



The Cursor



Monthly Newsletter of the Washington Area Computer User Group

Meeting Location:
OLLI, 4210 Roberts Road
Fairfax, VA



Next Meeting:
April 21, 2012



Abby Stokes discusses Social
Networks

Presidential Bits

by Geof Goodrum

President WACUG, [president\(at\)wacug.org](mailto:president(at)wacug.org)

Abby Stokes, author of “Is This Thing On?” (<http://abbyandme.com/>), signed copies of her book and gave a lively and entertaining discussion about social networking at our March meeting. She started by contrasting the Digital Immigrants (those of us over 40) with the Digital Natives (those who grew up with technology), and identified three rules: 1) don’t try to compete with the Digital Natives; 2) don’t put anything online that you wouldn’t post on your front door; 3) the answer to “Should I?” (as in Should I answer this unsolicited e-mail or pop-up ad) is “No.” The current edition of her book has new information about social networking. Some of the tips Abby imparted was Facebook does not mean you must share personal information—you can use it to find people you lost contact with, and access information and special discounts from stores. However, read the Facebook terms of use—Facebook owns any content posted there. Unlike Facebook, Twitter doesn’t require you to provide your true identity to setup an account. Abby talked about LinkedIn, the largest social networking website for professionals. She advised that invitations from LinkedIn users repeat indefinitely if there is no reply—the person who originated the invitation must remove the invited person from their list. Abby also advised the audience to try new websites and exchanging sites with grandchildren. She told those of us who do computer tasks for others to step back and help them learn for themselves—everyone can learn. And that’s what a computer user group is about, isn’t it?

To finish the March meeting, I was able to present many of the videos and photos I took at the 2012 International Consumer Electronics Show (<http://www.cesweb.org/>), held last January in Las Vegas.

Hopefully, you read the 21 March e-mail announcement (Subject: “Info on the possible merger of NCTCUG/ and WACUG”) to members of both WAC and the National Capital Technology and Computer User’s Group (NCTCUG). Newsletters for both groups are available as

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Useful Bits & Pieces

by Lorrin R. Garson

Washington Area Computer User Group

Windows 8 Consumer Preview Available

In late February Microsoft released a Windows 8 Consumer Preview. See <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-GB/windows-8/consumer-preview> for information from Microsoft. For those with a spare PC lying around, an ISO image of the software can be downloaded from <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/iso>. See <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/faq> for relevant FAQs. Woody Leonhard has an informative write up of Windows 8 Consumer Preview in the March 8th issue of Windows Secrets (see <http://windowssecrets.com/newsletter/a-windows-veteran-looks-at-win8-consumer-preview/>). Windows 8 is shaping up to be quite different than any previous Windows version and likely to be controversial.

System Restore

Is this a way to completely recover your computer in the event your machine is completely destroyed? Sorry, this won't do the trick, but this is an important security feature of the Windows operating system that's been around since Windows ME was released in 2000. System Restore would be better named "Software Restore" as it provides protection for software, including the operating system, but not your data. To protect your data you must use one of the numerous backup software packages on the market, including the "Backup and Restore" function that comes with Windows itself. Generally System Restore runs (a) every 24 hours and creates a new "Restore Point", or (b) when Windows Update installs updates, or (c) when software is installed using the Windows Installer, and under other circumstances. So, if you have a bad experience after installing updates or new software, you can invoke System Restore and return to a previous time when all ran well. Before installing new software, it is prudent to manually create a new "Restore Point" To do this:

See <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/948247/en-us> for Windows XP.

See <http://bertk.mvps.org/html/createrpv.html> for Windows Vista.

See <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows7/Create-a-restore-point> for Windows 7.

For more information:

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NCTCUG

Visit our "sister" user group. The National Capital Technology and Computer User's Group meets the first and fourth Wednesday of the month. They meet in Carlin Hall in Arlington at 5711 South 4th Street. Visit their web site for more information, a map and directions:

<http://www.nctcug.org/>

Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Washington Area User
Group Partners
Working Together for
Our Members

NCTCUG

WACUG

OPCUG

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See <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-vista/System-Restore-frequently-asked-questions> for FAQs from Microsoft.

See <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/942288> for information on Windows Installer 4.5.

Temporary E-Mail Address

Have you ever come across a Web site which you think has very useful information you want and need, but they require you to register and provide an e-mail address. If you provide your e-mail address, do you think you might just possibly start receiving e-mail messages to sell you shoes, weight-loss programs, or schemes for running your car on water? Well, you can outfox the spammers by using temporary e-mail address.

See <http://10minutemail.com/10MinuteMail/index.html> for “10 Minute Mail” which provides a free e-mail address that lasts 10 or 20 minutes during which time you can receive and reply to messages. After that, “poof”, the e-mail address is no more.

See <http://www.tempemail.net/> for TempEMail.net which provides a temporary e-mail address to receive (but) not send e-mail messages.

See <http://www.email-unlimited.com/stuff/temp-email-address.htm> for a list of several links to several temporary e-mail address providers.

Another approach is to set up a normal e-mail address with Google Mail, Yahoo, or other providers (see <http://www.fepg.net/providers.html>) and after the address becomes “trashed”, just delete it. This is more work than using temporary e-mail addresses but provides regular e-mail service and still provides privacy for your real e-mail address.

Hackers Get Hacked

Hackers associated with the group “Anonymous”, who are infamous for spawning denial-of-service attacks, have been conned into installing malware on their own machines. How sweet it is! See http://www.infopackets.com/news/security/2012/20120312_high_profile_hackers_hit_by_malware.htm.

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PDF downloads to members, and the WAC and NCTCUG Directors drafted Bylaws and a merger agreement for the new organization, the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS – we prefer pronouncing this as “pat aces”). Also, the WAC Board adopted amendments to the WAC Bylaws Article IV (Corporation Meetings) Section 5 voting procedures and Article V (Board of Directors) Section 2 to be consistent with current practice, and Article VII (Dissolution), which will allow WAC to transfer assets of the organization to PATACS once PATACS is established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, organization. The Bylaws are posted on the WAC web site at <http://www.wacug.org/orgdocs.html> and available for review at the April meeting. Among other details, the Merger Agreement addresses how WAC and NCTCUG memberships will be transitioned into PATACS, and this information will be released to members shortly.

The next meeting on April 21st will feature a presentation by Cherie Lejueune and Ralph Sklarew about Tablet computers (see write-up below), as well as a Learn 30 with tips on how to keep your keyboard, monitor and computer clean.

See you there!

April 21st: Tablets—Diving In

By now we’ve all been inundated by news and ads for the latest iPad, its Android competitors and buzz about the upcoming Windows 8 tablets. But for those who haven’t taken the plunge, April’s meeting will include a brief review of tablets and apps:

- What they are—and we’ll bring a few examples to demonstrate
- How they differ from portable PCs (& smart phones)—you’ll just lean back and love this one
- How to use them—all demonstrated on our tablets, shown handheld and overhead
- Accessories like a stylus, screen protector, keyboard, case and headset
- Why tablets are best for you—this will be touching!

The real action for tablets use is all about the apps so we’ll demonstrate some of our favorites for

- Communications—text in email & text messages, social network, phone & voice, video
- Entertainment—reading, games, music, podcasts, pictures, video, TV, movies
- Information—Internet, articles, health & medical, mapping
- Record keeping—calendar, personal, financial
- Shopping—bar code, reviews, prices, purchase
- “Productivity”—office-like, cloud

Please bring your tablets, if you have them, and your questions...lots and lots, for others will benefit from your inquisitiveness. And for those of you existing tablet users, prepare to share your favorite apps! We hope to see you on the 21st when we'll have some fun with tablets.

About our Guest Presenters

Cherie and Ralph, tablet enthusiasts and digital guides for boomers and beyond.

Cherie Lejeune caught the entrepreneur fever after a venture capital analyst job, finding success in three business areas starting with historic photographic art, followed by marketing and communications consulting companies. Cherie was active for years in sports marketing, notably The America's Cup. She working around the globe with clients that included Louis Vuitton, Unilever, Pepsi and the Trade Commissions of Italy, Australia and New Zealand. Se was an early internet adopter and while living in San Diego in the 1990's she worked with Pac Bell, Prodigy and was on the team that designed the first website for the SD Convention Center. Today, she enjoys social media development for clients and training particularly for iPads. She volunteers regularly for The Shepherd Center of Oakton-Vienna and two Fellowship Square buildings in Reston. She chairs the human services committee for Fairfax Federation of Citizen Associations. She lives in Vienna with her husband and son.

Ralph Sklarew developed one of the first tablets which was sold commercially 1987-1990 and he's senior enough to qualify for SS and medicare. He's been a techie and entrepreneur all his career, starting with a PhD in physics and building with a

dozen patents worldwide. He has made pioneering contributions to diverse fields such as environmental simulation, computerized emergency response, space industrialization, traffic control, remote laboratories, active components, and classes for seniors. Ralph has started a half dozen companies—one was sold to duPont, one funded by venture capital and one built on corporate contracts. Lately he has been active in senior education and technologies. He lives with his wife in Reston, VA near his three grandchildren.



Product Review: Sony HMZ-T1 Personal 3D Viewer

by Geof Goodrum

My ten year old, 1st Generation widescreen 38" HDTV (RCA F38310) failed in February. Although it had a great picture (direct view CRT, up to 1080i), it was a power hog, a monster to move (250 pounds!), and obsolete—component video input only.

I debated my options. I have a Sony PlayStation 3 (for occasional games, and DVD/Blu-ray video) and a laptop computer with a High Definition Multimedia Interface (HDMI), so I wanted a fast screen refresh for games, but didn't need a TV with built-in Internet applications. There is a lot of talk about 3D these days but not much content, and 3D, while interesting, doesn't make a bad movie good.

I was very close to buying the Samsung LN46D630, a 46" LCD flat screen, Energy Star qualified, 120Hz refresh with gaming mode, 1080p resolution with a cost after taxes of about \$800 (including delivery and takeaway of the old set). However, I was also eyeing the Sony HMZ-T1 “Personal 3D Viewer”, a cutting-edge product I tried briefly at the 2012 International Consumer Electronics Show. I spent more time with the Sony product demo at the local retail Sony Store (<http://store.sony.com/>, click on “Find a Store”), currently the only place to find one due to very limited production. I decided to take the plunge, and placed an order at the store on February 19 for home delivery (again, the product is backordered due to limited supply and high

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demand). The cost is \$799.99, shipping was free, and state taxes were \$40. The standard warranty is one year, with Sony offering protection options up to five years (I declined, and used a credit card that provides warranty extension). The shipment arrived by FedEx about three weeks later.

Here are some technical details about the Sony Personal 3D Viewer. It is a head-mounted 14.8 ounce



visor containing two independent Organic Light Emitting Diode (OLED) displays at 1280x720 (16:9 aspect ratio, 720p) resolution (one for each eye, enabling 3D content) and cushioned stereo earphones. The visor plugs into a separate processing unit (7"x1.4"x6.6") via a proprietary 11.5 foot cable that delivers power, audio, and video. The processing unit has AC power (120V, 60Hz, 15W active, 0.35W standby), HDMI in, and HDMI out (optional passthru). A six foot HDMI cable is included.

Note that the unit does NOT have a tuner—it is a HDMI-only display and audio device. HDMI connections are easy single cable connections and documented in the Sony manual provided. I am a Comcast cable customer and have High Definition digital service. I use the Sony viewer to watch TV through the HDMI output in the HD digital cable box provided by Comcast. I stopped by the local Comcast office and exchanged my older HD digital cable box for a 3D capable unit (<http://customer.comcast.com/help-and-support/cable-tv/can-my-cable-box-get-3d-programming/>). Comcast HD digital service currently carries two cable channels for 3D content (ESPN3D and Xfinity 3D, ask Comcast to enable these for you) and additional 3D content in the video On Demand menu. I also use the viewer connected to the HDMI output of my Playstation 3 and my HP g6 laptop.

One of the most important aspects of wearing the visor is making the fitting adjustments. The visor weight is supported by a pad (three pad thicknesses provided) that rests against the forehead and two adjustable rubber straps that hug the back of the wearer's head. Properly adjusted, the visor does NOT rest on the nose (an error some owners make). The visor is put on like a baseball cap, putting the back on first and lowering the visor over the eyes (and glasses). The earphones also adjust and pivot to cover the ears. There is also a lens spacing adjustment on the underside of the visor. Sony posted a YouTube video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQmIzu3MA5U>) to demonstrate the proper fitting adjustments. Sony provides rubber light “stoppers” that can be pushed into the bottom of the visor to block out light intrusion from below, but leaving them out leaves enough of a field of view to read during commercials.

The underside of the visor also has controls for power, volume, and on-screen menu selection. If the connected HDMI device supports Consumer Electronic Control (HDMI-CEC), the menu controls can also control the device remotely (e.g. play/pause/fast forward/rewind).

The Sony Personal 3D Viewer isn't perfect, but I really like it.

The video quality is exceptional, as should be expected from OLED technology—sharp images, high contrast, excellent color, and no noticeable refresh lag. I watched 3D videos from Comcast's On Demand (I particularly enjoyed “Ultimate Wave” filmed in Tahiti) and played the Playstation 3 game Killzone3, and the 3D is very effective (a claimed HMZ-T1 advantage is each eye gets a constant image, whereas 3D TVs alternate left and right images and introduce crosstalk noise). I find even 2D movies and TV seem to have depth—text seems to float in front of backgrounds during commercials (the unit does NOT have 2D to 3D conversion). Sony claims that the image is the equivalent of a 150” diagonal screen viewed at twelve feet. I would say it's about the same as sitting in the middle of a modern theater—the image does not fill the entire field of view. I did notice some transition artifacts in

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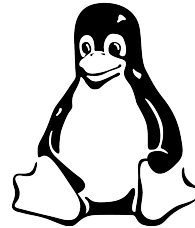
very dark scenes (OLED has very black blacks), and I was sometimes aware of light along the edges of the lenses, like subtle parentheses at the right and left edges outside of the image.

Sound quality is good. The built-in menu allows selection of simulated 5.1 surround sound with standard, cinema, music, game, and off settings. I found I preferred off over standard for most TV, but the other settings seem to work well for the appropriate content. I did find the cinema and standard settings for normal TV sounded odd.

Comfort is a bit of an issue, but maybe I haven't found the perfect fitting adjustments for me. It is very comfortable for up to an hour, then I become aware of the pressure the visor exerts against my forehead. My solution is to take the visor off during commercial breaks, take occasional breaks during movies, or support the visor slightly with my fingertips. For what it's worth, I am nearsighted and wear glasses with progressive lenses while using the visor. Be aware that the pad leaves a rectangular red mark on the forehead for a short while after removing the visor. I sometimes experience an annoying "hair tickling my forehead" effect that makes me lift the visor to scratch. Sony warns against use by children 15 and younger due to effects on eye development, and the unit has a built-in shutdown warning after three hours of use. The three hour warning can be overridden or disabled in the menu. There is also a built-in lens adjustment and eye test screen when the unit starts up.

The Sony Personal 3D Viewer is just that—personal. In my case, I live alone in a townhouse with a neighbor who sometimes complains when she hears my games or movies through the common wall (I have a 5.1 home theater speaker system with subwoofer). The Sony viewer lets me watch movies or play games at any time, so it works out well for me. While the HDMI passthru presumably allows multiple Sony viewers to be daisy-chained (expensive) or others to watch on a regular HDMI-capable display, that seems improbable. This device is not for shared viewing experiences. Also, if the visor is shared in a household, figure a few minutes time to make the visor fitting adjustments unique to each person.

All in all, I believe I made the right decision in selecting the Sony Personal 3D Viewer. There are still times that I would like to watch TV casually while working on my laptop, but my desktop PC has a TV card when I really need to do that. If I change my mind, I can still buy a flat panel TV set (and get the delivery service to lug away my old RCA monster!).



Linux and Open Source News

by Geof Goodrum
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Press Release: EFF Wins Protection for Time Zone Database

Copyright Lawsuit Threatened Essential Tool for Engineers Around the World

San Francisco, February 22, 2012 – The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is pleased to announce that a copyright lawsuit threatening an important database of time zone information has been dismissed. The astrology software company that filed the lawsuit, Astrolabe, has also apologized and agreed to a 'covenant not to sue' going forward, which will help protect the database from future baseless legal actions and disruptions.

Software engineers around the world depend on the time zone database to make sure that time-stamps for email and other files work correctly no matter where you are. However, last September, Astrolabe filed a lawsuit against Arthur David Olson and Paul Eggert—the researchers who coordinated the database's development for decades—because the database includes information from an atlas in which Astrolabe claimed to own copyright. But facts—like what time the sun rises—are not copyrightable. EFF, along with co-counsel Adam Kessel and Olivia Nguyen at the Boston office of Fish & Richardson P.C, promptly signed on to defend Olson and Eggert and protect this essential tool. In January, EFF advised Astrolabe that Olson and

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Eggert would move for sanctions if Astrolabe did not withdraw its complaint. Today's dismissal followed.

In a statement, Astrolabe said, "Astrolabe's lawsuit against Mr. Olson and Mr. Eggert was based on a flawed understanding of the law. We now recognize that historical facts are no one's property and, accordingly, are withdrawing our Complaint. We deeply regret the disruption that our lawsuit caused for the volunteers who maintain the TZ database, and for Internet users."

"It's a fundamental principle of copyright law that facts are not copyrightable, and Astrolabe should have known that," said EFF Intellectual Property Director Corynne McSherry. "While the lawsuit should never have been filed, we're pleased that the legal threat to an important resource has been eliminated.

"We are grateful that EFF and its co-counsel at Fish & Richardson were able to step in and assist us, so that we could help ensure the TZ database would continue to be available," said Eggert and Olson.

For more on this case:

<https://www.eff.org/cases/astrolabe-v-olson>

Contacts:

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Electronic Frontier Foundation
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Mitch Stoltz

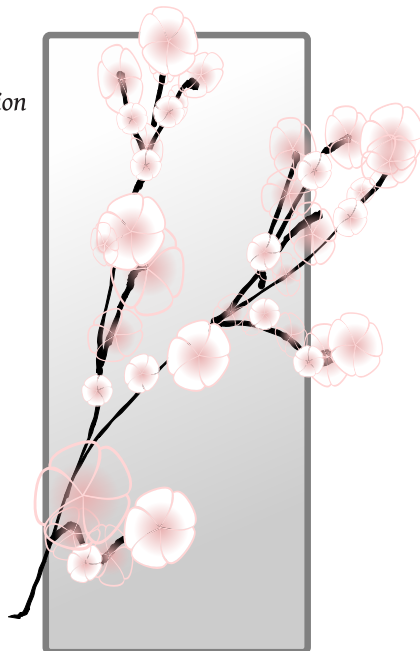
*Staff Attorney
Electronic Frontier Foundation
mitch@eff.org*

Related Cases:

Astrolabe v. Olson

Related Issues:

Intellectual Property



Featured Linux Software of the Month: April 2012

The software described below can be downloaded at the links provided or copied onto a USB flash drive at the WAC meeting. However, please check the online package management tool included with your GNU/Linux distribution first, as installation is often just a click away.

Bitcoin – v0.6.0. <http://bitcoin.org/>. Free MIT License source code and executable by Satoshi Nakamoto, Gavin Andresen, Pieter Wuille, Nils Schneider, Jeff Garzik, Wladimir J. van der Laan, and Gregory Maxwell. Bitcoin is an experimental new digital currency that enables instant payments to anyone, anywhere in the world. Bitcoin uses peer-to-peer technology to operate with no central authority: managing transactions and issuing money are carried out collectively by the network. Bitcoin is also the name of the open source software that enables the use of this currency.

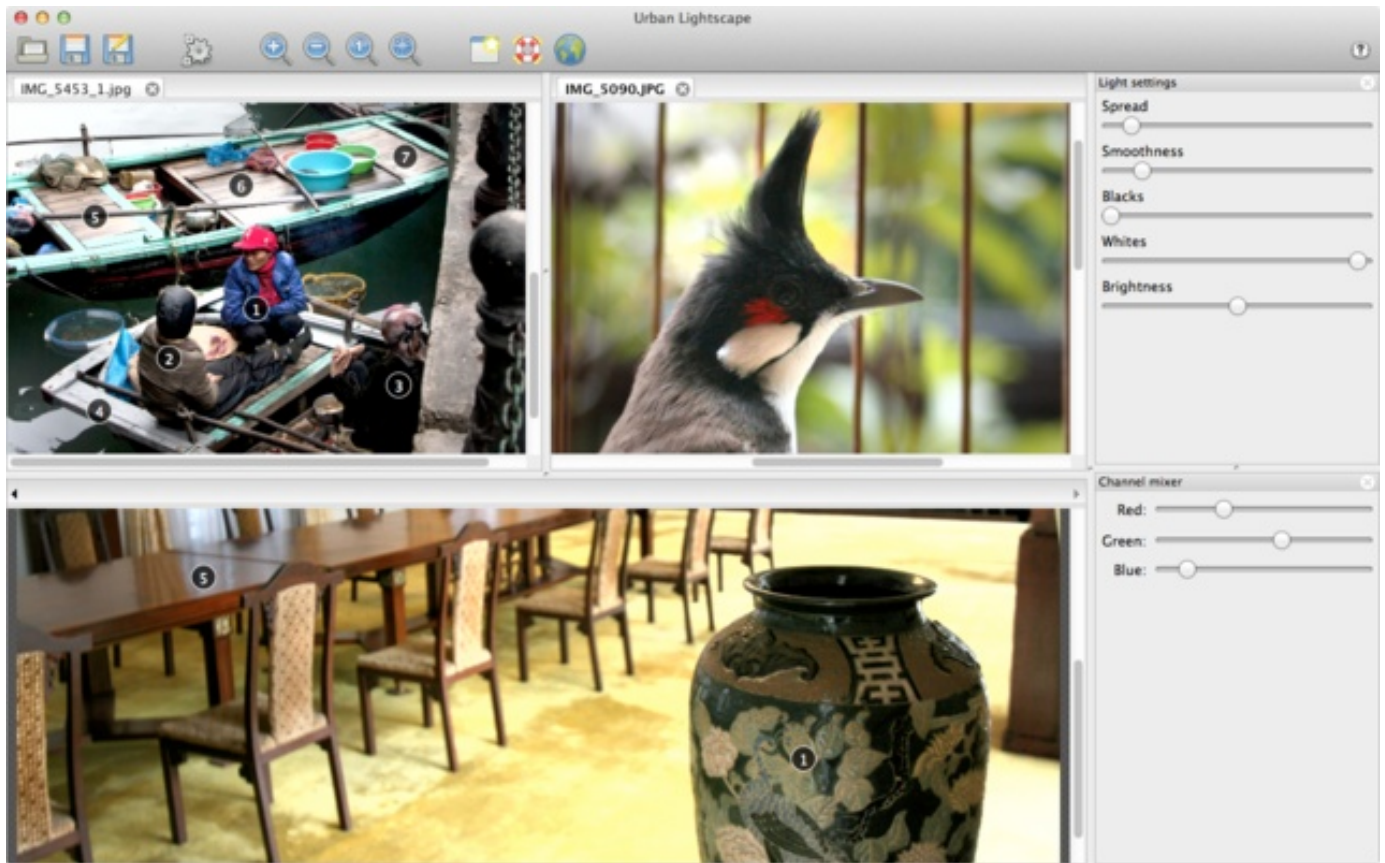
Urban Landscape – v1.1.0.

<http://www.indii.org/software/urbanlightscape>.

Free GNU General Public License source code by Lawrence Murray. Urban Lightscape is a photo filter for exposure correction, localized brightness adjustments, dodging and burning, and the introduction of synthetic lighting to a photo. A simple "double-click-and-drag" paradigm is used to place control points on a photo, and clever edge detection localises and interpolates lightness adjustments around and between these points. Results are rapid, with additional controls for more subtle refinements.

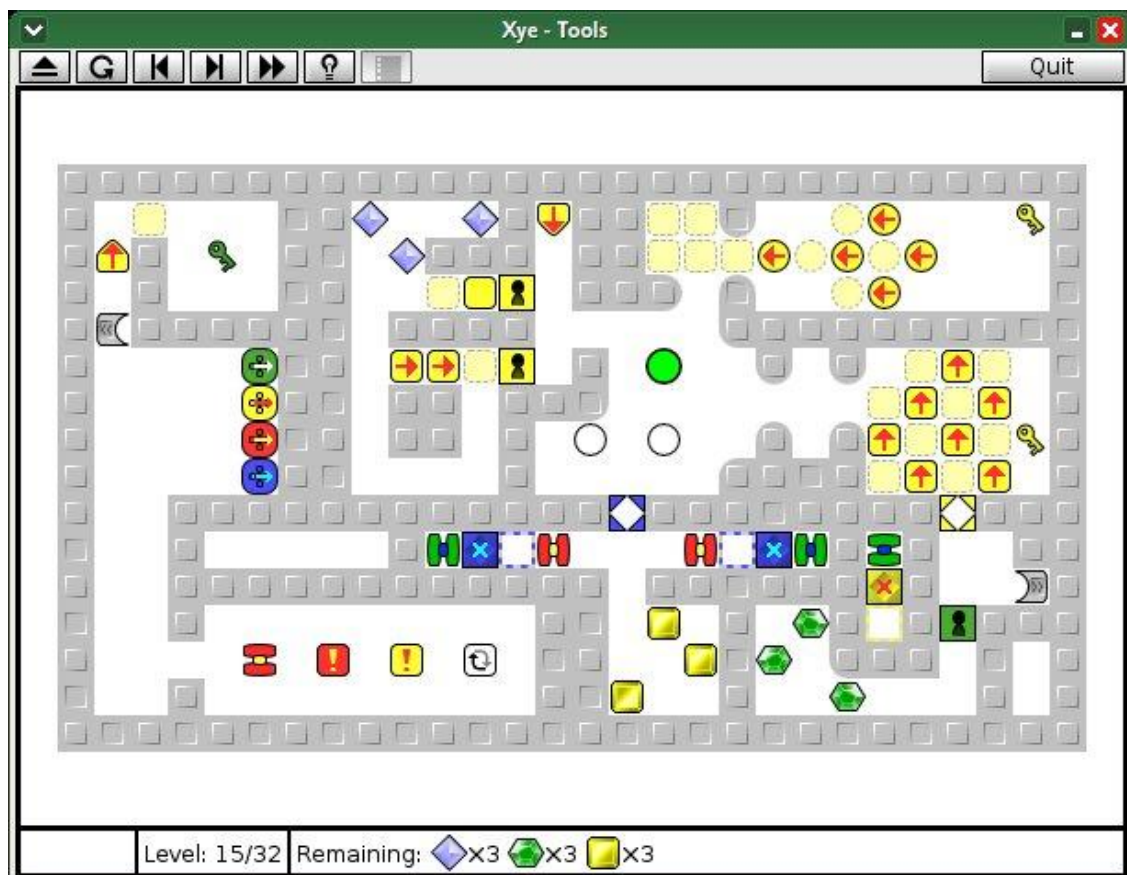
Xye – v0.12.1. <http://xye.sourceforge.net/>. Free zlib/libpng license source code and executable packages for Ubuntu and openSUSE by Vexorian. Xye is a puzzle game in which the objective is to help a character that looks like a green circle to get all the gems in the room. This is, of course, not as easy as it sounds, Xye must solve all sorts of puzzles while at the same time avoiding all sorts of traps and beasts. Xye is similar to other puzzle games like sokoban or boulderdash, yet it also includes some arcade elements. Xye is a derivative of a classic windows game called Kye, which is the base of the

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Top: Urban Lightscape image adjustment

Bottom: Xye puzzle game



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gameplay experience and visual elements. Xye is able to play level files that were made for Kye and Sokoban. It is also able to play custom .xye files, a richer level format that allows the new objects and features, you can make these levels by hand or by using the built-in editor that comes with the game.

Kernel Source – v3.3.2. <http://www.kernel.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.



Creating a Survey Form in Microsoft Word 2007

by Nancy DeMarte

Regular Columnist (Office Talk), Sarasota PCUG, Florida

March 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor

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It's a well-known fact that being faced with a task or problem is the best motivation for learning new skills. I have found this to be true for mastering the advanced features of Word 2007 (and 2010). So let's pretend you belong to an organization that wants to conduct an online survey of its members. This article explains how the average Word user can create this type of survey using features introduced in Word 2007.

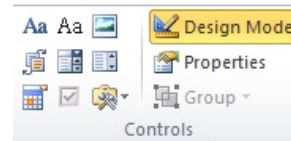
Creating an interactive survey in Word involves three tasks; generate the content, choose a format, and add response tools. The content of even a simple survey includes not only the questions you want answers to, but also a few demographic questions so the data you collect can be analyzed. When considering format, you may decide to base your survey on one of the Survey templates available through Word. Click the Office button – New – Microsoft Office Online. Click the Forms category -- Surveys. While these formats may not fit your need, they provide ideas about layout and other survey features. Another option is to start with a blank page, which is the Normal template in Word. Adding response tools in the form of placeholders (controls) involves a surprise. There is a hidden tab for the Word ribbon called the

Developer tab; to complete your survey, you need to display it on the ribbon. Click the Office button – Word Options -- Popular and click the box next to “Show Developer tab in the Ribbon.” You will be working with commands in the Controls and Protect groups on that tab.

Creating the Survey

Let's assume you have chosen to base this survey on a blank document. You have added the content and saved the survey with an appropriate name. Now you are ready to add the controls:

The Controls group on the Developer tab gives you a group of controls or placeholders which can be added to gather information interactively. You could decide to include a Date-Picker to record when the respondent last attended a club meeting or the date he completed the survey. Click in the spot in your survey where you want this to appear. Then click the date-picker icon (bottom row) to insert a date-picker. Clicking this control will reveal a calendar where the respondent may click a date. You can also include instructional text to make clear what information is being sought. With the date-picker selected, click Design Mode -- Properties. Here you can type a Title for the date picker, such as Last Meeting Attended, and choose a format for the date. Click OK to save your changes.



Next, you might include a few Drop-Down Lists to record other bits of demographic information, such as age range or gender. Using age range as an example, click in the survey, then click the drop-down list icon (middle row) to insert this control. With the drop-down list selected, click Design Mode -- Properties. Next type Age Range in the title box. In the Display Name section, select the phrase, Display Name, and click Remove. Then add age ranges, such as 51 - 60, one at a time, clicking after each one. Finally, click “Content Control cannot be deleted” to lock this feature in place. Now deselect the Design Mode button, and you have a drop-down list where respondents merely click a choice.

In the main section of the survey, you have listed possible presentation topics the club could feature

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for the coming year. To get feedback on these ideas, you might insert Check Boxes next to each topic. For example, you can add a row of four check boxes so respondents can indicate their level of interest in the activity: No Interest, Mild Interest, Strong Interest, Very Strong Interest. To add a check box, click the Legacy Tools icon (bottom right) and then the check box icon in the top row. The boxes can be lined up neatly under the response headings to create a grid-like structure by setting Tabs. Don't think you've made an error if you can't click in a check box right after you insert it; the checkboxes can only be filled after the survey is protected, which will be the last step.

Finally, you might add a Text Control so members can type comments or answers to open-ended questions. Click in the survey, then click the Text Control icon (Aa -second from left, top row). To title it, select the placeholder, then click Design Mode - Properties. Type Comments in the title box, lock it, and click OK. Now deselect the Design Mode button and try all the controls you have added to make sure they work as expected before you move to the final step.

Protecting the Survey

Once you have finished creating the survey, it is important to protect it. Deselect the Design Mode button. On the Developer tab in the Protect group, click the Protect Document button and then click "Restrict Formatting and Editing." This opens a pane on the right. Click the checkbox under Editing Restrictions which says, "Allow only this type of editing in the document." From the drop-down list, select "Filling in Forms." Finally, click "Yes, Start Enforcing Protection." Now your survey is protected and, unless you want to add a password to it, ready to use. To further ensure that its format is preserved, you might want to save your survey as a template. The survey template will remain in its original form and saved in your My Templates folder no matter how many times it is used. Click the Office button – Save As – Word Template (.dotx). Save it in Microsoft Word – Templates (top of the left pane in the Save As window). To find it, Open Word, click the Office button – New - My Templates.

Micro Center® In Store Clinics

by Neal Grotenstein

Vendor Liaison, Washington Area Computer User Group

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Micro Center stores host free events called "In Store Clinics." The clinics cover a wide range of topics. All Micro Center store locations follow the same schedule of topics.

A link for store locations is at the top center of the home page, www.microcenter.com. For those in the Washington, D.C. area, the only store in Virginia is in the Pan Am Plaza at 3089 Nutley Street, Fairfax, VA 22031, phone (703) 204-8400, and the only store in Maryland is in the Federal Plaza at 1776 E. Jefferson #203, Rockville, MD 20852, phone (301) 692-2130.

Micro Center Clinics are held on most weekends, except during holidays. The same topic is usually presented on both Saturday and Sunday. Topics may change and clinics may be cancelled without notice. Please verify the schedule with the store before leaving and register online for e-mail updates (http://www.microcenter.com/instore_clinic/sign_up.html).

Signing up in advance reserves a seat, recommended as space is limited. This can only be done at a store, either at the Tech Support or Customer Support area.

April/May 2012 Schedule

Start Time is 2pm local unless otherwise stated.

Apr 21 & Apr 22: Networking with OS X

Apr 28 Only: Anduino Workshop

May 5 & May 6: Windows Live Essentials

May 12 & May 13: Photo Tips

May 19 & May 20: Image Processing

Notes from previous clinics are available online at http://www.microcenter.com/understand_tech/index.html.

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TEMP-RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Free Hard Drive Cleaners Remove Junk Files, Free Up Space

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner>

<http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner/download/portable>

<http://singularlabs.com/software/system-ninja/>

<http://singularlabs.com/software/ccenhancer/>

<http://wisecleaner.com/wisediskcleanerfree.html>

It never amazes me anymore when I try and help people having computer problems, often performance related, and find that their hard drives are so badly cluttered with useless garbage that hard drive performance is seriously degraded. While there are many potential causes of poor computer performance, one of the easiest problems to detect and remedy is hard drive clutter.

Our computers are constantly reading and writing data, often creating massive amounts of temporary files that serve no useful purpose after a very short period of time, or after the program is closed. Browsers use cache files as temporary storage, where web pages, images, and other web-based information is temporarily stored. After programs are installed, there are often sizeable temporary files left on the hard drive that serve absolutely no purpose. The frequent Windows updates downloaded from Microsoft, are usually very large files, often writing huge temporary files on the hard drive, causing littering of our precious hard drive space. It is not at all uncommon for users to literally have several gigabytes of useless garbage occupying space on a device purchased by the user, which wastes time and money, as well as possibly degrading computer performance.

One of the most common and most widely used types of utilities available are programs that will remove the useless files from a hard drive. By far, the single most popular hard drive cleaner is Piriform's CCleaner (www.piriform.com/ccleaner), which has had over 100 million copies downloaded, and has versions for both PCs and Macs, as well as a portable version. The same fully featured program is available as a "free for personal use" desktop and

portable version (no support), an identical "Professional" version (\$25 with priority technical support), a "Business Edition" (\$35 with business grade technical support), and a "Network Professional Edition" with pricing based on the number of workstations.

The user can selectively choose which items to clean from the hard drive, but at a minimum (for those who want to be especially safe and not concerned with possibly deleting useful files) the user should select to clean browser temporary internet files (cache), recycle bin, temporary system files, memory dumps, and old prefetch data; other items can be selected from both the Windows and Applications tabs. CCleaner will perform a fast scan of the hard drive, disclosing whatever files are selected for removal. If the user is satisfied with deleting the selected files, clicking the "Run Cleaner" button will complete the cleaning process. As a general rule, I personally choose not to delete internet cookies (most are harmless or necessary, and I use security software to detect and remove risky cookies), browsing history, passwords, download history, and other possibly useful internet content.

CCleaner also has other useful features, listed as icons on the left margin, and includes a decent registry cleaner, a series of system tools including a startup manager, uninstall utility, system restore, and a drive wiper which can securely overwrite sensitive data making it difficult to recover.

While CCleaner is an extremely popular drive cleaning utility, there are hundreds of other programs whose useless and temporary files are not cleaned by CCleaner; a free third-party utility, CCEnhancer (singularlabs.com/software/ccenhancer), works as a plug-in to CCleaner, identifies the software installed on the computer, and if available, adds those software products to the list to be cleaned by CCleaner.

The same publisher that produces CCEnhancer also produces a complete, free, cleaning utility, System Ninja (singularlabs.com/software/system-ninja), which is a direct competitor to CCleaner, having

Continued on page 14

many of the same functions and features as its larger competitor. In my experience, while it is not quite as fast as CCleaner in scanning the hard drive, the System Ninja “Junk Scanner” performs a more thorough scan for useless files, without the need for any plugins (though two are available for specialized purposes). System Ninja also includes a “System Tools” feature that incorporates a startup manager, process manager (shows what is running, and can stop any unwanted programs), and a “FileAnalyzer” that can display detailed information on any selected file. The “PC Analysis” function provides the user with very detailed information on the computer’s hardware and operating system. System Ninja bills itself as “100% Freeware, 100% Safe; System Ninja is provided absolutely free of charge, with no strings attached. It is also 100% free from Virus’s, Malware, Spyware and all that other unwanted junk. We do not package any toolbars with System Ninja, nor do we use it to display ads or popups.”

A third cleaning utility that also has a large and loyal following is Wise Disk Cleaner - Free Edition (wisecleaner.com/wisediskcleanerfree.html). Wise Disk Cleaner - Free touts that it is “ ... the only 5-star disk cleaner rated by CNET editor”. Unlike some of the other freeware drive cleaner that offer no or minimal technical support “Wise Disk Cleaner Free provides lifetime free update service and Unlimited Free technical support. In addition, it also provides more and more language packs for worldwide users”. Wise Disk Cleaner is one of the easiest cleaners to use, offering a simple interface. The first option is listed under the “Common Cleaner” tab, which will detect and remove the most common forms of junk files from a hard drive, including obsolete and useless Windows system files, old internet files, useless multimedia files, and the debris left by Windows components and other program files. Other tabbed options include an “Advanced Cleaner” with additional cleaning options, and a “Slimming System” feature that cleans the operating system of junk files.

About the only negative characteristic of the Free version of Wise Disk Cleaner is that it is advertiser supported, not an evil enterprise, but something

that the user should be aware of; the authors need to be compensated for their work, and the free version does it with advertising and related activities. According to the download website Major Geeks

(majorgeeks.com/Wise_Disk_Cleaner_d5436.html)

“This program is advertising supported and may offer to install third party programs that are not required for the program to run. These may include a toolbar, changing your homepage, default search engine or other third party programs. Please watch the installation carefully to opt out.” Unless you want any of these advertising services and activities, be sure to uncheck the appropriate boxes during the installation process when these items are offered.

I have all three of these hard drive cleaners installed on my computers, and rotate through them periodically to ensure that my hard drive is clean of useless clutter. For those who like to defragment their hard drives, removing these useless files prior to defragging will speed up the defrag process, leaving much more usable space on the hard drive. If you ever get errors that you are low on virtual memory (hard drive used as additional memory) or notice degraded performance, try cleaning your hard drive with one of these three free utilities as a first step.



Is Google Compromising Our Privacy?

by *Sandy Berger*

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Recently Google announced consolidating the privacy policies for all of its services. These include about 60 different services like the popular Google search engine, the Google-owned YouTube video website, Gmail, and the Android operating software for mobile phones. Because of the scope and popularity of these services, this move got the attention of everyone from state and federal representatives to advocacy and security groups. But more than anything else, it left consumers with a throbbing headache as they pondered how this

Continued on page 15

would affect them and if they should be concerned enough to stop using Google services.

Data-protection agencies and lawmakers around the globe requested Google delay this implementation so they could review the new procedure but Google did not comply. The new privacy policy went into effect March 1, 2012.

Although Google states that this new privacy policy is aimed at making Google services easier to use, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that their primary aim is to target users with advertising that is relevant to their interests, making Google's ads more valuable. The aggregation of information from different areas enables Google to target the interests of their users more accurately. For instance, if you search for gardening information with the Google search engine, play videos of how to plant seeds on YouTube, and get brochures of the latest horticultural offerings in Gmail, Burpee and other seed and plant companies may be willing to pay Google more to blanket you with their ads.

If you are interested in gardening you might actually be happy to see ads for gardening tools and seeds, but this is not really the point. The point is that we are putting private information about ourselves in the hands of others. The problem lies in two areas.

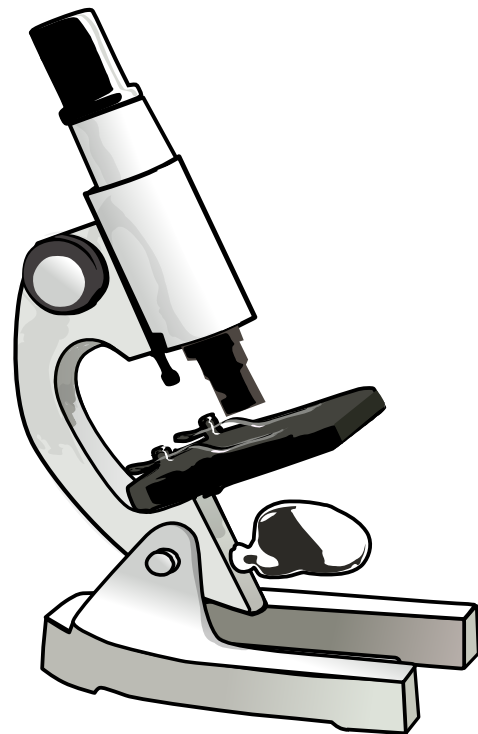
First are the unintentional consequences. As we recently saw in the proposed SOPA and PIPA legislation, even acts made with the best intention can backfire creating more harm than good. When you add that to the fact that technology is moving at the speed of light, we are becoming more and more data-dependent, and new ways to manipulate data are being invented every day, it gets a little scary.

Second, and possibly even more disturbing, is that power and money can corrupt even the most honorable people and companies. History tells this story over and over again. Google's informal corporate motto is "Don't be evil." Yet it was recently found that Google was circumventing the users' privacy settings in the Safari web browser. Even though the Safari browser was set to refuse tracking cookies, Google was adding hidden code that allowed it to implement browser cookies from

third-party ad sites that Google operates. When this was made public, Google stopped the practice. But, other devious practices could be revealed or be implemented in the future. Believe me, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Although Google's current proposed aggregation of data may be somewhat benign, what it will empower them to do in the future is problematic. With the use of data from mobile devices Google will be able to track our physical locations and actions. With data from our consolidated online profile they may be able to foresee our every move.

If you want a prediction of what this type of unseen tracking can do, check out the movie called "Antitrust." It was produced in the year 2000 when Microsoft was the big, bad, corporate entity. It shows what can happen when a company gets too much power, too much technology, and too much money. When you watch the movie, remember to add ten years of technology to the mix. In the year 2000 they didn't have the mobile technologies and data-tracking capabilities that we have now. If you watch this movie and really ponder how large and powerful Google has become, the throbbing in your head may become a much larger headache.



Product Review: Digitz® Wireless EZmouse

by David Kazmer

Member, SCV Computer Club, California

April 2012 issue of the DATALINE

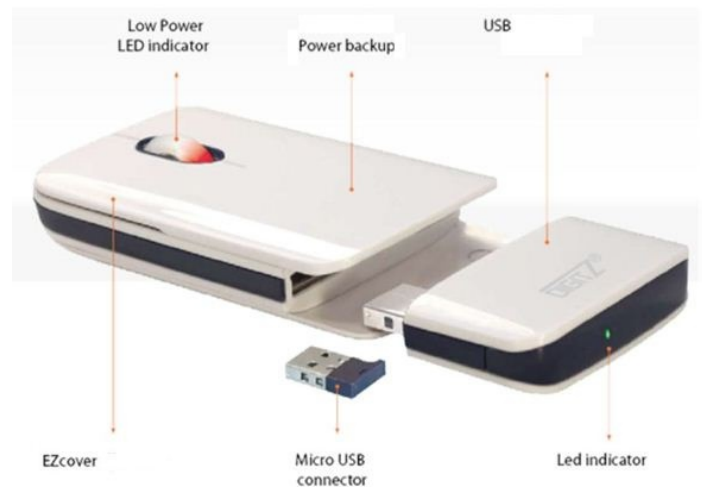
www.scvpcg.org

[scvcomputerclub \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:scvcomputerclub(at)gmail.com)

Many years ago I got my first notebook PC and found out about all the gadgets it would take to be prepared to use it at any location. There were so many cables that the notebook case almost wouldn't fit under an airplane seat. Since then, the new technologies that emerged, especially wireless, have taken a lot of the bulk out of the case. One of the remaining bulky items was the mouse, until I discovered the wireless Digitz EZmouse.

The first attraction was the flat, slim design, perfect for my notebook case. It is a small rectangular shape just 4" long by 2.1" wide, by .7" thick and weighs just .132 lbs, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. It is very comfortable to use, as you don't have to arch your hand as with other mice. The shape fits under my hand very nicely, and the two long skids on the bottom glide very smoothly on just about any surface. There are the standard two buttons and scroll wheel, plus pressing down on the scroll wheel is the third button.

One of the amazing features is that it does not require any conventional batteries! The unit contains two lithium-ion polymer batteries, one internal and one attached through a USB connector. The external battery, about 1.25" by 2.25", fits into the rear of the mouse and detaches for charging from any PC USB port. A red LED by the scroll wheel will blink when the external battery has about 15 minutes left. A complete charge would take about two hours and will operate the mouse for about five to six weeks of normal use. While the external battery is detached and charging, the internal battery will keep the mouse operational for up to three days. To facilitate possible charging access space problems, the USB connector on the external battery is attached by a swivel, and there is an LED at the back of the battery to indicate the progression of the charging. Life expectancy of the batteries, based on normal use, is about eight years! This innovation is impressive.



Stored in the mouse is the wireless 2.4G nano-receiver which plugs into any computer USB port. Also, if the mouse is not used for about 20 minutes it will go into a sleep mode to save the battery; just click the mouse to wake it up. The optical sensor is 1600 DPI for high accuracy. A felt carrying bag is included. The mouse is both PC and MAC plug-and-play compatible.

Ready for the icing on the cake? The top cover can be replaced by one of your own design by ordering it from Digitz and sending them a JPG picture of your choice! Check www.digitzgroup.com for more details and an informative video. If the display does not appear in English, just click on the small American Flag icon.

SCV Computer Club Rating (0-5, 5 being best)



Digitz EZMouse

www.digitzgroup.com / www.ezmouse.com

info@digitzgroup.com

\$49.95 (Free shipping – USA and Canada)

