1.4. <http://www.nongnu.org/awale/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Mandriva and Debian/Ubuntu by Alain

Le Bot, Laurent Le Bot and Diana Martin de Armenta. Free awale is an African game played against the computer by moving seeds on a board with two lines of six cups. Rules and variants with a tutorial are on the web site. Version 1 of free awale is based on an improved min-max Von Neuman’s algorithm. It is particularly efficient due to the low number of choices at each turn. The mean depth of research is about 10 at the beginning of the game. But it depends on the capacities of your computer and the level of the game. Free awale requires tcl/tk and the X Window system, included with most GNU/Linux distributions.

**GNU xorriso** – v0.5.6. [http://www.gnu.org/software/xorriso/xorriso\\_eng.html](http://www.gnu.org/software/xorriso/xorriso_eng.html). Free GNU General Public License source code by Thomas Schmitt. GNU xorriso creates, loads, manipulates, and writes ISO 9660 filesystem images with Rock Ridge extensions. Files can be copied in and out, and can be used for applications like file backup. The session results get written to optical media or to filesystem objects. Rather than needing external tools for ISO 9660 production and CD/DVD/BD burning, it is a static compilation of libburnia-project.org. Thus GNU xorriso depends only on fundamental operating system facilities.

**Kernel Source** – v2.6.33. <http://www.kernel.org/>. Free GNU Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.



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### Linux screenshots next page

**Top:** Entangle-photo

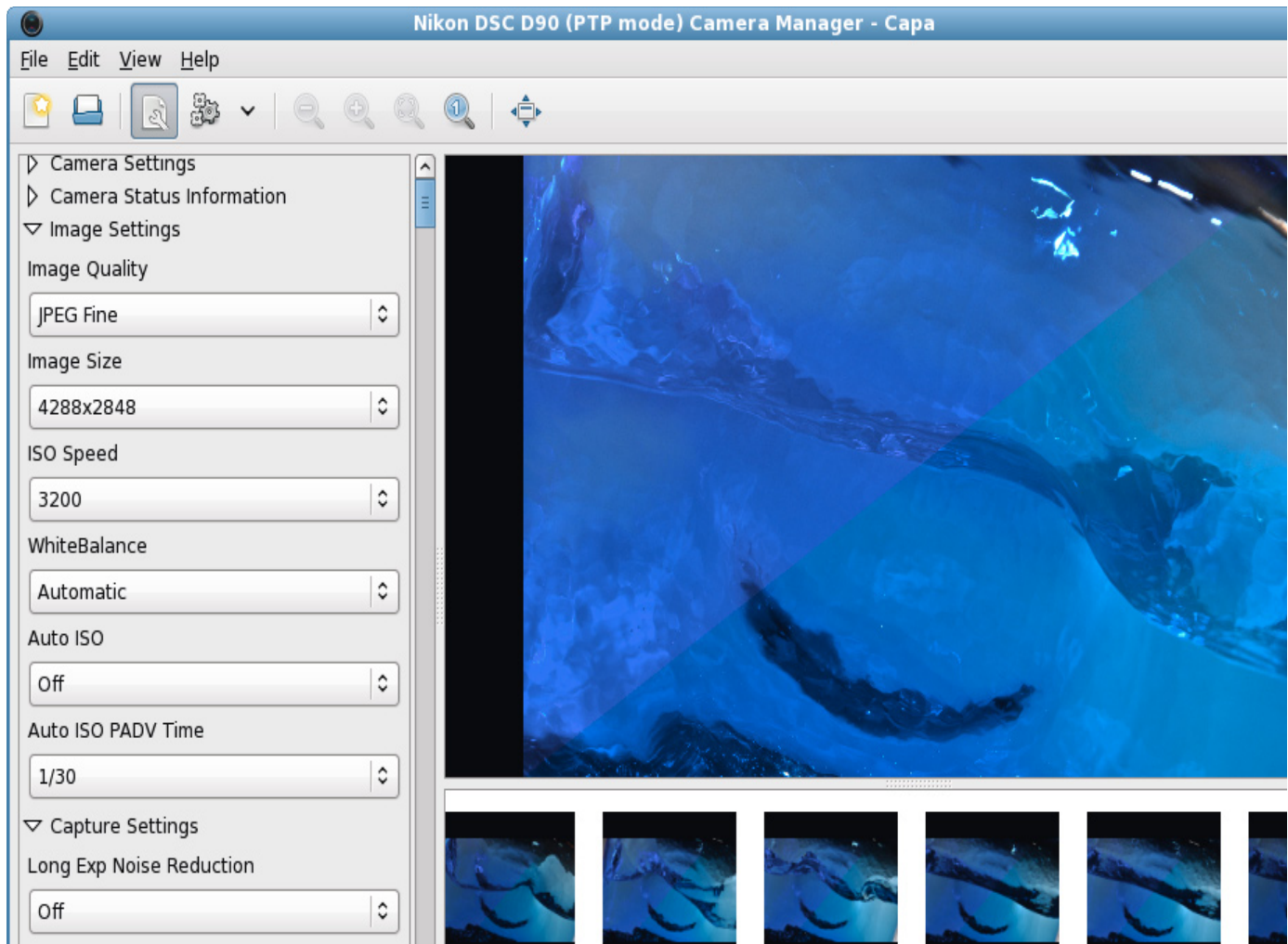
**Bottom:** FET Lalescu.ro/liviu/fet

### Page 6 screenshots

**Top:** FET Lalescu.ro/liviu/fet

**Bottom:** Free Awale





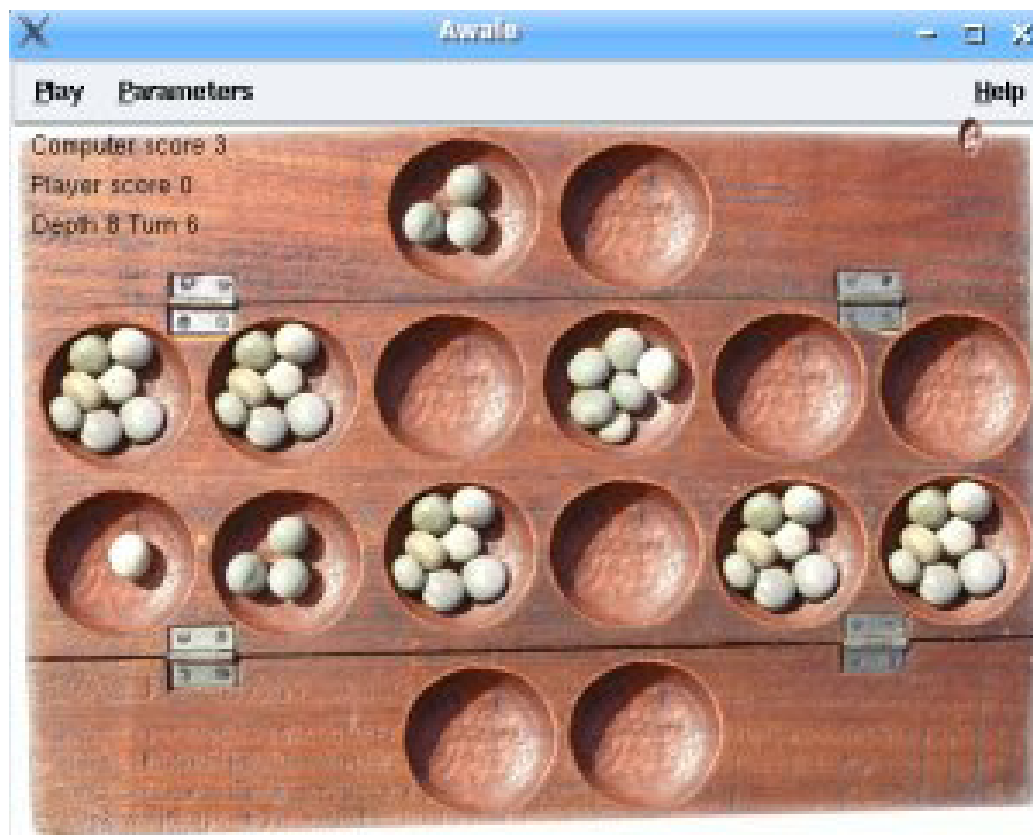
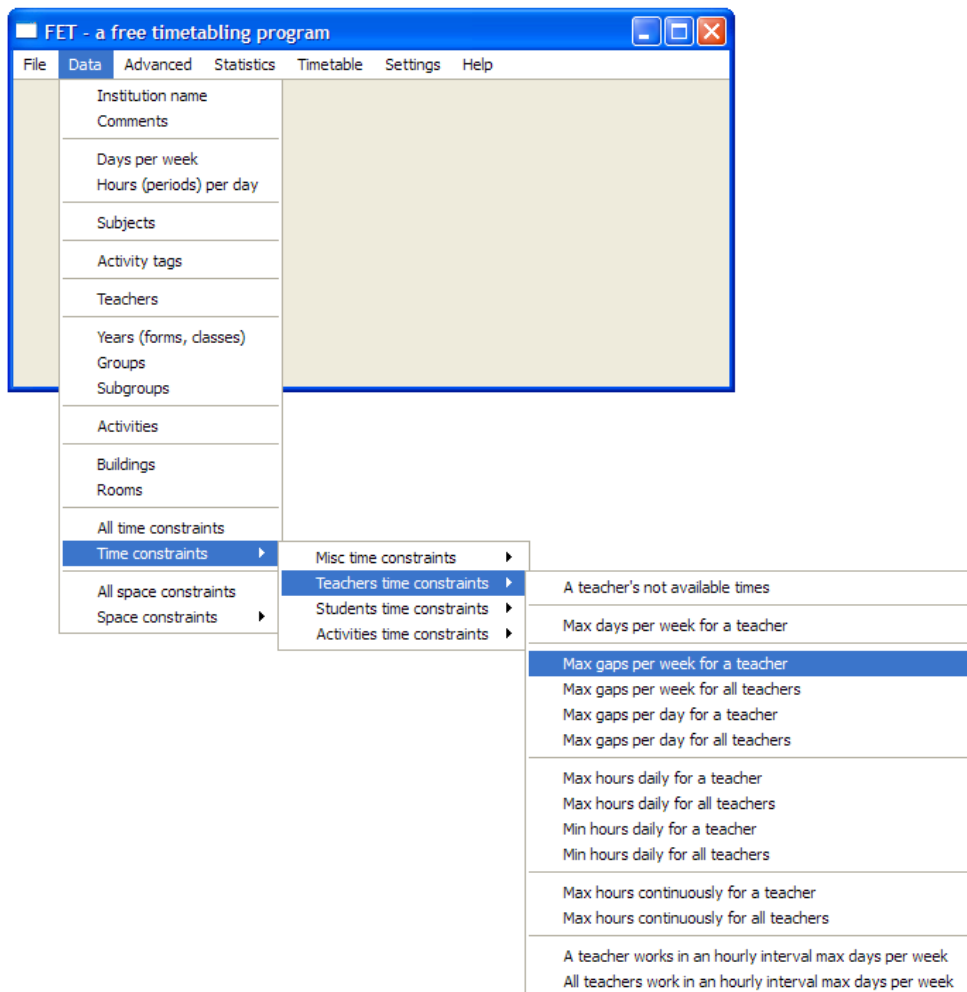
Viewing the timetable for the teachers

Teacher	Details				
Gilmar	Activity: Teacher=Bruna				
Helvecio	Subject=Matematica				
Luzia	Students=204				
Maria da Luz	Id=85				
Tania	Activity group id=84				
Bruna	Duration=1				
Silvania	Total duration=4				
Wellington	Active: yes				

Toggle lock/unlock selected activities (only time)  
 Toggle lock/unlock selected activities (only space)  
 Toggle lock/unlock selected activities (time and space)  
 Close

Bruna

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
0	Matematica 104			Matematica 204	Matematica 103
1	Matematica 204			Matematica 104	Matematica 206
2	Matematica 206	Matematica 204	Matematica 103	Matematica 206	Matematica 205
3		Matematica 104	Matematica 205	Matematica 205	
4	Matematica 205		Matematica 206	Matematica 103	Matematica 204



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## LEARN HOW TO CONVERT VHS TAPES TO DVDs

*Become a Movie Producer in An Afternoon*

By Kurt DeSoto, WACUG Member

If you are like me and invested a lot of time and effort videorecording family events and vacations or school activities over the years, you probably have stacks of VHS tapes deteriorating in boxes or shelves in your closet. And you probably would like to share them with your children or your grandchildren before the tapes become completely unplayable and, more importantly, without boring your family with a 2,400-hour movie marathon.

My recommendation on how to achieve your goals is to convert those tapes to DVDs, make multiple copies, and then distribute the DVDs to family and friends to view on their own schedule. With the DVDs in hand, they will also have the flexibility to rip them and edit them as they wish, perhaps to delete their most embarrassing moments (or to send them to America's Funniest Videos). Heck, you need some rationalization for experiencing all those "live" events with one eye behind a viewfinder!

And in these economic times, you might prefer to do make these DVDs at a reasonable price. Indeed, sending your tapes to one of the many professional conversion companies could cost a fortune; professional conversions can run up to \$50 per tape! (For representative information, visit <http://thevideoeditorusa.reachlocal.com>; <http://www.apmstudio.com/>; <http://www.homedvd.ca/>). And there is always a risk that the company might not do a great job or, worse, ruin or lose your irreplaceable tapes.



## MS Office Tips

from Sharon Parq Associates

Sharon Parq Associates has been kind enough to provide new content to The Cursor on a monthly basis. This is their May submission.

## MS Word Tips

### *Finding Related Words*

Finding just the right words to say what you want to say can sometimes be a challenge. Fortunately, Microsoft Word can help in this regard. One of the tools that Word provides is a full thesaurus. You can use this tool to find alternate words with the same meaning (synonyms), words with the opposite meaning (antonyms), or related words. Related words are typically similar words based on the root of the word you specify. To find a related word, follow these steps:

1. Position the insertion point in the word you wish to check.
2. Press Shift+F7 or choose Language from the Tools menu and then Thesaurus from the submenu. If you are using Word 97 or Word 2000, you see the Thesaurus dialog box. If you are using Word 2002 or a later version, you see the Research task pane, with the thesaurus information displayed.
3. If related words are available for the word, you will see the Related Words choice in the dialog box or the task pane. Click on Related Words.
4. In the Related Words list, select the desired related word.
5. Click on Replace (if using Word 97 or Word 2000) or click the down-arrow to the right of the related word and choose Insert (if using Word 2002 or a later version).

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## MS Excel tips

### *Counting Unique Values*

When working with a Microsoft Excel worksheet, you sometimes need to know the number of unique values in a range of cells. For instance, suppose that

Continues page 8

an instructor was teaching the following classes:

104-120

104-101

104-119

104-120

In this case there are three unique values. There is no intuitive worksheet function that will return a count of unique values, which makes one think that a user-defined function (a macro) would be the logical approach. However, you can use an array formula to very easily derive the desired information. Follow these steps:

1. Define a name that represents the range that contains your list. (This example assumes the name you define is MyRange.)
2. In the cell where you want the number of unique values to appear type the following formula, but don't press Enter yet:

```
=SUM(1/COUNTIF(MyRange,MyRange))
```

3. Instead of pressing Enter, press Ctrl+Shift+Enter. This informs Excel that you are entering an array formula. The formula shown in the formula bar should now appear as follows (notice the addition of the surrounding braces, indicative of array formulas):

```
{=SUM(1/COUNTIF(MyRange,MyRange))}
```

That's it! The cell now contains the number of unique name values in the specified range. This approach is not case-sensitive, so if you have two values that differ only in their capitalization (ThisName vs. THIS-NAME), they are both counted as a single unique value. In addition, there can be no blank cells in the range. (Having a blank cell returns a #DIV/0 error from the formula.)

If your particular needs require that your list contain blanks (but you don't want them counted as a "value") and you want the evaluation to be case-sensitive, then you have no choice; you must turn to a macro. The following VBA macro, CountUnique, will do the trick:

```
Function CountUnique(ByVal MyRange  
As Range) As Integer  
    Dim Cell As Range  
    Dim J As Integer  
    Dim iNumCells As Integer  
    Dim iUVals As Integer
```

```
    Dim sUCells() As String  
  
    iNumCells = MyRange.Count  
    ReDim sUCells(iNumCells) As  
String  
  
    iUVals = 0  
    For Each Cell In MyRange  
        If Cell.Text > "" Then  
            For J = 1 To iUVals  
                If sUCells(J) =  
Cell.Text Then  
                    Exit For  
                End If  
            Next J  
            If J > iUVals Then  
                iUVals = iUVals + 1  
                sUCells(iUVals) =  
Cell.Text  
            End If  
        End If  
    Next Cell  
    CountUnique = iUVals  
End Function
```

Simply put an equation similar to the following in a cell:

```
=CountUnique(MyRange)
```

The value returned is the number of unique values, not counting blanks, in the range.

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# Abode Premiere Elements 8

By Louise Maye Huddelston, a HAL-PC family member and partner of a graphic outsource company  
[www.hal-pc.org](http://www.hal-pc.org)  
editor (at) hal-pc.org

**A**dobe Premiere Elements 8® is the companion software to Photoshop Elements 8, and this is the video editor and “movie-maker” software. If you like to take videos or make slide shows with effects, music and more advanced direction, this is what you need. You can buy Premiere bundled with Elements or separately. This review is about Elements, so this part is brief.

Premiere 8 has serious problems that have been traced to conflicts with Realtek Audio drivers and Nvidia graphics driver installation software. Suggestion: download the free 30 day trial version to test compatibility with your PC.

I am having an issue with some of the rendering and converting to certain formats while I can render and upload to YouTube. The troubleshooting is a complex series of tests and definitely pushing my patience, as it will probably take me more than a few hours.

I found this software absolutely intuitive and even as a total novice to video production, I made several A/V productions and I was very happy. Not perfect, but I could to do some cool things with sound and transitions that were beyond my usual slideshows with Photoshop Elements. There is Instant Movies, to process a video clip for you with pre-packaged templates, based on one of several themes; this is a life-saver.

Auto Analysis is a new feature that takes in image content (including face recognition) and allows you to do Smart Tagging of various aspects, including video quality, date, subject and much more.

Help: As far as help goes, the tutorials are somewhat limited unless you pay for the Plus Membership. There is excellent help online and I had occasion to use it.

Remark: I have heard that some users have crashes, freezes, etc. I think this is not so much the program but the user’s computer resources – mediocre operator, insufficient RAM and/or CPU speed.

I expected that I would be able burn a DVD in the AVCHD format and then play it on a Blu-Ray player. I discovered that Premier Elements 8 does not sup-

port burning AVCHD format DVDs! Most competitive software will burn AVCHD format DVDs. More successful results from Microsoft’s Movie Maker Live, which is free.

Another cool technology from Adobe stable in Premiere 8 is “Object Tracking”. You have to use it to believe it! You select a person/moving object in the video & drop a clip (rain, lightening, bird etc) on the object.

General: Contacting Adobe support is another exercise in patience. Send them an e-mail, wait 2-3 days for a response is canned, wait another 2-3 days for another response. If you’re in any kind of hurry, forget it. Adobe support just isn’t the quality it used to be. Bottom line, for the money Premiere is the best video editor I have tried.

The practical value of Premiere 8 is the incredibly rich feature set, the sophisticated, yet simple user interface, and the wealth of content, add-ons, and tutorials. Just put it in a sufficiently powerful engine!

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).



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# The New Community Rules: Marketing on the Social Web

Author: Tamar Weinberg

Pages: 346

Cost: \$24.99

Publisher: O'Reilly Media

ISBN: 978-0-596-15681-7

Reviewed by Tammy Barbee

<http://www.webmastertoolcenter.com>

(Submitted by Gabe Goldberg)

I spent a lot of time reading this book on social media as I was intrigued to find out more about it. I am familiar with some of the social media network but how to target a community is a different story. Social media is being used more than just traditional marketing to connect with your friends and family but, in turn, to connect with your clients and customers to engage them in the business or community that is being promoted.

The book has 12 great social media marketing points which are:

- An introduction to Social Media Marketing.
- Set goals by using the SMART method (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely).
- Achieve social media mastery by building relationships and listening to consumers.
- Play an active role within the community by participating and listening to build a strong reputation in the community.
- Communicate, influence, and learn by using blogs within the community.
- Use micro blogging(Twitter) as part of community and using other Twitter tools(TweetDeck) to engage consumers.
- Use Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn to create profiles to connect with friends, family, and consumers. Beyond the three above are others that are used in other countries such as Friendster, Orkut, Bebo, and hi5.
- Find answers to questions using Wikipedia, Yahoo! Answers, and many more.
- Use social bookmarking such as Stumble Upon, delicious.com, and Digg
- Promote content and bring visitors by using social news site such as Sphinn and Reddit.

- Share photos on Flickr, share videos on YouTube, and use podcasting.
- Gather from the eleven points above how to implement social media marketing into your marketing plan.

The book is useful for those who are starting out and want to know what social media marketing is, how it can help with their business, and how to implement these ideas, techniques, and tactics into their business. It also points out various examples of how several companies use a form of popular and non-popular social media to stay involved with their consumers. Therefore, I recommend this book for those who have an interest in knowing more about social media because social media is not a one-sided conversation; it is about staying engaged with the community.



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

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**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)**

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**WAC Membership/Renewal Application**

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Dues are collected on an Annual basis and includes:  
downloadable links for 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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 22 • Jun 19 • Jul 17 • Aug 14 • Sep 18

Call (703) 370-7649 for the latest meeting information or Visit our Web Site at:

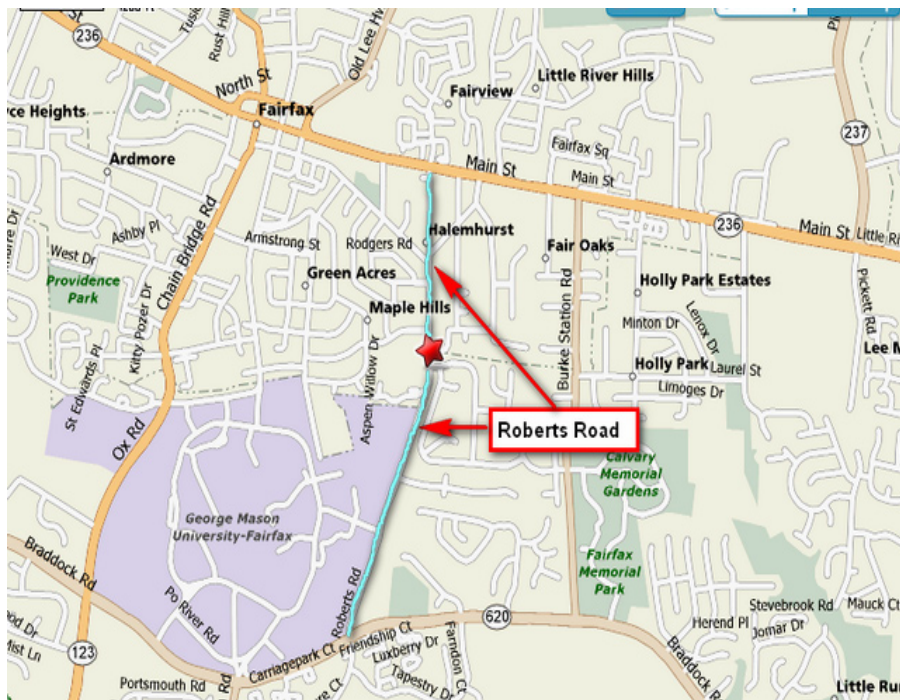
<http://www.wacug.org>

All Meetings are held at the  
*Osher Lifelong Learning Institute* 4210 Roberts Road,  
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line or visit our web site if  
you need additional infor-  
mation.

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# Adobe Photoshop Elements 8 & Premiere 8: Still Top Notch

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If you're new to the worlds of digital photography and image manipulation, Photoshop Elements 8 offers everything you need and more. Elements 8 is a powerful, well-balanced consumer photo editing and organizing tools. Photo Recomposition feature as amazing as its larger sibling - Photoshop. Tight integration with on-line services and Premiere 8 and extensive selection of help and tutorials. Users of Elements 7 are unlikely to find a reason to upgrade.

When you open Photoshop Elements 8, you're greeted with a just two real options: Going to the Organizer or opening Photoshop Elements 8 proper. Elements 8 remains the best option for consumer photo editing. It offers more than the competition in a package that's as attractive and unthreatening as this kind of software can be. The novice can rest assured they're getting the tip of the top. This is a very powerful program, though you might not think so with such a friendly face.

The Organizer is a large project folder with shortcuts for handling quick jobs without opening the individual programs. The Organizer bridges both Photoshop and Premiere Elements 8. The Editor has remained largely unchanged from Elements 7. That means it includes a healthy amount of the features found in its more robust and expensive sibling.

Elements 8 boasts a number of new features in an attractive and an intuitive, tabbed interface. Best improvements include an Auto Analyzer to practically automate image tagging and a new People Recognition feature that identifies people in images, plus new one-click image editing tools.

It can't be easy for a software develops keep products fresh year after year. I like the familiarity which actually reduces the learning curve! Because the software remains remarkable for the breadth and depth of its capabilities, it remains my pick. But for the new user, it's a steal with a breath taking feature/tool set.

The most exciting new addition – is the Recompose Photo tool. A refinement of the astounding content-

aware scaling that appeared in Photoshop. It allows you to redefine a photo selectively to fit into a specific size or orientation by choosing which elements of the picture to remove and which ones to keep. This is digital voodoo!

runSlideShow(); Quick Fix previews in Quick Edit mode now let you examine prospective changes, making it a lot easier to get the effect you want.

The biggest changes to PE 8 come in the area of organizing. Tags are even easier to use, with a "tag cloud" to help you rapidly sort or search for files matching your most frequently used criteria. The new Auto-Analyzer can automatically apply Smart Tags to files you import.

Of more immediate usefulness is the software's expanded help section, which includes tutorials that help you learn how to perform certain common tasks. Unfortunately, you can't derive the full benefit from them without paying an extra \$40 on a one-year Plus membership.

The new Auto QuickFix tools (Smart Fix, Color, Tone, Contrast, Detail, Color, and Red Eye) in the Organizer's full-screen mode can handle all of the editing that many photos require before you move on to the Create and/or Share tabs. Use Elements' full edit interface for more complex issues.

Among Elements 8's handful of new or extended photo editing tools is PhotoMerge, which now includes an Exposure tool that allows you to combine two nearly identical photos, taken with different exposure values, to attain the optimum exposure.

Those users who want a bit more assistance, you will find yourself pretty well taken care of.. By clicking the down arrow next to Edit, you'll see an Edit Quick and Edit Guided menu..

Though Edit Guided it presents you with what is at first a fairly intimidating list of options, it actually works quite well by telling and showing you exactly what to do to get the result you want. "Picture too blurry? It pops up with the blur-correction tool itself, instructions, and even an Auto button to see if the software can figure it out by itself." Very friendly.

The output features of Photoshop Elements 8 include Flickr which is under More Options while UTube is right out front. You share your images via iPhone, e-mail, and web/TV.

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System requirements: Adobe has historically been resource hungry and for a reason. Best minimum: Win7 64-bit, at least a 2.1GHz processor and four, preferably six, GB of RAM. It was not worth my time to save a \$150 for less RAM and a slower processor.

Users who already have Elements 7 should pass on this “upgrade,” since the move will feel lateral. Having said that, if you’re in the market for photo editing software, Photoshop Elements 8 has a lot to recommend it, specifically the stripped-down, easily used, implementation of Photoshop proper balances ease of use and flexibility. It’s beginner friendly but not oversimplified and remains sophisticated for the experienced user. For more info and updates go to [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

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## Convert a PDF File to a Text File

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**H**ave you been wishing you had a piece of software that would convert PDF files to text files that you can edit? And maybe also didn’t cost an arm and a leg?

BCL Technologies has such software called easyConverter Desktop that costs about \$20. That sounds like a good buy to me. But it only works with Windows (2000, XP, Vista and Win 7). So that leaves a lot of people, namely Linux users, out in the cold.

The good news is that BCL also has a free, online utility that does the same thing. And your operating system doesn’t come into it. Open your browser and go to <http://pdfonline.com/pdf2word/index.asp> and take a look.

On the left side, under a header that says “Convert PDF to Word for Free” you’ll see a place to browse your computer and select a file. Note that there is no need to provide your email address, since you’ll just download the file directly.

Find your file and double click it (or click once then click Open), then click the Upload and Convert button. Press it only once, and wait; larger files may take a while to upload. The conversion is pretty fast, under a minute for the one or two page files I tried. There is a 2 MB limit on uploads, so really big files won’t work.

This part is where, if you wanted to do a lot of files, or large ones, it would be great to have an application on your computer to do it—thus eliminating the time to upload.

The next step is downloading the text file. I’m not sure why the instructions say to Right Click on the link to download the file, because for me at least it didn’t work. I Left Clicked instead and the download dialog opened.

You’ll see that the file is a rich text file (.RTF or .rtf) which can easily be opened by Word, OpenOffice

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Writer, Abiword, or other word processors or text editors and be available for editing. When you save it you can save it as a .doc if you like.

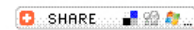
The dialog asks, What should (your browser) do with this file? The first choice is to open the file with the default application (mine showed OpenOffice) or you can choose another from a drop-down list. The second choice is to save the file, and if you choose Save the file, your download manager will save it to the default location—or you might get a Save as dialog and choose where to save it. One caution: opening the file directly rather than downloading it got me a Read Only file, which of course I couldn't edit. So for editing purposes, save the file before opening.

Make your choice by clicking a radio button, then click OK. You now have a text file you can edit. And the quality is very nice, too—for mostly text documents. I tried a PDF file that I had originally created in OpenOffice Writer which contained a calendar in a table. The results were not pretty! And for a postal PDF which was a requisition form using tables, the results were somewhat better but still unusable since the tables overlapped, hiding some of the text.

On the other hand, I made a list of data (several rows and columns) in an OpenOffice spreadsheet, exported it to PDF, then uploaded it and converted it. When I downloaded this file, it was perfect—and perfectly editable.

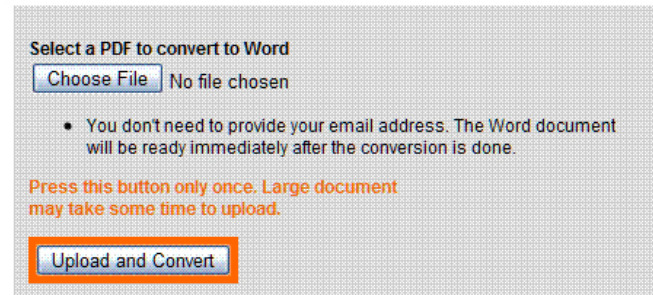
For me, using Ubuntu Linux, this free, online version is a good thing. Windows users have a choice of the web version or the computer application. And pdf2word gives the best results I've seen for this kind of web application.

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## Karen Is Offering Free Software Utilities

by Ira Wilsker, APCUG

WEBSITES;

<http://www.karenware.com>

<http://www.karenware.com/powertools.asp>

<http://www.karenware.com/bio.asp>

<http://www.karenware.com/powertools/ptreplicator.asp>

<http://www.karenware.com/powertools/ptsync.asp>

<http://www.karenware.com/powertools/ptwhois.asp>

I have been a big fan of free software utilities, and have written about them in this column many times before. Some years ago I was looking for an obscure utility, and found it on the Karenware.com website. Recently I was looking for another freeware real-time backup utility to use on my new Windows 7-64 computer, and read a review about the free Karenware utility "Karen's Replicator". I had forgotten what a treasure trove of over two dozen freeware utilities that Karen offers, and this review refreshed my memory.

In her online autobiography at [karenware.com/bio.asp](http://karenware.com/bio.asp), Karen says that she is "Karen Kenworthy, author of Karen's Power Tools and Karen's Power Tools Newsletter. Karen has written for Windows Maga-

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zine and Winmag.com, for almost a decade. Her free Power Tools newsletter has over 80,000 subscribers, and is growing by 100 new subscribers every day. She also writes custom programs, and develops web sites.” Karen has earned a well-deserved reputation for writing some excellent quality free utilities that can satisfy a variety of computing needs.

I downloaded her Karen’s Replicator v3.6.8 from [karenware.com/powertools/ptreplicator.asp](http://karenware.com/powertools/ptreplicator.asp) to my Windows 7-64 machine, and the 1.9mb file downloaded and installed quickly. There were no toolbars or other gimmicks to install, which some other freeware publishers have started to include as a revenue stream, but not Karen; her software is clean and free of nuisance add-ons. Replicator will run on almost all Windows machines from the ancient Windows 95 to the new Windows 7. Replicator is a very simple backup utility that can automatically backup an entire hard drive at user selected times, or be run manually as desired. By default, Replicator will not duplicate a file that has already been backed up, unless it has a different name, size, or date. Replicator can also be configured not to backup selected files, such as temporary and other useless files, saving time and space. As soon as I installed Replicator I selected to do a full file backup to one of my several external USB 2.0 hard drives, which it performed surprisingly fast. Files are stored on the backup device in native format, and can be read or copied by Windows Explorer or any other file utility. I even directly opened files on my external drive that had been copied by Replicator, and they opened flawlessly.

Remember that Murphy’s First Law of Computing is that, “A properly backed up hard drive will never fail; but if there is no current backup, the hard drive will always fail at the most inopportune time”. I have Replicator set to perform a backup every evening, such that I will always have a backup of my critical files that is not more than 24 hours old. It does what other programs call an incremental backup, in that it only copies new, or changed files with each backup, making subsequent backups very fast. Since I like redundancy, as an external hard drive can fail also, I am currently using three external drives which I rotate periodically, having only one connected to the computer, and the other two stored safely away. If one external drive should fail, I still have a fairly re-

cent backup, minimizing any losses. When I change external hard drives, Replicator does a very good job at keeping the backup files current. When I evacuated for Rita, Gustav, and Ike, the first item I packed was my external hard drive with my most recent backup. Since the backup files are in native format, no utilities other than Windows Explorer or another file manager are necessary to copy the files back if necessary. Especially after Ike, many local people and businesses were distraught to find their computers with their irreplaceable data destroyed by the hurricane and storm surge. Fortunately I had only minor damage to my house from the storms, but if I would have had major damage, I could have purchased a new computer and quickly restored my important data files. Many of us have important files on our computers, including tax files, wedding pictures, family photos and videos, financial records, and other vital files. A good backup buys us peace of mind and a sense of security. I can strongly recommend Karen’s Replicator as an excellent, but very easy to use, backup utility.

One of my pet peeves is a computer with the wrong date and time on the clock displayed on the taskbar. Recent versions of Windows include a feature to update the internal clock, but experience has shown that this utility’s performance is often spotty and unreliable, resulting in an incorrect time (and sometimes date) displayed. I downloaded Karen’s Time Sync v2.02 from [karenware.com/powertools/ptsync.asp](http://karenware.com/powertools/ptsync.asp). Time Sync offers a comprehensive list of hundreds of time servers from all over the globe; I selected the public time server closest to me and in my time zone, “tick.uh.edu” at the University of Houston. The selection of time servers offered by Time Sync is far superior to the handful of time servers included in later versions of Windows, and will update the clock as desired. I selected to automatically check and update my computer clock whenever the computer is booted. Now I can be reasonable certain that the time displayed on my computer’s clock is accurate.

Sometimes an internet user would like to know who owns an internet domain, complete with contact information on the domain owner. Karen offers a free utility WhoIs v2.6.6, which can be downloaded from [karenware.com/powertools/ptwhois.asp](http://karenware.com/powertools/ptwhois.asp). According to the website, WhoIs will, “Query the 200+ top-level domain registries and Regional Internet Registries around the world, and return information about Internet sites. Information available includes owner of domain name, and

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often owner's mailing address, email address, phone number, and fax number." I occasionally use WhoIs to find the registered owner of a website, and it works very well provided the owner has honestly registered the domain with accurate information.

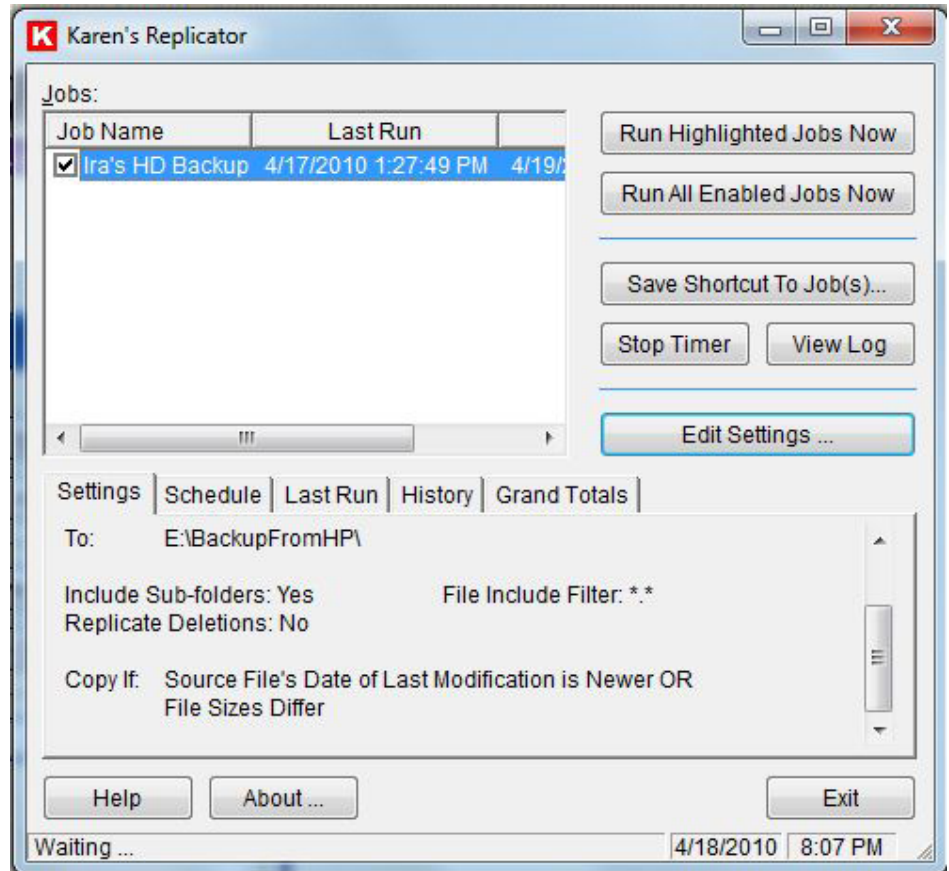
Some of Karen's other utilities that I sometimes use are URL Discombobulator, Computer Profiler, Calculator, and LAN Monitor. The URL Discombobulator can decode and display the real internet addresses of a website that has an ascii or hex web address, or otherwise difficult to comprehend web address. Computer Profiler displays all of the minute details about a computer's hardware and software, including network information, USB devices, operating system, printers, drives, and many other things about a computer; this information may be useful in servicing, upgrading, updating, or repairing a computer. Karen's Calculator can process and display numbers with thousands of digits, and displays the entries and answers on a virtual paper tape which can be saved. LAN Monitor, which is Karen's only program which will not run on Windows 95 (but runs fine on Windows 98 to Windows 7) displays information on the computer and local network. LAN Monitor shows the adapter speed, IP address DHCP, type of connection, and other information on every connected computer. This utility shows the real-time traffic, transmission errors, and network load information.

Karen Kenworthy is to be commended for writing such fine utilities, and offering them to the public at no charge. I recommend that users look at the list of available utilities at [karenware.com/powertools.asp](http://karenware.com/powertools.asp) and download and try any of interest. The file sizes may be small, but their quality and features are excellent. I like Karen's utilities, and use a few of them every day, and so should you. As I have said before, you cannot beat the price and the quality.



## Karen Replicator 1

## Karen Replicator 2



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## Compatibility

Karen's Power Tools are compatible with virtually all versions of Windows released since Windows 95. Here are the details:

This Power Tool:	Runs on this Version of Windows										
	95 <sup>1</sup>	98	98 SE	NT <sup>2</sup>	Me	2000 <sup>3</sup>	XP <sup>4</sup>	2003 <sup>5</sup>	Vista <sup>6</sup>	2008 <sup>7</sup>	7 <sup>8</sup>
LAN Monitor		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
All others	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Windows 95 original and OSR2  
<sup>2</sup>NT v4.0 and later  
<sup>3</sup>All editions of Windows 2000 (Professional and Server)  
<sup>4</sup>All editions of Windows XP (Home and Professional)  
<sup>5</sup>All editions of Windows 2003 Server  
<sup>6</sup>All editions of Windows Vista  
<sup>7</sup>All editions of Windows Server 2008  
<sup>8</sup>All editions of Windows 7

## Karen Utilities Compatibility