

DATA LINE



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Editor: Judy T aylour

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Meetings

SCV Senior Center
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Newhall CA 91321
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April 12 - Back to the Basics;
VCom's PowerDesk Pro

May 10 - Back to the Basics;
Cleaning and Degunking Windows

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Application
Membership Benefits
Around Town

6:00 pm Member2Member. Linux with Arnie Kazdoy, SCV PC Group member and computer teacher, Golden Oak Adult Ed + Q&A.

7:00 pm - Digital Audio Essentials

CREATE, RECORD, DOWNLOAD AND SHARE MUSIC AND OTHER DIGITAL AUDIO with Bruce Fries, co-author of Digital Audio Essentials

**Podcasting

**What you Should Know Before you Buy a Portable Digital Music Player

**Recording and Editing Digital Audio

**Wireless Audio for Your Home

**Digitizing Vintage Records

Digital Audio Essentials

O'Reilly www.oreilly.com/catalog/digaudio

Digital Audio Essentials is a comprehensive reader-friendly guide to the world of digital audio on computers and the Internet. The book explains in everyday, understandable terms, how digital audio technology works -- and how to make it work for your own needs and goals. Digital Audio Essentials includes just enough history and theory to give you a solid understanding of how digital audio works, plus a wealth of practical advice, tips, and product recommendations so you can create the ultimate digital audio experience.

Welcome to Our New Members

Robert Arkow Ken Schwartz

The Beginner's Corner

Clear Reading with ClearType

by Vinny La Bash, vlabash(at)home.com
Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer
Users Group, Inc.

My students know why LCD displays are superior to CRT monitors. When one of them complained to me that he found text difficult to read on his new 21 inch LCD Monitor, I told him it was probably because the screen resolution made the text too small to read easily. He didn't think so because his teen age granddaughter also thought the text wasn't clear. His comment made me think.

Flat panel LCD Monitors are designed to display information at a specific resolution known as the "native resolution". Manufacturers refer to them as "fixed-pixel displays" because they are limited to displaying only one resolution. If they receive an image signal that is either higher or lower than the native resolution, they convert or scale the image automatically to fit the native resolution.

If the incoming source has more pixels than the display's native resolution, you will lose some visible detail and sharpness. Very often you will need to carefully compare the images side by side to see any difference. Only the most exacting applications will suffer from this small constraint.

If the incoming source has fewer pixels than the native resolution, there is no benefit from the higher resolution. Extra pixels will not improve the appearance of a lower-resolution source.

Converting images from either a higher or lower resolution to the LCD's native resolution hardly affects the quality of graphic or video images, but it can make text appear blurry. Early LCD displays had no ready solution for this problem. All one could do was experiment with various font styles and sizes until an acceptable compromise was reached.

Microsoft didn't want to keep its customers waiting while it found an answer so it licensed TrueType fonts from Apple. The advantage of TrueType fonts was that text could be made larger or smaller with little distortion. Text became easier to read, and Microsoft made some improvements to the technology, but TrueType proved to be an interim response.

While Microsoft was working on Windows XP, it was also developing a new software technology designed to enhance text readability on flat panel LCD monitors, laptops, PDAs, Pocket PCs, indeed any device that used an LCD screen, no matter how big or small.

Microsoft claims that its development people spent two years studying typography and the psychology of reading to create ClearType. Instead of affecting individual pixels which are either treated as "on" or "off", ClearType works with a different type of pixel that is constructed of three individual pieces tinted with red, blue, and green stripes. The technology varies the brightness of the sub-pixels, making the screen characters appear smooth, clean, and sharp around the edges.

Now that you know what it is, how can you use it? You have three ways to turn on or "enable" ClearType for your LCD display. Let's start with the easiest way.

Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/cleartype/tuner/Step1.aspx>

Follow the online directions to enable ClearType on your system.

Another way is to download the PowerToy version of the online tuner. This lets you do the same thing that the above procedure does, but you do it by accessing the Control Panel and activating the ClearType settings from there.

Go to <http://www.microsoft.com/typography/ClearTypePowerToy.msp>

Follow the online directions to download, install, and use. It's easy. Finally, for the propeller heads and bit twiddlers in the

audience, you can access the Registry. To enable ClearType for all users of your system:

From the Start button, select Run and type Regedit in the Text box. (As if you didn't know). Navigate to HKEY_USERS/.DEFAULT/Control Panel/Desktop.

Create or Modify the Data Type and Value Name as detailed below.

Data Type: String Value

Value Name: FontSmoothing

Setting for Value Data: [Set Value to 2]

Data Type: Dword

Value Name: FontSmoothingType

Setting for Value Data: [Change Value to 2]

Exit Registry and Reboot

Enabling ClearType only for the current user instead of all users is identical to the above procedure except that instead of HKEY_USERS, work with HKEY_CURRENT_USER instead.

When you're finished, check the Desktop and examine the icon titles. Open the Start menu while you're at it and observe the readability of the text. You may find the text too small to read even though it is sharp and clear. If this is the case:

Right click on the Desktop

Choose Properties from the popup menu.

Click the Appearance tab.

Click the Advanced button and make changes there.

Decide which technique is best for you, and enjoy text that is clear, crisp and sharp. :

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The New, the Best, and the Worst

February 2006

Collected by Pim Borman

SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

Rants

It is a dark, dreary, drizzly day in mid-January as I write this, perfect for contesting a will (as they say in my native Holland) or protesting the peccability of PC peddlers.

Rant #1 concerns the software Dell installs on new computers, whether you want it or not. James Derk, computer columnist for Scripps Howard News Service, wrote recently about the effort it required to remove all the extraneous junk from someone's new Dell system: *"Dell is on the list this year for adding so much junk to their new PCs that it takes a trained technician to remove most of them. Their "starter" edition of QuickBooks is the most annoying...even popping up reminders to try the program long after you've deleted it. I know Dell sells 80 percent of its PCs to businesses but there's no reason to have such an invasive product and selling tactic. Most large businesses don't use QuickBooks, most small businesses already have it and consumers don't want it. Editing the Windows Registry should not be needed to remove it. (Dell gets an honorable mention for charging \$25 for a USB cable to connect their "free" printers to their computers.)"* (<http://snipurl.com/derkcolumn2>). Elsewhere he mentions the desirability of removing the pre-installed temporary version of McAfee anti-virus. He wrote: *"If you have McAfee preinstalled on your new PC, I would uninstall it immediately and install a free product. It's not just a bias...in my computer repair business I have seen dozens of PCs with McAfee installed that are riddled with viri. Something either about McAfee's online-only product or the configuration just lets viruses pass through"* (<http://snipurl.com/derkcolumn>).

As luck would have it, my neighbors asked me soon thereafter for help with the installation of their new Dell computer. The recently retired professional couple had been using a Macintosh computer for the past eight years and were unfamiliar with MS Windows. Remembering Derk's comment, I suggested we remove the McAfee program and install Norton Internet Security. Tough luck! As I attempted to remove McAfee via the Control Panel's Add/Remove feature, I kept getting error messages that part of the program was running and could not be removed. I did everything I could think of to stop/disable McAfee, but nothing managed to kill it dead. I did a Google search later on and found that usually there is no simple way to get rid of it. A "help" page on the McAfee page provides pages of procedures to "try," all of them obscure and non-intuitive. An unwanted program that can not simply be uninstalled is **malware** in my opinion. If Dell is unwilling to sell computers without all the junk, the best solution may be to reformat the hard drive and reinstall the desired programs only. Or choose another vendor. It is hardly an attractive option for new Windows users.

Rant #2 Sony BMG recently got caught using rootkits to provide copy protection on CDs they sold. Rootkits are programs that hide on your hard drive, out of sight of Windows. They are an open invitation for virus writers to invade your system and are hard to remove without damaging Windows. Sony was forced to apologize for its error, recalled the CDs involved, and published a patch to remove the rootkits from the customers' computers.

According to an article in *eweek.com*, the rootkit trick is being used by other companies also (<http://snipurl.com/lis7>, thanks to Jim Geiser). Norton SystemWorks is specifically mentioned. Symantec explained that they used the rootkit to prevent users from accidentally removing the file, but offered to relocate it with a program update. According to *eweek.com* there are other instances of rootkits being used, but no specifics were mentioned.

My Norton Internet Security subscription is about to expire. I already had planned to try the ZoneAlarm Security Suite, based on a recommendation in *PC Magazine* (12/27/05) that included it in their list of Best of the Year Products (but that also included McAfee anti-virus!). But then Linda Gonse, editor/webmaster of the Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, wrote that the ZoneAlarm Security Suite interfered with her ftp program and mangled the files she uploaded to her Web site. She had a dickens of a time trying to uninstall the program. However she never had a problem with the plain, free ZoneAlarm firewall. I concluded that my best bet was to use free ZoneAlarm as the firewall.

I chose a separate anti-virus program, **f-prot** from Frisk software (<http://www.f-prot.com/products/>). I used that program years ago in the DOS days, and more recently I have been using it on my Linux computers. Their technical support is outstanding, as I mentioned in a previous column (*P-See Urgent*, December 2005). F-prot, based in Iceland, was one of the first to spot the rootkits and to provide an uninstallation patch. They update their database as soon as they add new data, usually several times a week. The Windows version costs \$29 per year, but a trial version is available to make sure the product fills your needs.

As expected, replacing Norton Internet Security with ZoneAlarm and f-prot was not without problems. I downloaded the trial version of f-prot without difficulty and stored it, ready for use. Getting the free version of ZoneAlarm was a different story.

Rant #3 If you make a free, limited version of your software available for download, don't play silly games trying to hide the download button hoping that the prospective customer will finally give up, or make an error, and order your paid-for version. It may work sometimes, but you lose every last bit of goodwill you may have worked years to earn. Is that worth it? After struggling with ZoneAlarm for 20 minutes trying to download the free program, I simply

copied an older setup version that was still on my other Windows computer and installed that. ZoneAlarm then promptly offered to update that version and I was in business. Installation of f-prot went without a hitch.

Although I had uninstalled Norton Internet Security with the Control Panel- Add/Remove route, it was evidently not quite dead yet. ZoneAlarm started telling me that Norton was still trying to access various parts of my computer, which I blocked. Soon thereafter everything froze and I got the Blue Screen of Death. It took two cold restarts to get everything back up and running, and my first action was to have ZoneAlarm block everything with the Norton label. That seems to work thus far.

As every successful business, from Wal-Mart to General Electric, knows, your most important asset is customer goodwill. A happy customer is a return customer. Over the years Dell has built up an excellent reputation for product quality, price, and service. They stand to lose all that for a few bucks they make as "partners" with the likes of McAfee and Quicken Books. It isn't worth it. The same goes for Norton, known since DOS days for its reliability and excellence of technology. Avoid exasperating your customers and they'll keep coming back.

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For less than a computer how-to book, a yearly user group membership is the best accessory you can buy for your computer.

Why Settle, Do it Your Way

by Lee Alexander, Member Macon Users Group, Franklin, NC
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Icons

You can make your PC more colorful and distinguish folders by using icons other than the ubiquitous manila folder. Right-click a folder and select properties; under the Customize tab, click the Change icon button and you will see more than 250 icons to choose from. Actually, the file, Shell32.dll, contains 1484 icons on my system. A good many of these are duplicates in different sizes and color depths. Sizes range from 16 x 16 pixels through 96 x 96 pixels; color depths can be 16, 256, or True colors (24-bit for a range of 16,777,216 hues).

Using one of my favorite free utilities, IrfanView, you can view and do minor editing such as changing size, color depth, and rotating the image.

TIP: Open an IrfanView window and Drag the file Shell32.dll into it. You can then see previews of the icons, one by one. If you want to do extensive editing of folder icons, create a shortcut to shell32.dll on your desktop. Then right-click on it and choose "Open With" - Irfanview.

I have created an Excel spreadsheet with a brief description of about 100 selected icons – Shell32Icons.xls.

Acrobat Reader

This free utility is much in demand of late as many program manuals are now written in the .pdf (Portable Document Format) format. A few handy keyboard shortcuts are:

Adobe uses <Ctrl> L (instead of F11 as in Microsoft products) to toggle full screen view.

Toggle the toolbars with F8.

Use the right/left arrow keys to advance/go back a page.

Adobe Photoshop, Etc.

You can hide the floating palettes in Adobe products (such as Elements), by hitting the <Tab> key. It is a toggle; hit it again to bring them back.

Word Toolbars

You can create a toolbar button for easily inserting a symbol into a document. Right-click a toolbar and select Customize and the Commands tab. In the categories pane scroll down and click on All Commands . In the right pane, Commands, click on Symbol: and drag it to a toolbar. This will open the Symbol dialog box. Click the symbol to be attached to the button and click OK.

The toolbar button now displays the font name (Symbol) followed by the symbol number. Since this is not very friendly information, we can change the button's appearance. With the Customize dialog box opened, right-click the button and choose Name: . To make the button resemble the symbol it's attached to, use the <Alt> key and the four digits on the number pad for that symbol. You can add a graphic to the button by clicking on Edit Button Image. You're then presented with a simple grid and color palette upon which you can draw simple shapes.

Tips on Digital Photography and a PC Windows Picture and Fax Viewer

This versatile (for photos) utility is often overlooked in the availability of photo editors. As it is included with the Windows Operating System it is a "freebie" readily at hand

Typically, unless you have set file associations otherwise, double clicking on a photo will open it in the Viewer. The toolbar at the bottom has some handy features that are not immediately intuitive. The Previous and Next buttons allow you to view all the images in the folder of the first photo you selected. The Screen icon will start an automatic slide show; the Zoom, Rotation, and Delete are self explanatory.

However, the Print icon can surprise you – it opens the Photo Printing Wizard. As you step through the Wizard, the Layout Selection provides a variety of print configurations from 8.5 X 11 to a 35 print "contact sheet."

If you have set a file association to open your photos in an editor, you can create a shortcut to the Picture and Fax Viewer on your Desktop or in the Quick Launch Tray. Right-click in the area you want the shortcut and choose New | Shortcut. In the Shortcut wizard, enter C:\Windows\system32\shimgvw.dll (assuming your Operating System is on the C: drive). Name the shortcut and click Finish. On the first use you will have to choose the program, Picture and Fax Viewer, and check the box to "Always use selected program ..."

Note that if you right-click and choose Edit, you will open the Paint program. The next-to-last button closes the viewer and opens the photo editing program associated with the file type.

Harry's Filters

Harry's Filters 3.0 is a Photoshop-compatible plug-in which can be used in dozens of different image editing applications e.g. Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro, Corel Photo-Paint and many other. It includes 69 effect filters, an Animation feature, options for saving and opening presets and an instant preview feature.

Harry's Filters 3.0 is freeware. You can use them for whatever you like, but you aren't allowed to distribute them without the author's permission.

Be sure to read the instructions about extracting the zipped file to the folder containing your photo editor.

At this point, the website link I had entered is no longer valid. This brings up a salient point – rather than hold on to old links (the dynamic nature of the World Wide Web is in constant flux, always changing) it is better to Google the topic or subject to get the latest information.

LCD Usage with a Digital Camera

The disadvantage of using the LCD, as opposed to the optical viewfinder, the camera is not braced against a body part (your head). It is difficult to avoid camera shake when the camera is held at arms length. Try tucking your elbows into your sides and exhale before pressing the shutter release -- don't punch it.

Flash as a fill-in

Using flash as a fill-in in outdoor shots, such as when the subject is backlit, can reduce the shutter speed. If your camera has the ability, check the shutter speed and aperture after such a shot. When flash is forced, digital cameras typically compensate by lowering the shutter speed and/or increasing the aperture.

White Balance

If your photos have an overall cast of color it could be a function of the White Balance. In a photo editor, find a patch of near-neutral gray and check the RGB color levels. They should be nearly equal in value. A free utility, Pixie, can check this for you. You can download the program from www.nattyware.com.

Color Management Schemes

Color schemes can conflict, if you use more than one of them. Select the color profile of either the printer or the photo editing software, not both. With inkjets, a greenish tone could indicate that no color scheme has been applied; a reddish hue may indicate two color schemes have been applied.

See More Thumbnails in Win Explorer

Hold down the <Shift> key when selecting the Thumbnail view to eliminate file labels = more pics per screen.

Auto-reduce Photo File Sizes

Windows XP has a neat feature to adjust the file size of photos for transmission over the internet. Select the photo(s) and right-click on one. From the pop-up menu, choose Send to and Mail Recipient. This will bring up a dialog box, Send Pictures via E-Mail. The radio button Make all my pictures smaller is selected by default. Click on Show more options to see 3

degrees of reduction.

Although it creates a message with the reduced file size photos as attachments, you do not have to send the message. You can right-click on an attachment and from the pop-up menu select Save as or Copy to put it on the Clipboard. You then simply delete the message without sending it.

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Happy St. Patrick's Day

Identity Theft Phishing Scams Abound

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Advisor; Radio & TV show host; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX

WEBSITES:

<http://www.websensesecuritylabs.com/alerts>

<http://www.antiphishing.org>

I have been busy compiling information so I can complete my 1040 for this year. I have also been actively searching for bargains on eBay, typically paying for my purchases utilizing my PayPal account. I frequently use the online bill paying service offered by my credit union. Much to my chagrin, according to a series of emails I received, my eBay account is being suspended, as well as my PayPal account, or somehow I added another email address to my PayPal account that I did not recognize.

I did receive some good news by email from tax-refunds@irs.gov; I have an unclaimed refund at the IRS! Here is what that good news email says: "Subject: Refund notice; You filed your tax return and you're expecting a refund. You have just one question and you want the answer now - Where's My Refund? Access this secure Web site to find out if the IRS received your return and whether your refund was processed and sent to you.**New program enhancements** allow you to begin a refund trace online if you have not received your check within 28 days from the original IRS mailing date. Some of you will also be able to correct or change your mailing address within this application if your check was returned to us as undelivered by the U.S. Postal Service. "Where's My Refund?" will prompt you when these features are available for your situation. To get to your refund status, you'll need to provide the following information as shown on your return: * Your first and last name * Your Social Security Number (or IRS Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) * Your Credit Card Information (for the successful complete <sic> of the process)." It seemed too good to be true; all I needed to do was to connect to the government website listed in the email, GovBenefits.gov, enter my name, social security number, email address, credit card number and expiration date, CVV2 security code on the back of my credit card, and my ATM PIN number, and within 28 days an unexpected \$571 tax refund will be deposited to my account. I think that is just wonderful.

I am very concerned that my eBay privileges may be compromised, as there have been some discrepancies in my eBay account, so I claimed an email I received from eBay. All I need to do to is verify and reactivate my eBay account by clicking on the link in the email, entering my username and password, and then verifying my identity with either my PayPal address or password, or reentering my credit card number, security code, and expiration date. That is quick and simple, so I will do it to preserve my eBay account.

I buy a lot of "stuff" on EBay, and pay for it from my PayPal account. I was shocked when I received that email from PayPal verifying that I had added another email address to my PayPal account. I did not recognize that email address, so I clicked on the PayPal link in the email, and entered my PayPal email address, password, credit card number, expiration date, and security code. Now that I have verified my identity to PayPal, I can safely remove that unknown email address from my PayPal account.

In another recent email from the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), I was utterly shocked to learn that my credit union account and ATM card would be suspended within five days due to suspicious activity unless I connected to the website listed and confirmed my identity, and re-authorized my account. In a panic, I immediately did so, entering my account number, ATM card number, PIN number, and the routing number from one of my checks. A reassuring "Thank You" from the website relieved me of the anxiety I had about my credit union account, and now I feel better.

All of the emails above are real, but my responses to those emails are not. These types of emails present a very real and growing threat to our financial privacy and security. They are representative of a rapidly growing and dangerous trend of "phishing", a popular method of identity theft. By simply responding to the emails by clicking on the authentic looking link, the user is directed to an authentic looking but counterfeit website which solicits the victims' personal information. Once that information is entered, it has been documented that credit cards can be illicitly charged within seconds, and bank accounts drained via the use of the ATM and PIN numbers.

The Anti Phishing Work Group (www.antiphishing.org) is a trade group with over 2000 members including the major credit card companies, banks, credit unions, EBay, and financial service companies, who tracks phishing attacks. The most recent figures

available as I type this indicate that in the month of November 2005, there were 16,882 individual phishing attacks, each possibly consisting of millions of fraudulent emails sent to people like us. The rate of phishing attacks, and the number of phishing emails has doubled since November 2004, and the numbers still appear to be increasing as it has become an easy method to defraud victims out of their money. These attacks connected to 4630 fraudulent web sites, triple the number for the same month in the previous year. The scam sites are short lived, being shutdown either forcibly, or voluntarily, within an average of 5.5 days, with some being active for as long as 30 days. Eighty percent of phishing scams illicitly use the name of just six legitimate companies, such as PayPal and eBay, and the other 20 percent of scams misrepresent 87 companies. While the majority of these web sites are hosted in the US, they are actually owned and operated predominately by foreign nationals, often in Eastern Europe, and southeast and central Asia. Criminal prosecutions and recovery of lost money are scarce, making it a high gain – low risk crime, which helps account for its rapid and malicious spread.

A comprehensive list of current phishing scams, predominantly directed against the customers of major financial institutions may be found at www.websensesecuritylabs.com/alerts. Some of the most recent listed financial institutions targeted are Greater Texas Federal Credit Union, Day Air Credit Union, First Bank, The Farmers Bank, Town North Bank, and many others.

As users start to implement updated software of various types, phishing may become more difficult. Newer versions of email programs, such as Outlook, Mailwasher, Eudora, and others show if a link redirects to another address, other than the one listed. The new version of Internet Explorer offers an anti-phishing option which will check internet addresses against suspicious or known phishing sites. Trend Micro's PC-Cillin Internet

Security Suite 2006 offers an anti-phishing toolbar for Internet Explorer that shows if a link is being redirected to a suspicious site. Recent versions of the Firefox browser offer some protection against phishing by indicating the real, rather than the apparent web address in the address bar, which should notify the user of a potential scam. In order to bypass many of the new protections offered, some phishers are registering close variations of legitimate domain names in an attempt to trick users into accepting their false authenticity. Another trick is "pharming", which illicitly redirects correct internet addresses to bogus web sites for the purpose of tricking the victim into entering sensitive data.

Never click on a link in an email warning about some dire financial risk or reward, as reputable agencies will not utilize that tactic in the event of a problem. A quick call to a known 800 number to verify any such problem will quickly indicate that the email is bogus. Better safe than sorry.

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Hard Disk Disasters

By Dick Maybach, member Brookdale
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Hard disk failure is the most serious PC problem, because it jeopardizes all your data. Even if everything else in your PC dies, if your hard disk is good, you can just move it to a new machine and be back in business as though nothing had happened.

The first problem is to recognize hard disk failure. Look for one or more of the following symptoms.

- A squealing or clicking noise – you will have to open your system case to find where the noise is coming from. Diskette and CD-ROM drives and fans can produce similar noises.
- A longer than usual time to boot up.
- A longer than usual time to open a folder or file.
- Spontaneous file or folder name changes.
- Frequent error messages.
- Missing or corrupted files or folders.
- Frequent “blue screens of death”.

If these begin to appear, immediately copy your data files (most likely your *My Documents* folder) to another device, preferably one with removable media, such as a CD-ROM or a DVD. Do not turn off your PC and do not spend time trying to diagnose the problem before saving your data. Every second you delay increases the likelihood that more data will be lost.

Clearly, the best defense is to back up your data before you have a problem. However, few people do this, and even if you do, it may have been some time since your last backup.

If your hard disk fails before you can save your data, all is not lost. If your data is very valuable, for example if it's customer data, you can send your disk to a commercial firm that specializes in data recovery. This service will cost from several hundred to several thousand dollars, but usually there is no fee unless they are at least partially successful. If you decide to do this, shut off your PC immediately and contact the firm for instructions. If your data is worth less than this amount, there are two things you can try that may work.

Remove the hard drive from the system unit and give it a light tap by holding a screwdriver by its blade and tapping the unit with the handle. Reinstall the hard drive and reboot.

- Remove the drive and place it in a freezer for several minutes, until it is cold to the touch. Reinstall and reboot.

If either of these works, move your data to a safe place immediately.

If you have only a partial disk failure, save as much data as you can; then try the following.

Restart your PC, but before Windows boots get into the BIOS setup utility. If you watch the screen carefully, you should see directions on how to do this. Often you will press F2 or F10. Look for an area called Utilities or something similar and run any drive diagnostics available.

Run CHKDSK. (Click on *Start*, then on *Run...*, and at the prompt type “chkdsk x: /r”, where x: is the drive in difficulty. If c: is problem drive, you will probably see a message that chkdsk can't check the drive now, but will offer to check it the next time you restart. Answer “y” and reboot.

- Run diagnostics supplied by your drive manufacturer, or if you don't have one, use Western Digital's Data Lifeguard Diagnostics, available free from <http://westerndigital.com>. Versions are available for both Windows and DOS.

You can take some simple steps to prolong the life of all your PC components.

- Keep the system unit clean, especially if it sits on the floor. Once every month or two open the system case and remove any dust and debris with a vacuum. I prefer this to compressed air, which just moves the dirt to a new resting place.
- Don't move your PC while it's operating; especially, don't jar it.
- Use a power surge protector or preferably an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). The latter are widely available for \$100 or so. Besides reducing stress on your components, one of these will save your data if the power fails. I always had a UPS at work, and every so often I would see the

lights blink and hear streams of profanity from other offices whose occupants did not have one.

Modern PC components are quite reliable, and the chances are that you will replace your computer before anything fails. However, you should have a plan in case there is a problem. Similarly, the chances are that you will replace your car without ever having an accident yet you still wear a seatbelt, and carry insurance.

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Computer Humor



A couple of years ago I was working at a local regional railroad and was given the job of upgrading all the computers to newer machines. One of my last upgrades required me to upgrade a machine the was infrequently used at the car shop. Now the car shop is where they repair all rail cars that are not locomotives. This naturally results in a lot of airborne particles (soot, metal shavings, dust, etc) and the contaminants not only covered the work area but also crept into the office. They combated this by cleaning the office frequently and mopping the floor nightly. Unfortunately the machine I was to upgrade sat on the floor. For five years. Specifically they had been mopping around the computer for 1825 days.

When I arrived to get the machine I discovered I couldn't budge it. A closer examination revealed five years of rust underneath it and five years of floor polish sealing it to the floor. A quick call to my boss confirmed that we could consider the machine "field destroyed" and take whatever steps needed to remove it.

Which was just as well, as it took two of us and half a dozen whacks of a sledgehammer to get it free. Out of morbid curiosity, we opened up the case (wasting another 30 minutes) to discover the entire bottom of the case had rusted away, but you couldn't tell because the inch deep accumulation of who knows what covered every square inch of the inside. No one had ever seen fit to blow out the dust bunnies...or dust lions, as they were in this case.

An man purchased a laptop from me. He called about a week later and said that it would no longer boot up. He brought it in, and I discovered that sixteen nicely drilled holes were in the bottom of the case. I asked him about it, and he said the machine was too hot sitting on his lap, so he had drilled these "air holes."

"Could that be the problem?" he asked.



Back to the Basics 6:00 Presentations

April - The Internet - linking your computer to the world. How does the Internet work? How does one computer talk to another? How to access your computer when you are away from home.

May - Communicating with the world. E-mail – set up a web-based Gmail account, attach pix, docs, PDFs, download same.

June - Security - set up McAfee A/V & firewall (or Time Warner's free programs) via Comcast (or TW), spyware, adware, MS anti-spyware program.

July - Updates to OS, Office suite, above security programs

August - Storage. People keep saying back-up, back-up, back-up. What do they mean and how can I do it? CD-ROMs, thumb drives, USB external drives, flash drives



Tips & Tricks

Print Screen (PrtSc key – to the right of F12)

You can make screen shots just with Windows. To grab your entire screen, just tap the Print Screen key. But what if you just need the active window? Hold down the Alt key when you hit Print Screen. Either way, an image is copied into the Windows clipboard. From there, just use Ctrl-V to paste it into an e-mail message, Windows Paint, Word, or any other app. The Paint applet, however, is best if you want to save the image as a file.

Calaveras County PC Users Group, California

Sharing Favorites

Have you ever wanted to print a list of your favorite sites and their URLs to share with friends, relatives, or just to keep a paper copy in your files? This task can be accomplished if you follow these simple steps.

Internet Explorer

1. Open Internet Explorer
2. Choose Import and Export in your File menu
3. Once the Import and Export Wizard opens, click Next, highlight Export Favorites, and click Next again.
4. Choose the Favorites folder
5. Click Export to a File or Address, save your bookmark HTML file onto your C drive, and click Next
5. Click Finish and OK
7. Open your new HTML file by choosing File and Open in Internet Explorer or double-clicking the file on the C drive of My Computer
8. Choose File and Print. Check the Print Table of Links box at the bottom of your

print menu if you want to print a list of URLs as well as the names of your links.

Netscape

1. Open Netscape
2. Press CTRL-B to open your bookmarks menu
3. Choose Save As in the file menu. Save the file as an HTML file if you only want to print a list of your bookmarks. If you want to print a list of the names of your bookmarks as well as their URLs, save it as a text file (.txt).
4. Open your new file and print.

You can also back up each of your files to disk.

Pikes Peak Computer Association, Colorado

Jump To It!

Picture this: you're working on a big document and you're making some adjustments just on page 17, but you forgot something you needed on page 1. So, what do you do? You end up scrolling all the way back up to the first page. Once you find what you needed, you have to go all the way back down to page 17. Oh, make it Stop!

Here's a quick way to solve that conundrum. Simply hold down the Shift key and press F5. The cursor will automatically jump to the exact place where the cursor was before you moved it.

Now, even better. You're still on page 17 and you save the close the document. When you re-open it, the cursor will be at the very top of the first page. Press Shift+F5 again and you'll immediately jump right back to where you were on page 17.

How lovely is that?

Valencia Lakes Computer User Group, Florida

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Show your Santa Clarita Valley PC Group Membership Card to receive the below discounts.

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Areas of Interest

Level of computer skills (please circle)

Novice Average Expert

Mail to: SCVPCG, 18727 Nadal Street
Canyon Country, CA 91351

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The Santa Clarita Valley PC Group is dedicated to supporting the needs of its members and to the exchange of information about computers, peripherals, services, hardware and software through meetings, special interest groups, web page, and the distribution of this newsletter.

The SCV PC Group is a proud member of the
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DATALINE

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Canyon Country, CA 91351

Don't forget to bring your empty toner or inkjet cartridges to the meeting. We'll turn them in to Precision Computers and they will donate \$0.25/each (inkjet) or \$1.00 (toner) to a local school.

If your work doesn't recycle cartridges, ask if you can also donate them.

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