



The Cursor



Monthly Newsletter of the
Washington Area Computer User Group

Meeting Location
OLLI, 4210 Roberts Road,
Fairfax, VA



Next Meeting:
June 19, 2010



Presidential Bits

by Geof Goodrum, President WACUG, president@wacug.org

For the May meeting, Kurt DeSoto put together an impressive multimedia presentation about converting videos from VHS tapes to digital files on PC and DVD. Combining animated slides, videos, and synchronized narration with two high-quality computer generated voices, we have already asked Kurt about giving a presentation about how he put together the presentation! Kurt compared the options to convert videos, including local commercial services (he went so far as to try a couple of them), using a PC with an inexpensive (\$100) commercial software/hardware package, and combo VHS/DVD player/recorders that largely automate the conversion process. In short, all have their pros and cons (which Kurt listed), but Kurt recommended the VHS/DVD player/recorders (one of which he demonstrated). We expect to have an abbreviated version of Kurt's presentation slides on the WAC Recent Meetings web page (<http://www.wacug.org/recmtgs.html>) by the time you read this.

Also at the May meeting, Chuck Roberts introduced us to the free version of IObit's maintenance utility for Microsoft Windows, Advanced SystemCare (<http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html>). While this software can scan and remove malware, its primary purpose is to tune up and optimize performance of Microsoft Windows systems with disk defragmentation and system registry cleaning. This is definitely something Windows users should keep on their system along with good antivirus and firewall software. Chuck also reminded us that WAC keeps a list of useful keyboard shortcuts on our website in Portable Document Format (PDF) (<http://www.wacug.org/kbshtcts.pdf>). I'll bet there are a few there you don't know about but could really benefit from!

For the next meeting on June 19th, we will host our semi-annual PC Clinic to help people diagnose and repair their PC problems, as well as install and configure software and operating systems. This year, we will also have a Hands on Help panel during the general meeting to address specific problems in an extended Q&A format. We do ask that you request help in advance of the meeting by describing the issue in an e-mail to pcclinic@wacug.org or in a voice message on the WAC AnswerLine (703-370-7649). Lorrin Garson will also present a Learn 30 tutorial on encryption software to keep your personal information secure (see Lorrin's write-up on page 9).

See you there!

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Lloyd's Web Sites for June, 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. Yahoo: Reference – <http://education.yahoo.com/reference> – Yahoo! Education offers a handy selection of searchable reference materials to help you find the information you need. Look up the definition of a word in the Dictionary, find its synonym in the Thesaurus, or translate it into Spanish. Search for facts and information in the Encyclopedia, find country and regional maps and flags in the World Factbook, and much more.
2. Wikipedia – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page – Wikipedia is a multilingual, web-based, free content encyclopedia project. Wikipedia's articles provide links to guide the user to related pages with additional information.
3. Astronomy Picture of the Day – <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html> – Discover the cosmos! Each day a different image or photograph of our fascinating universe is featured, along with a brief explanation written by a professional astronomer.
4. Mensa Workout – www.mensa.org/index0.php?page=12 – This quiz is provided for entertainment purposes only; it is not an IQ test. This score will not qualify you for Mensa. The questions on the 'Mensa Workout' are biased towards people whose primary language is English.
5. Safe bicycle turn indicator – www.safeturn.com – Automatically turn on light when you raise arm to indicate a turn and light goes off when you put hand back on handle bar. Cost \$18
6. IRS: Frequently Asked Questions – www.irs.gov/faqs – Welcome to the Internal Revenue Service's general questions and answers section. Each year we update the answers to reflect the latest changes in tax regulations. These questions and answers came from taxpayers like you
7. Recalls.gov – <http://recalls.gov> – Find recent recalls of consumer products, motor vehicles, boats, foods, medicines, cosmetics, and environmental products. Also, search for past recalls.
8. Arts & Letters Daily – <http://aldaily.com> – This Website provides daily updates and information on "News, reviews, latest trends, breakthroughs, disputes, and gossip in arts and culture." It provides links to "articles of note," "new Books" and "Essays and Opinion" pieces as related to arts and letters.
9. The March King: John Philip Sousa – <http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ahas/html/sousa/sousa-home.html> – An online presentation of selected music manuscripts, photographs, printed music, historical recordings of the Sousa Band, copies of programs and press clippings, and more from the Sousa Collection at the Library of Congress.
10. Weekend getaways – www.iloveinns.com – Over 19,000 romantic, historic and other bed-and-breakfasts across USA



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
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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) at least 48 hours before meeting day to order or for more information.

DistroWatch.com lists the following distribution release announcements for the period May 6 – June 2, 2010.

Distribution
aLinux 14.0
Arch Linux 2010.05
CentOS 5.5
Clonezilla Live 1.2.5-17
DigAnTel 3
eBox Platform 1.4-2
Element 1.2
Endian Firewall 2.4
Fedora 13
iMagic OS Sho
Linux Mint 9
Magic Linux 2.5
MeeGo 1.0
Monomaxos 5.0
NuTyX 2009.4
Parsix GNU/Linux 3.5
PCLinuxOS 2010 “Openbox”
Peppermint OS One-05222010
Puppy Linux 5.0
Quirky 1.1



See *Linux* page 4

Scientific Linux 5.5
Slackware Linux 13.1
SME Server 7.5
SystemRescueCd 1.5.5
Toorox 05.2010
Ultimate Edition 2.6 “Gamers”
VectorLinux 6.0 “KDE-Classic-Live”
Vinux 3.0
Zenwalk Linux 6.4

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.

June 2010

cutmp3 – v2.0.2. <http://www.puchalla-online.de/cut-mp3.html>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executable by Jochen Puchalla. cutmp3 is a small command line MP3 audio file editor. It lets you select sections of an MP3 interactively or via a timetable and save them to separate files without quality loss. Silence and ID3 tag searching are also possible. For playback it uses mpg123. The program works with VBR files and files bigger than 2GB. There is also a simple graphic frontend for it, called xcutmp3.

Danger from the Deep – v0.3.0. <http://dangerdeep.sourceforge.net/>. Free GNU General Public License executable installer and source code and Creative Commons At-Nc-Nd 2.0/2.5 licensed content by Thorsten Jordan, Luis Barrancos, Markus Petermann, et al. Danger from the Deep (known as dangerdeep or DftD) is a free (as in free speech), Open Source World War II German submarine simulator. This game is planned as tactical simulation and will be as realistic as our time and knowledge of physics allows. It's current state is ALPHA, but it is playable. DftD requires an OpenGL 1.5 Compliant graphics card (OpenGL 2.0 or greater is recommended), a fairly fast CPU, anything from 1.0ghz to 1.5ghz or greater should work, 256MB RAM (512MB or more would be much better).

Simple Groupware – v0.622. <http://www.simple-groupware.de/cms/>. Free GNU General Public License PHP script by Thomas Bley. Simple Groupware is a complete enterprise application offering email, calendaring, contacts, tasks, document management,

synchronization with cell phones and Outlook, full-text search, and much more. Simple Groupware combines standards like RSS, iCalendar, vCard, IMAP, POP3, SMTP, CIFS, CSV, WebDAV, LDAP, and SyncML under one platform. Unlike other groupware software, Simple Groupware contains the programming language sgsML to enable the quick customization and creation of powerful Web applications.

TkCVS – v8.2.2. <http://www.twobarleycorns.net/tkcv.html>. Free GNU General Public License script code by delson and DorothyR. TkCVS is a cross-platform, Tcl/Tk-based GUI for the CVS and Subversion configuration management systems. It displays the status of the files in the current working directory, and provides buttons and menus to execute CVS, Subversion, or RCS commands on the selected files. The Log Browser displays a branch diagram of the revision history. The Module Browser extends CVS with facilities for a user-friendly listing of modules in the repository. TkDiff is included for browsing and merging your changes.

Kernel Source – v2.6.34. <http://www.kernel.org/>. Free GNU Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.



Screenshots for Linux featured applications follow on pages 5, 6 and 7



Danger from the Deep





TkCVS

MS Office Tips

Contributed by Sharon Parq Associates

Printing More Than One Copy

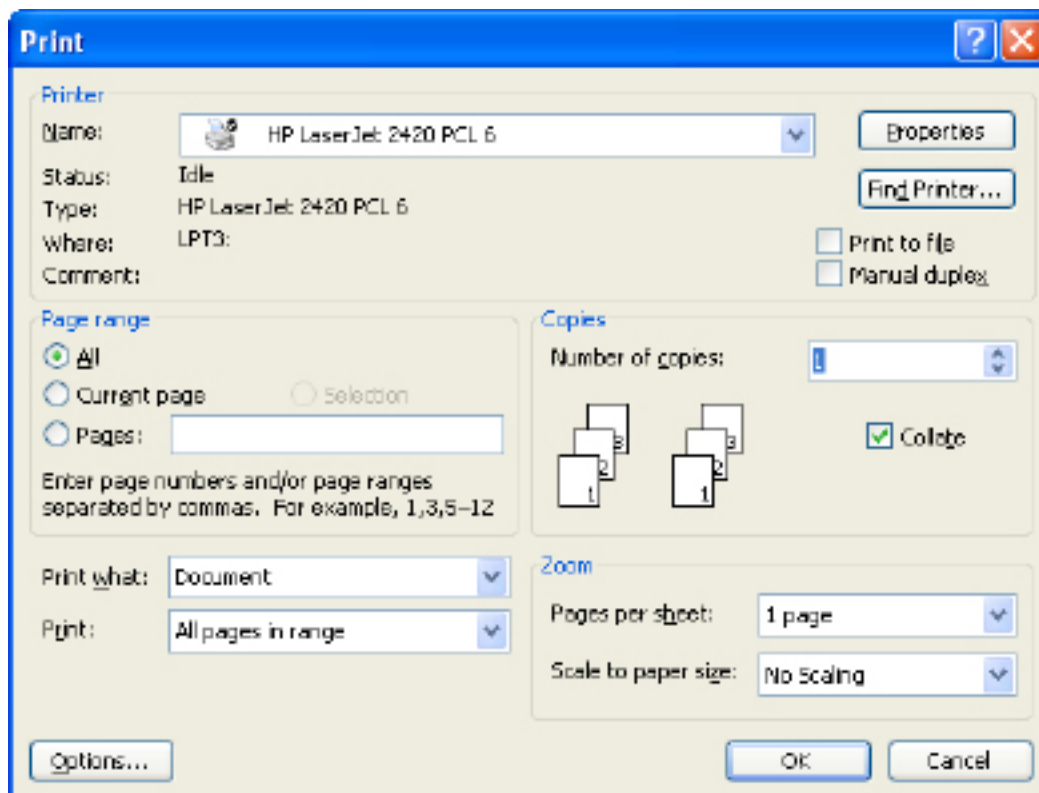
Microsoft Word gives you complete control over how it prints your document. If desired, you can print more than one copy of your document. To print to a file, follow these steps:

1. Choose Print from the File menu. You will see the Print dialog box. (To display the Print dialog box in Word 2007, click the Office button and then click Print.) A really quick way to display the Print dialog box is to simply press Ctrl+P.
2. In the Copies box, indicate the number of copies you want to print.

3. In the Range box, specify what you want to print.
4. Check the status of the Collate option. (Select or clear the option based on whether you want the pages of each copy printed in order or not.)
5. Click on OK.

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MS Office Tips continues next page



Counting Cells with Specific Characters

Let's say that you have a Microsoft Excel worksheet that contains all the people who have ever worked in your department. Each name is prefaced by a single character that indicates the status of the person. For instance, if Fred Davis were retired, his name might show up as "RFred Davis". With quite a lot of these names in the worksheet, you may need a way to count those people with a specific status character.

The easiest way to accomplish this is to use the COUNTIF function. If, for instance, the status character is the letter R (for "retired"), and your range of names is in cells A5:A52, then you could use the following to determine which cells begin with the letter R:

```
=COUNTIF(A5:A52,"R*")
```

The formula works because the comparison value is R*, which means "the letter R followed by any other characters." Excel dutifully returns the count. To search for a different status character, simply replace R with the desired status character.

Obviously, if the asterisk has a special meaning in this usage, you can't search directly for an asterisk. Actually, there are three characters you cannot search for directly: the asterisk (*), the question mark (?) and the

tilde (~). If you want to search for any of these characters, you must precede the character with the tilde. Thus, if you wanted to determine a count of names that had a question mark as a status code, you could use the following:

```
=COUNTIF(A5:A52,"~?*")
```

An alternative to using COUNTIF is to create an array formula that is applied to every cell in the range. The following will do the trick very nicely:

```
=SUM((LEFT(A5:A52,1)="R")*1)
```

This must, of course, be entered as an array formula. This means that instead of pressing Enter at the end of the formula, you would press Shift+Ctrl+Enter. The formula checks the left-most character of a cell, returning the value TRUE if it is R or FALSE if it is not. The multiplication is done to convert the TRUE/FALSE value to a number, either 1 for TRUE or 0 for FALSE. The SUM function returns the sum, or count, of all the cells that meet the criteria.

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Effortless Encryption for Anxious Users

Presented by Lorrin Garson, WACUG member

Protecting private information and securing your identity are increasingly important. Countless computers are intruded upon daily and an estimated 600,000 laptop computers are stolen annually. With modest effort, private information can be protected using simple procedures with strong encryption. At the June 19th meetng, I will discuss two encryption software packages, Cypherix (<http://www.cypherix.com/>) and TrueCrypt (<http://www.truecrypt.org/>). I will also demonstrate of downloading, setting-up, and using TrueCrypt.



iPad Shoppers Beware!

By Gregory West, Member of Computers Operators of Marysville and Port Huron (C.O.M.P.), Michigan

[http://www.bwcomp.org/prospector16\(at\)gmail.com](http://www.bwcomp.org/prospector16(at)gmail.com)

If you are bent on getting an iPad don't read any further. However, if you are trying to decide between buying a laptop and an iPad this article is for you.

I like my laptop because I can load any software, connect any device such as a digital camera, memory stick, backup drives, by USB connections. I like the idea of being able to load free software from any company or source and not be restricted to one company such as Apple.

"Your computer should be yours to control," said Peter Brown, the Free Software Foundation's executive director. "By imposing such restrictions on users, Steve Jobs (APPLE CEO) is building a legacy that endangers our freedom for his profits (The Microsoft Blog)."

For me, choosing a laptop is simple: Macbook. I run Windows XP and Windows 7 on my Mac laptop without a glitch. Of course there are many other laptops, notebooks and net books that work great too and all of them avail you the opportunity to install third party applications, many at no cost.

The iPad has landed in North America and is creating huge hype. Rightfully so! It is a wonderful device

allowing for various functions. According to Wikipedia the iPad "is part of a device category between a smartphone and a laptop computer." This may be true but it is not close to my Macbook laptop, not by a long shot.

For starters the hard drive is only 16 to 64 gigabytes (GB) of flash memory (a technology that is primarily used in camera memory cards). My laptop is 250 GBs and with a terabyte hard drive connected by USB. I now have a grand total of 1274 GBs of hard drive space. Very different from 16 to 64 GBs of the iPad.

The iPad's 9.7-inch (25 cm) screen has a low end resolution of 1024 X 768. What this tech talk means is that the iPad will not support HDMI video which many have come to love. With high definition the rave...Why go back to a lesser screen resolution. This does not make sense.

Other features lacking in the iPad are: no camera, no webcam, no multitasking, no drag and drop file management, no USB port, no SD slot, no Flash, no HDMI out, no 1080p playback, and no native widescreen. Are we going backwards here? In 2005 it was "the Year of High Definition Video," according to cnet.com. How come the iPad lacks these features?

Many are saying the iPad has its neat functions and is esthetically appealing. Just make sure you are getting the exact features you require in any tech device. Do your homework on this one.

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Gregory West is a Mac Instructor for Lambton College in Ontario, Canada.

He is also Webmaster at Central United Church, the home of the new COMMUNITY Computer Room at: <http://central-united-church.org/news>.



PCmover, A Review...

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ

The Journal of the Tucson Computer Society,
January 2010

www.aztcs.org

[Georgehardingsbd \(at\) earthlink.net](mailto:Georgehardingsbd(at)earthlink.net)

Laplink has had PCmover available for many years. Its purpose is to successfully transfer your data and programs from an old computer to a new one. The data part of the transfer is easy enough, in fact, Microsoft has an application called Easy Transfer that will do that part. However, to transfer the programs part is difficult. You usually have to install the original programs on the new computer, and then update them as necessary, which may take a long time

The PCmover process has been adapted to include the tricky process of upgrading from XP to Window 7. As you probably know, Microsoft requires you to do a "clean" install (format the hard drive, then install) if you are running XP, then reinstall and update all your programs. I tried the PCmover process in an update from XP to Window 7. Overall, I would say it was a remarkable success. Before you start doing an upgrade, it's wise to run Microsoft's Upgrade Advisor, available at Microsoft's site.

The first step, of course, is to make at least one complete backup of your system – not just the data files, but the entire partition in which XP is running. Some tech people even advise making two complete backups and having them verified by the backup software.

The next step is to download and install PCmover. You can download it at www.laplink.com/PCmover. Once downloaded, you install it just like any other application. Laplink advises that you turn off any screen savers and power-saving settings. For laptops keep the power plug in. Your computer must stay awake during the entire procedure. They also recommend disabling anti-virus, spyware and similar applications because they probably won't be transferred correctly; you'll have to reinstall them after the upgrade.

Next, you run PCmover. You will need a serial number in order to run the program, which you should get when you download the program. The next screen of the program shows several choices for method of migration. You should choose the Windows 7 Upgrade Assistant method.

You can choose to migrate all users or only chosen ones. You'll usually choose all. Next, you'll be presented with a list of all your hard drives and partitions. You'll only want to migrate the partition/drive which has XP. Next you can exclude certain file types. You probably won't want to transfer the listed types, but it won't hurt anything if you do transfer them.

Next is a scan for applications. You'll get a list of all the applications on your computer. I got 112 in my list. You may deselect any of these which you don't want to migrate.

I left them all checked.

The next step creates the list of applications you have chosen, and then asks you what name to give it and where to save it. You should save it on a different drive/partition from the one you are migrating, or on an external hard drive. You can give it any name you want. I called mine "upgrade."

Now, PCmover creates the Moving Van, the file that contains all the info to be migrated and saves it where you specified. This may be quite a large file. Mine was over 7 MB.

Now you upgrade to Windows 7 by selecting the Custom method. This will take a while, but your input will not be needed. Once complete, you reinstall PCmover on the upgraded computer, run it, find the Moving Van file and let PCmover migrate your applications and data. This transfer may take quite a while.

When completed, you should have all your applications and data that you wanted migrated available and working in Windows 7. There may be some of your applications that do not work in Windows 7. I had a few, but the problem was with Windows 7, not PCmover.

I found this migration assistant to be easy to use and quite effective to migrate applications and files

About: PCmover

Vendor: Laplink

www.laplink.com

Price: Ranges from \$20 to \$60 for a single license



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

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

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 WAC's monthly newsletter,
The Cursor, in PDF format

Individual/Corporate/Family Dues: \$25.00
\$5 annual surcharge for delivery of the Cursor by
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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

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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: • Jun 19 • Jul 17 • Aug 14 • Sep 18 • Oct 16

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,
Fairfax, VA. Call our help
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mation.

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Free Utilities to Uninstall Unwanted Software

by Ira Wilsker, APCUG

WEBSITES:

http://www.revouninstaller.com/revo_uninstaller_free_download.html

<http://www.iobit.com/advanceduninstaller.html>

Recently, in one of the computer classes I was teaching, a student volunteered that he got rid of unwanted programs by simply deleting the files and directories using Windows Explorer (file manager). He asked if that was ok. I politely explained that the method that he used was not ok, because improperly deleting files can leave errors in the registry, damaged file associations, and a host of other problems. I showed him on my desktop computer that Windows has an integral function commonly called “Add or Remove Programs” that could do a credible job of properly deleting unwanted programs. I also showed him if he clicked on START - PROGRAMS and went to the menu for his now unwanted program, there may be an entry to uninstall the program, directly from the menu. Additionally, if he used his Windows Explorer file manager to look at the directory containing the unwanted program, there would sometimes be an executable file with the name “uninstall.exe” or “unwise.exe” in the program directory, which will start the proper uninstall process. While these methods are at least minimally adequate, and generally safe, they do tend to leave some now useless “garbage” on the hard drive and in the registry. After time, as more programs are installed and deleted, this buildup of obsolete and useless files and registry entries can amount to substantial wasted hard drive space, and degraded performance due to a bloated registry.

A cottage industry has developed where programmers have developed software to more thoroughly uninstall unwanted software, better and more completely than Windows’ integral Add or Remove program, and the uninstallers sometimes included with the now unwanted programs. Many of the commercial and freeware utilities that can perform computer maintenance and cleanup tasks now include some form of uninstaller, and these are generally pretty good. For those PC users who may like a freestanding utility that can effectively and completely uninstall an unwanted or obsolete program, there are two that I am currently using, both of which have proven themselves as ca-

pable utilities. Both of these utilities not just delete the unwanted programs, but also scan the hard drive and registry for now useless files and entries, and allow the user to selectively and safely remove them. The two programs that I am currently using are the freeware version of Revo Uninstaller (version 1.88), and the recently updated freeware IObit Uninstaller (version 1.1).

The freeware version of Revo Uninstaller, available by download link at the bottom of the page at www.revouninstaller.com/revo_uninstaller_free_download.html is one of the most popular and highly rated uninstallers available. While not as feature rich as its commercial big brother, it does have the ability to totally remove any unwanted programs from the computer. The default display of Revo Uninstaller shows the icons of the programs installed on the computer. Clicking on the icon of the unwanted program opens a “Select an Uninstall Mode” window where the user has four choices. The first choice only executes the target program’s own uninstaller, and does not do any additional scanning. While fast, this is typically not a very complete removal of the unwanted software. The second selection, the one that I use almost universally, is the “Safe” mode, which first runs the unwanted program’s own uninstaller, and then scans the registry and hard drive to find leftover items that are safe to delete. The “Moderate” and “Advanced” modes are slower as they perform more comprehensive scans, but sometimes find a few more items to delete. Once a mode is selected, Revo does as instructed, creates a restore point, and uninstalls the program, followed by a registry scan and hard drive scan. After the registry scan is completed, now obsolete entries are displayed in a bold font, with a checkbox to the left of the entry; it is generally safe to check the box adjacent to the bold entries, which will delete them from the registry. The user generally should not check any boxes that are not adjacent to a bold entry. After removing selected registry items, Revo scans the hard drive for now orphaned files and directories, which are displayed along with adjacent check boxes. The user can “select all” or choose which files to delete. Once Revo Uninstaller has completed its tasks, the unwanted program is no longer present anywhere on the computer. Revo Uninstaller has a well-earned reputation for effectiveness and safety, and is a most viable alternative to Microsoft’s anemic Add or Remove Programs utility.

See Free Uninstall Utilities next page

Always on the lookout for new products to try, I recently read some very positive reviews of IObit's recently released Uninstaller software, available as a free download from www.iobit.com/advanceduninstaller.html. The interface on IObit Uninstaller is clean, and displays all of the programs installed on the computer. A checkbox on the left of each program is used to select the program to be removed. There are only two choices available under the "Uninstall" icon on the program toolbar, "Standard" and "Advanced". The "Standard" selection only runs the unwanted program's own uninstall function. The "Advanced" choice performs the more thorough uninstall, complete with registry and hard drive scans to locate and remove now obsolete entries. Before any files are removed, IObit creates a system restore point so the system can be quickly and easily recovered if an error is made during the uninstall process. One interesting feature on the left side of the IObit Uninstall window is the "Toolbars" icon, which displays the toolbars installed in the browsers. Many users have too many toolbars installed on their browsers, which robs the user of valuable desktop real estate. Many browser toolbars are redundant and offer no additional functionality, and some are actually security and privacy risks, or slow down the browser. By checking the box adjacent to the unwanted toolbars, this software will do a fast and credible job of removing the unwanted toolbars from the browser.

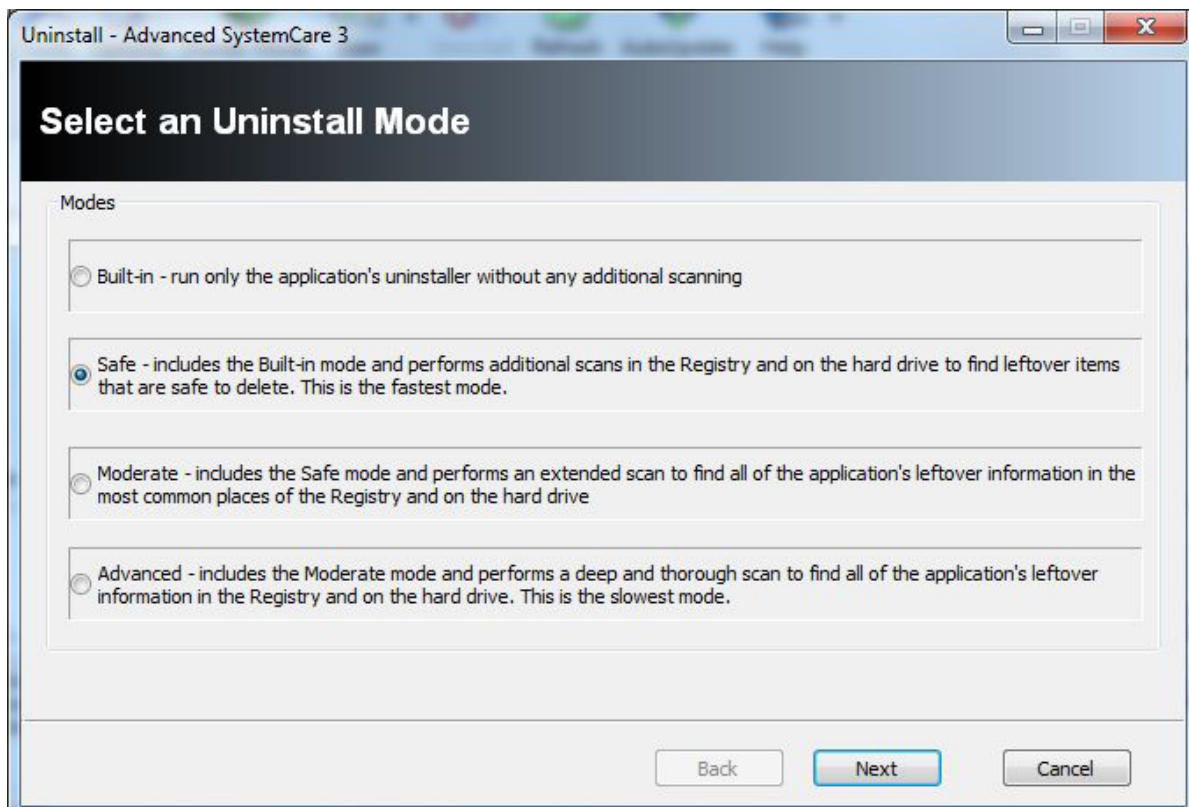
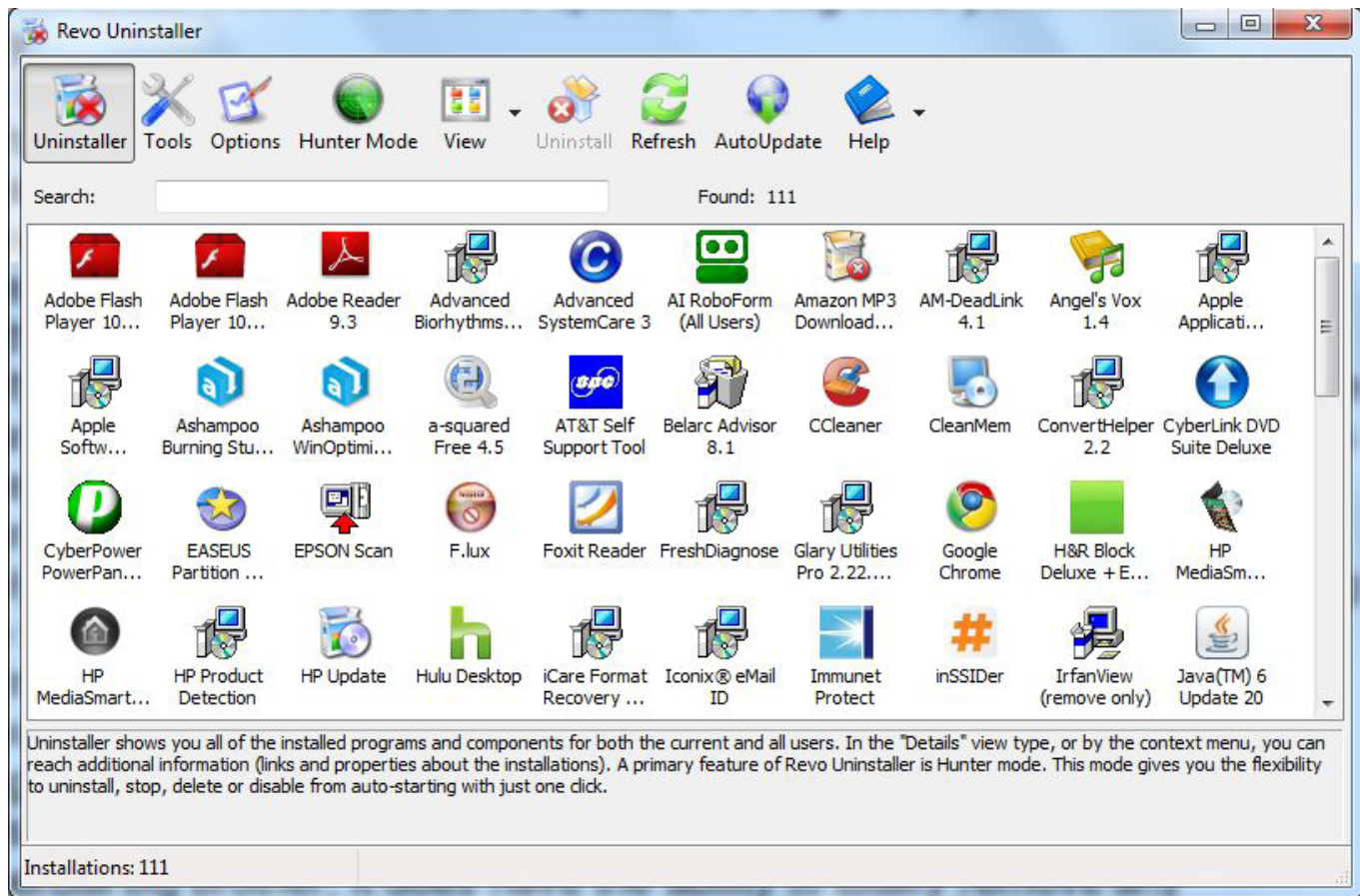
The IObit Uninstaller allows the user to "batch uninstall" where checking more than one box (selecting more than one program to uninstall) will uninstall several programs with a single click. Another interesting feature is that the program is run as downloaded, and requires no installation. In addition to having IObit Uninstaller on my hard drive, I now have a copy on the USB flash drive that I carry on my keychain, along with my security software.

Either or both of these programs would be worthwhile to have on any computer, and can assure the user that any unwanted programs are safely and properly deleted from the computer.

Screenshots appear on BP3.

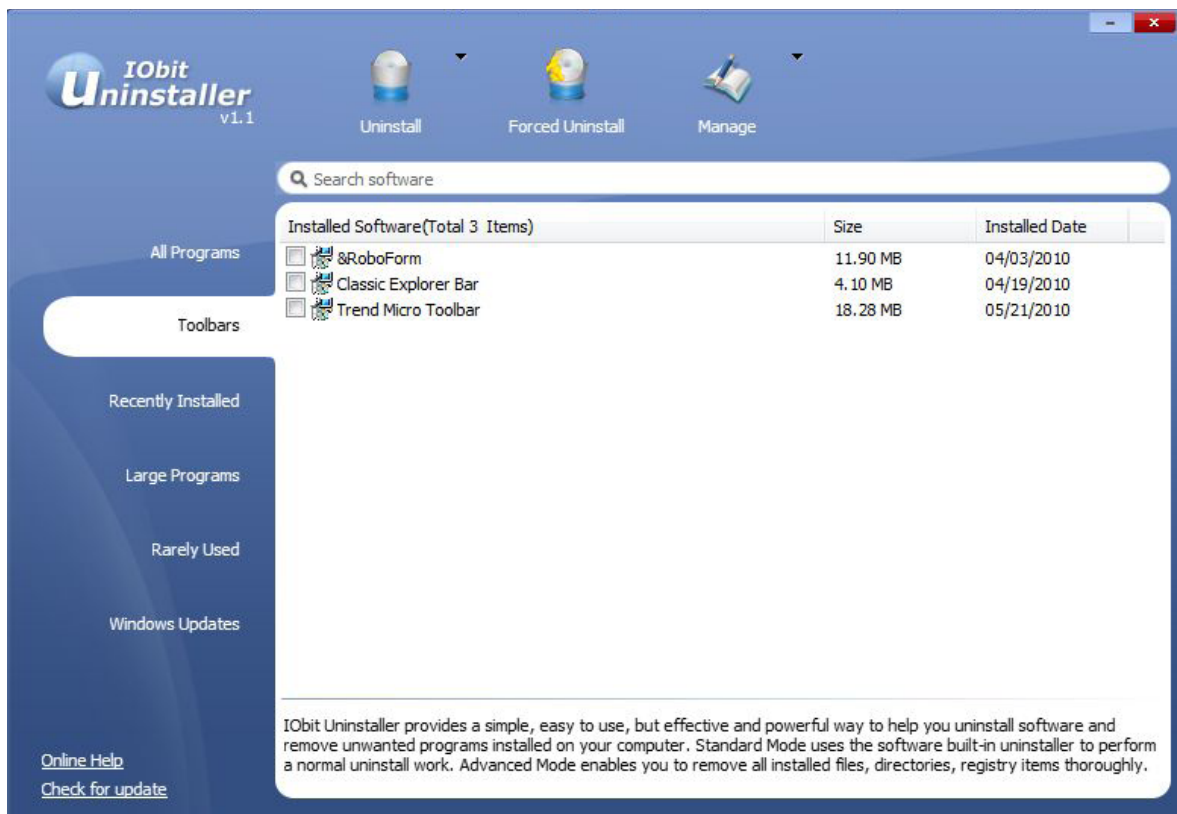


Free Uninstall Utility: Revo

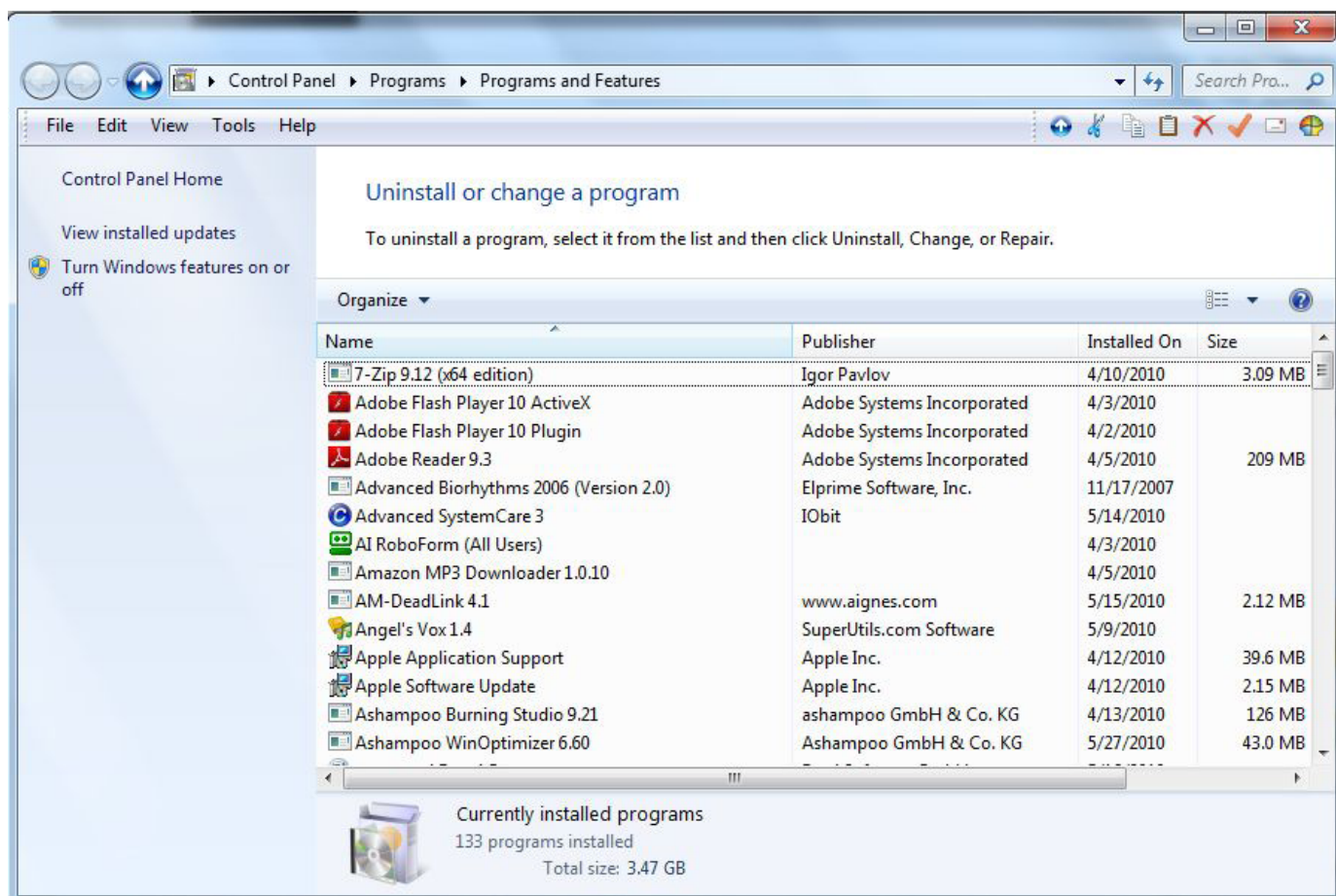


See *Free Utilities* Bonus Page 4

Free Uninstall Utility: IObit



See Free Utilities Bonus Page 5



CrimeReports.com – The National Crime Map

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG

WEBSITES:

<http://www.crimereports.com>
<http://www.crimereports.com/files/CommandCentralBrochure.pdf>
<http://www.crimereports.com/files/CrimeReportsBrochure.pdf>
<http://www.crimereports.com/iphone>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNX1YTOeU8U>
[iPhone demo](#)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtvKb4bEN9Y>
[TV Report](#)
<http://www.youtube.com/user/CrimeReportsVideos>

At present, over 600 law enforcement agencies are participating in an online service, CrimeReports.com. Claiming to be the largest crime mapping network in North America, CrimeReports.com gives people the information that they need to help protect them from crime, and also offers crime prevention information. Seamlessly integrated

with Google Maps, CrimeReports.com displays up-to-date crime information from any of the 600 participating jurisdictions located in 44 states and the District of Columbia. In addition to crime information, this service also displays the locations of registered sex offenders in all 50 states. Being internet based, the service can be accessed by anyone for free, and does not display any advertising banners or other commercial information. While viewing the service is available to anyone at no charge, [CrimeReports.com](http://www.crimereports.com) is funded on a subscription basis by the participating law enforcement agencies with monthly rates of \$49 for college and university police departments, \$99 for small towns (under 50 thousand population), and \$199 for larger towns and cities.

Upon accessing the website, the user is greeted with a clean interface displaying a U.S. map, and a Google search bar. Clicking on an active state will display a scrolling list of the participating jurisdictions. Clicking on a jurisdiction will display a Google street map. The user can select a time period to display (3, 7, 14, 30

CrimeReports continues next page

days, a specific date, or range of dates), types of crime, or distance from a specific address. The display of registered sex offender residences can be turned on or off as desired. Alternatively, a street address, city and state, or zip code can be entered in the Google search bar, and the map will be centered on that location. If the location selected is not in a jurisdiction that subscribes to CrimeReports.com, then only registered sex offenders will be displayed; but if the location is in a participating jurisdiction, then a detailed crime map will be displayed. As with all Google Maps, the user may choose to display a conventional street map (the default display), a high resolution satellite image, a hybrid map (satellite image with street names overlaid), or a terrain map. The Google Maps display can also be zoomed in or out by manipulating the slider bar in the top-left corner of the map, while options are displayed on the bottom-right margin of the map to show a “printer friendly” display, a “distance guide” that displays distances as a series of concentric circles from the given address, and a “legend” which defines the types of crimes based on the icons shown.

From the CrimeReports.com front page, I clicked on Texas on the national map, and a listing of 37 Texas subscribing cities was displayed. Scrolling through the list, I found that my home city was not listed, but does display local registered sex offenders. The closest participating city to my home is Jasper, Texas, so I clicked on the Jasper link on the pull down menu. I zoomed in centering on the center of town, and the crime map was very easy to read. I selected the most recent 14 day period, and the incidents were clearly displayed. On the left margin of the map was a listing of offenses, which I sorted by date. Alternatively, clicking on one of the displayed icons displayed the type of crime, the date, the address, time, and reporting agency.

There is much more information available than just displaying a crime map. Clicking on the “Analytics” tab on the top of the web page opens up a detailed crime analysis graphing utility. On the top of the display the user first clicks on a state from the pull down menu, and then in the adjacent column clicks on a participating jurisdiction. As with the maps, specific time periods can be easily selected. The first graph displays the type and number of crimes as a bar graph. The second chart shows a pie chart showing

types of crimes as a percentage of total crime. The bottom of the web page shows crime trends, color coded by type of crime, and charted by date and number. With the maps and analytical information, residents and businesses can be better aware of the criminal risks throughout an area.

While all of the information on CrimeReports.com is freely available for anyone to access and use, it also offers several advantages to those law enforcement agencies that subscribe to the service. The analytics can be used by neighborhood watch and community oriented policing activities to identify problem areas, allocate resources, set goals, and measure progress. City councils may find the information very useful in terms of ordinances and budgetary planning. The law enforcement agencies themselves may make use of the service with several non-public analysis tools called “Command Central”. This service integrates with any existing CAD or RMS systems, and supports CompStat-style analysis. While secured, authorized users can access the information online using any web browser. The integral “Roll Call” feature can display crime maps and statistics on a precinct or district basis, alerting officers to potential crime patterns. In researching this column, I found several complementary reviews by law enforcement personnel that explained how the system is used to maintain and disseminate crime reporting information. A “TrendCaster” function “... can be used to evaluate policy changes, beat assignments, and overall crime trends with a heat map that highlights areas where crime is on the rise and decline.”

Agencies can also use CrimeReports.com as a public information tool alerting residents of potential situations. The website offers free email alerts which will deliver contemporary crime maps directly to the subscribers’ inbox.

“Residents can sign up for automated emails that let them know where crime has happened near their home or place of work. All alerts are customizable by location and area. In addition, citizens can choose to receive daily, weekly, or monthly alerts, and they have the freedom to choose which crime types they want to track.” There is also a free iPhone application available for download that offers great functionality. The iPhone app will display crimes by location or address, crime type, and customizable date range; display data on the crime map or in a list view; show national sex offender data alongside crime in your

neighborhood; and provide free, automated, email crime alerts. CrimeReports.com also disseminates information in real-time on social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook. There is also a free widget which can be installed on the agency website to give residents access to a local crime map without having to leave the agency website.

Crime is something we all must be aware of and deal with. By using the capabilities of CrimeReports.com residents and law enforcement alike may benefit through increased information about local threats and trends. It is a very worthwhile service.



Visit the opening Web site for detailed Google Earth images enhanced with the numerical data for specific locations

