PC Post

Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

User Helping User

26 years of User helping User

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For directions to Destiny Christian Center see page 11

Our Next Meeting

What's the latest: Kirk S. tells all

Computer forensics investigator Kirk Stockham will tell all about the latest high tech happenings in computer investigation at the next meeting of the Modesto PC Computer User Group on Thursday, March 27.

He will discuss actual cases with a special "see-through" computer used to train forensics investigators.

"The field of computer forensics is growing beyond all expectations," he says. "In fact, courts systems are ordering plaintiffs and defendants to meet on their cases and reveal and share their computer data as evidence or face punishments."

As usual, the gathering will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the Random Access Special Interest Group, where members can get their most pressing computer questions answered. Stockham's presentation will follow refreshments at 7:30 p.m.

The event will take place at Destiny Christian Center on Carver Road just south of Roseburg Avenue. Members and friends should park in front or back of the building and enter on the south side.

Important Meeting Dates

General Meeting — Mar. 27 — Destiny Christian Center
Photo SIG Meeting — Apr. 1 — Denny's Restaurant
Board Meeting — Apr. 2 — Ridgeway's Restaurant
Beginner's SIG Meeting — Apr. 14 — Denny's Restaurant
Office SIG Meeting— Apr. 23— Scramblz' - Turlock

President's Report …. Mike Kumler

Membership Report …. Hank Mudge

Members dues expiring in January:

Joe Sousa   Arthur Gingrich

Members dues expiring in February:

Donald Risen   Hank Mudge
Riva Lee   Jerry Jackman

Members dues expiring in March:

Ed Sill   Skip Pringle   Mike Kumler

Members dues expiring in April:

John (Jack) Selover   Bettie Nickerson   Luther Whitten
Philip Anselmo   Donald Branson   Frank Waldorf

Treasurer's Report …. Barb Cameron

Income		**Modesto PC User Group**	**Expenses**	
		Financial Statement		
Membership	$ 48.00	**February 2008**	Rent	$ 75.00
Interest on Savings	$ 0.00			
Donations	$ 0.00			
Total Income	**$ 48.00**		**Total Expenses**	**$ 75.00**

Current Assets

Checking - US Bank, Modesto	$ 1,744.64
Savings, US Bank, Modesto	$ 332.39
	$ 2077.03

Total Club Assets	**$ 2,077.03**

Claude's Bytes ....

By Claude Delphia, Editor Emeritus, Modesto PC User Group

On the right in the above graphic, is the Picture menu bar that is available in many Microsoft applications. If you click in the menu area above the work area, there will be a drop down menu in which you can choose new menus to become available as needed. Click on Picture and you will then have the above menu bar.

Next click on a graphic, such as the above letterhead. The Picture menu bar is now active.

Basically when ever you import a graphic into an application, such as MS Word, the graphic may not be shown at it's optimum resolution. In every case, as soon as you change the size either up or down on a graphic, it no longer has its best resolution.

This menu bar allows you to correct that and other picture problems.

The first icon on the left allows you to Insert a graphic. Next is a color choice. One reason for this icon is to be able to convert a graphic to Black and White if it is in color. You can also change it back to color if needed at any time. The picture is stored in whatever mode it was originally inserted.

Next are a series of icons which can be used to adjust Contrast up or down and the to lighten or darken.

The next icon is the crop image tool, a very important one. Next to that to the right is the icon to flip a graphic by 90 degrees. This is followed by an line icon. You can ad a line around the image in various sizes. It's mostly valuable for photos, especially ones where parts of the picture may be washed out on the edges.

Now we come to what I consider as the most important tool. This one compresses any graphics in your project. This is mainly used after you've changed the size of the picture. When you change the size, the image is no longer displayed at it's best resolution. Clicking on this button fixes that and you can generally see the results on your screen immediately. I can still remember when I discovered this feature. The image popped into a crisp and clear photo. Later I realized it could be used in many different Microsoft applications.

The next tool can be used to have text wrap around your picture. It has a number of options, too many to detail here. Next is a Format tool which I haven't used.

Now to the Transparency tool. Those of us who work with graphics, quite often need to set white as the transparency so that the background surrounds the non white areas of the picture. Try it and you'll like use it sometime. The last icon is Reset. I've not had to use that although if you mess up your editing, you'll want to Reset and start over, something most of us have had to do on many occasions.

I recommend you try these the next time you put a picture in a Microsoft application. You'll never stop using it when the occasion comes up. You can make a questionable picture into a good one.
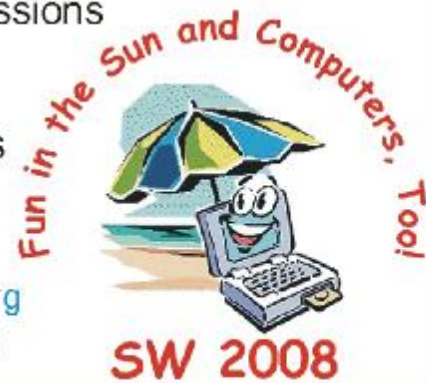
Interested?

Contact Bud for more information or go to www.theswcc.org

Benefits of Using a Computer Sandbox ....

By Gene Barlow

User Group Relations   **Copyrighted January 2008**

A computer Sandbox is newer technology that is not very well known, but, it can be quite useful in many situations. By using a Sandbox utility, you can place your computer in a protected state where you can try some rather risky things on your computer and not have your computer damaged in the trials. Once you place your computer into Sandbox mode, you can safely run anything on your computer, knowing that all changes to your hard drive will not be permanently made to your computer. While in Sandbox mode, your computer runs as if all changes to the hard drive were actually made to your system. But, at the end of using the Sandbox, you can throw away these changes, putting your computer back exactly the way it was before entering the Sandbox.

Let's take a look at some real life situations to better understand the benefits of using a Sandbox utility.

Installing New Software
Everyone knows that when you install a new software product on your computer, parts of the product are

placed all over your computer's hard drive. Entries are made to the Windows Registry, special supporting files are place in certain directories of the operating system, and other shortcut and setting files are scattered in various places on your hard drive. These are in addition to the main folder that is installed on your hard drive with the software programs. Most software will uninstall easily, but often pieces of the product are left behind on your hard drive. These leftover pieces of orphaned software can build up and slow down your computer. Some software products include hidden viruses or other bad programs as you install them. The end result is that installing new software on your computer can be a risky thing to do.

Using a Sandbox to install and test new software is a much better approach. With a Sandbox, you put your computer in Sandbox mode before you downloaded and installed the new software. Since the Sandbox lets you use the newly installed software just as if it had been permanently installed on your computer, you can run the new software to try it out and see if you like it. You can also run virus utilities to see if the installation gave you a virus you were not expecting. If you find viruses on your computer or just decide you do not like the newly installed software, you can get out of the Sandbox and throw away all traces of that software product and any hidden virus that came with it.

Letting Others Use Your Computer
Another reason to use a Sandbox is to let others use your computer. Other users may change your computer to match the way they like to use computers. For example, many of us have grandkids that come to visit and want to play on our computer. They may download games they like, change your wallpaper and default font sizes. They may pick up viruses in the process of getting your computer changed to their needs. When they leave, your computer no longer is the same as it was before they arrived. It may take you days to get it working again like you want it to. With a Sandbox, you can place the computer in Sandbox mode before they arrive and then let them play on your computer to their hearts content. When they leave, you simply exit the Sandbox and throw away all changes that they made to your computer. It is instantly back the way it was before they started to use it.

Computer Labs and Classrooms
User groups that have computer labs or classrooms have a similar situation. The classroom computers are setup carefully by the instructors before the class begins. Once the students have used the computer throughout the day, the computers are different and modified from what they were in the beginning of the day. This may cause problems for the students that follow them, so the instructors will often restore the computer's hard drives to put them back to normal. With a Sandbox, this long restore process is not needed. Instead, put the computers in Sandbox mode at the beginning of the day before the students arrive. Then at the end of the day, exit the Sandbox and throw away all hard drive changes made by the students. The computers are quickly returned to their normal state as you exit the Sandbox.

Browsing the Internet
Much of the Spyware that you pick up on your computer comes from simply browsing the internet. Some web sites are designed so that simply passing your cursor over a part of the screen is enough to activate a download of Spyware to your computer. Not only that, but your privacy is at risk when you browse the Internet. Windows automatically saves all of the places you browse to and all of the screens you see on the Internet. Browsing the Internet in a Sandbox is a much better approach. Place your computer in Sandbox mode before you start to browse the internet. Then browse all of the sites you want to. When you are done browsing the internet, exit out of the Sandbox and throw away all Spyware and traces of web sites you may have visited.

We offer three excellent Sandbox products that you may want to use on your computer. Let's look at each of these briefly to help you decide which one would best meet your needs.

StorageCraft ShadowSurfer

The smallest and least expensive Sandbox we offer is ShadowSurfer by StorageCraft Software. This product is the quickest product to install and the easiest product to use of all of our Sandbox products. With Shadow-Surfer, all changes to your hard drive are always thrown away when you exit the Sandbox, which is what you want in most cases anyway. This excellent product runs on Win2000 and WinXP systems and is available from us at the discount price of just $20. This is an excellent beginning Sandbox product for most home users.

Acronis True Image 11 Home Try&Decide

The next step up in ability and price is a feature that Acronis has added to their new True Image 11 Home backup utility. This feature is called Try&Decide and it is a Sandbox feature built into this award winning backup utility. Try&Decide requires that you create and use the Acronis SecureZone on your hard drive to contain the temporary changes to your hard drive. When you exit the Sandbox with this product, you can choose to keep all changes to your hard drive or throw them all away. This excellent product runs on Win2000, WinXP, and WinVista operating systems and is available from us at the discount price of just $29 for a download or $33 on a CD. This is a very good Sandbox feature that comes with an outstanding backup utility.

StorageCraft ShadowUser Pro

The most advanced Sandbox utility we offer is ShadowUser Pro by StorageCraft Software. This is a professional-level Sandbox product that has many options and features to it. With this product, you can password protect the controls of the Sandbox, so that nobody can disable the Sandbox unless they know the password. Perhaps the biggest differences between this product and the other two Sandbox products is that you can pick and choose what files to throw away and what files to keep as you exit the Sandbox. This top of the line Sandbox product runs on Win2000 and WinXP operating systems and is available from us at the discount price of $47. This is the product you should use if you are running a public computer workstation that needs tight controls.

A Sandbox offers you a new way to protect your computer from damage from the software you install or access on the internet. It also keeps your hard drive safe from damage caused by others using your computer. The selection of Sandbox products we offer lets you pick and choose which one is right for your needs. To order your Sandbox product, go to www.ugr.com and find the Sandbox product you are interested in. Then click on the Buy Now button on that product page to place your order using our secure web shopping cart. As you complete your order indicate the order code of UGNL0108 to qualify for these excellent discount prices. If you have questions about this new technology or about any of these products send an email to gene@ugr.com and I will try to help you.

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E-Mail Responsibilities ....

by Bob Schwartz, a member of HAL-PC, Texas,

www.hal-pc.org   bobx(at)hal-pc.org

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

E-mail is a very valuable method of almost instant communication. However, many people operate under an illusion that it is private. It is not. Once sent, it is effectively broadcast to the world. So one should NEVER send anything that they might regret. Once it is sent, it is now in other people's hands. The recipient may or may not care as much about controlling your e-mails distribution as you do.

Just suppose you send something clever about someone you know to a friend or acquaintance and they bring it up on the screen. Then, they take a break and go to coffee, leaving it on the screen. Another person passes by, snoops, and sees the e-mail. They also think it is clever, and make a copy of it and send it to someone they know, etc.

Or, the employer records all e-mail traffic passing within their company, which they have every right to do, since the equipment is theirs.

Worse yet, some people send messages that they believe are benign and strictly business, yet some self-anointed "god" thinks otherwise.

Yet even sneakier are viruses that can unknowingly, by you, forward your e-mails elsewhere; or, police and other snoops tapping your connection. There are innumerable ways by which your "private" traffic can go public.

So, the BOTTOM LINE is: compose your messages with care, check the addressees listed, and review the message before pressing the "SEND" key.

Oh, by the way: do not think that once sent and "deleted", that the file is gone from your computer. When you "delete" a file, this DOES NOT ERASE THE FILE. All this does is change the first letter of the file name in the directory. The file, in all its glory, remains untouched on the hard drive, which is why it is so easy to recover it. Technology has provided a variety of means to recover and reconstitute "deleted" files.

To conclude, e-mail is a tremendously valuable means of almost instant communication. Just make sure that you use it carefully, thoughtfully and wisely.

Bob Schwartz is a HAL-PC member, retired EE, 14 patents, technical writer, active in civic affairs: President, Brays Bayou Association; Vice President, Marilyn Estates Civic Association; Correspondence Secretary with the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.

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WWW.MPCUG.NET

New Technology Terms ....

by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

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Words, words, words….In the fast-moving world of technology, new words and phrases are constantly introduced. In order to keep up with the times, you need to learn about the current terminology. This need not be a drudgery. In fact, it can be fun to see what new words and abbreviations are popular. Check these out and you can wow your friends next time computers and technology become the subject at the 19th hole or the neighborhood cocktail party.

SSD (Solid-State Drive)

This is a type of memory that you will be hearing more and more about in the future. It is a type of flash memory that has no moving parts. Some small laptop computers are appearing using SSDs for storing data instead of hard drives. Because SSDs have no spinning disks like the ordinary hard drives, they offer improved battery life for laptop computers. They also have better data access speeds than hard disks.

404

You may recognize this as a common message on the Internet. It indicates that the requested page could not be found. This may mean that the page has temporarily or permanently moved and is not currently available. However, recently the term 404 has come to have another meaning. It refers to someone who is totally clueless. From the error message "404 not found", this has become a slang term meaning that the person's brain could not be located. If you decide to call your spouse a 404, make sure that he or she has not read this column or you'll be in big trouble.

Crowdsourcing

Using the skills of a wide variety of people to do a job or perform a task is called crowdsourcing. The people who perform such a function are often found on the Internet. Although these people can be paid, often they are often volunteers.

Geotagging

This is technology built into a digital camera or part of a camera add-on device that is able to tag each photo with the exact location that the picture was taken. Photos can then be sorted based on where they were taken. They can also be plotted on maps.

HDMI (High-definition Multimedia Interface)

This is a newer audio and video interface that is often found on televisions, DVD players, video game consoles, video cameras, and other video equipment. This type of connector replaces older standard connectors like composite video, S-Video, component video, and DVI. HDMI carries both audio and video in one cable. It supports digital rights management systems. HDMI cables can be very expensive in comparison to older audio and video cables.

One Laptop per Child (OLPC)

Led by Nicholas Negroponte, this is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to design, manufacture, and distribute affordable laptop computers to children around the world. The laptops were initially called the "$100 laptop", but the final build cost almost $200 each. In 2007, the One Laptop per Child organization started distributing these laptop computers to children in developing countries. The laptops are bright green

and white portable computers with special features like a sealed keyboard. They are called XO computers.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization)
Search Engine Optimization is the process of tweaking a website to improve the volume of traffic that is produced by search engines. The idea is to give the website a higher ranking in the search engines thereby producing more traffic to the site. SEO includes using keywords and website design to get higher rankings with search engines.

Skype
This is an online service that allows users to make telephone calls over the Internet. The software is free and there is no charge to call the computers of other Skype users. Your computer must have a microphone in order to use Skype. With the addition of a webcam, Skype callers from computer to computer can also place video calls where they can both see and talk to each other. Skype also allows you to call landlines and cell phones for a fee. Skype has other services such as instant messaging and file transfer.

FTW
This stands for "For The Win". You may remember it being a part of the game show "Hollywood Squares" where a certain square would be selected "For the Win." It is also used in some online games like World of Warcraft. It is now a popular term that usually projects a boast, as in "I did it FTW." It is often used ironically and sarcastically.

Bot
A bot computer is one that has been infected with some type of malware that allows the computer to be controlled by an outside entity. Millions of computers are bots that are now under the influence of malware distributors who use these computers to send out spam, attack other computers and websites, and carry out scams and identity theft. The computer owner is usually unaware that their computer has been compromised since this activity is performed in the background.

BotNet
A series of bot computers, sometimes as large as millions of computers is called a BotNet. The BotNet does the bidding of some entity that has compromised the computers and taken control of them by installing some type of malware.

Zombie
This term that means the same thing as a Bot. It is a personal computer that has been infected with a virus that allows an outside force to control it. Such a computer can be used to send out spam or attack other computers without the owner's knowledge. Millions of computers today are zombie computers. They are part of a Zombie Network of computers that are controlled by hackers.

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Hasta la Vista ....

by Lee Reynolds, a member of the Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida and regular contributor to Boca Bits, the BRCS monthly news magazine

www.brcs.org   leetutor(at)earthlink.net

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I'm told the literal meaning of "hasta la vista" in Spanish is "until the seeing." Or maybe a more adequate translation is "see you later."

But in this column, I'm using that phrase to invite you to take a look at Microsoft's
latest version of Windows: Vista.

Configuring the Taskbar

The Taskbar works very much like previous versions of Windows, particularly XP.
You can configure some options on how it operates by right clicking an empty area on it and selecting from a
popup context menu.

For example, you can decide:
♦ To have various toolbars such as the Quick Launch toolbar and a Desktop or Documents toolbar displayed
♦ Show all open windows "cascaded" like a row of dominoes one behind the other, or show them side by side,
or one on top of another to cover the desktop
♦ Minimize all the windows to show the Desktop
♦ Start the Task Manager application; or lock the Taskbar so that its settings cannot be modified without
unlocking it first.
♦ If you select Properties from the context menu, you are given further ways of customizing the Taskbar.

As in Windows XP, there are options:
♦ to auto-hide the Taskbar (it reduces to a very thin line which only becomes visible as a normal Taskbar when
you put your mouse over that thin line)
♦ keep the Taskbar visible over other open windows,
♦ group similar Taskbar buttons for the same application in a stacked list.

NEW OPTION

A new option available in the Taskbar properties page, is to determine whether or not hovering your mouse
over a Taskbar button shows a live preview of the corresponding
window (thumbnail.)

CUSTOMIZE THE NOTIFICATION AREA

Unlike XP, you now have a separate tab to customize the Notification Area, which is the part of the Taskbar
on the right hand side, normally showing the system clock, a
volume control for your speakers, a Network icon, a Safely Remove Hardware icon, a Power icon (if you are
using a laptop on battery power), and others. You can put a check mark next to Hide Inactive Icons and then
click the Customize button, in order to access a list of all icons that have shown up in the Notification Area.

This is broken down into two lists, those icons that are currently showing in the Notification Area, and those
that have shown up in the past but are not currently there now. For each icon, you click to access a drop down
list to choose Hide when inactive, Hide, or Show.

SYSTEM TIME

One of the things that you can show on the Taskbar is the system time (and that was in previous versions of
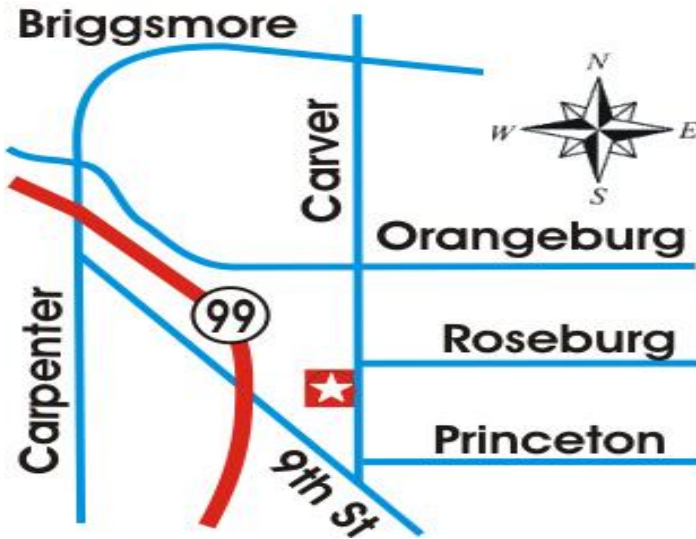Windows also), but this now has some modifications.

Hover your mouse over the system time in the Notification Area, you get a balloon tip telling the system date
and day of week, but if you click on the system time instead, up pops a nice looking circular clock and a calen-
dar of the current month, with a link to the Control Panel area where you can change the date and time settings.

In that area of Control Panel, you can now click on a tab for Additional Clocks and configure up to 2 more dif-
ferent system clocks to be active, each with a different time zone and time of day perhaps. If you do that, then
hovering your mouse over the system
time in the Notification Area will modify the balloon tip to show all active clocks, whereas clicking on system
time will now show all these different clocks side by side, together with the calendar of the current month.

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The Club's Meeting Place

Our general meeting and the Random Access Special Interest Group are held at the Destiny Christian Center, 1161 Carver Road on the west side of Carver across from Sam's Food City. Parking is available both in front of and behind the Center. No parking along side of the Center, please.

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Be sure and check our web site at least once a week at www.mpcug.net

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PC Post

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Join The Modesto PC User Group

Web site: www.mpcug.net

To join MPCUG (or just get more information about us go to our Web site and fill out the new member form or mail your check to: MPCUG, P.O. Box 5122, Modesto, CA 95352-5122.Membership is just $24 a year and includes 12 issues of the PC Post along with participation in all meetings and events. You will also receive e-mail advising you of extra events or news.

The PC Post and Editorial Policy

The PC Post is published online 12 times per year and is available to all group members as a membership benefit. Annual group membership dues are $24.00.

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The PC Post encourages group members to submit articles for publication. We would like to have articles which deal with the writer's experience with computer hardware and software or digital photography.

An article may deal with any computer-related subject provided it contains no libelous or offensive material. We can't use information copied from other publications without written permission except for quotes.

Articles should be submitted in MS Word text. Do not spend time formatting your article such as indents or centering. Please use only one space between sentences. and do not use bold, italicize or otherwise format the submission as we can't guarantee results in translation to Publisher. Proof read and run your spelling checker. Watch for special upper and lower case in brand names. Do not tab or indent to layout text.

If you want to include a graphic, please contact the editor for instructions.

We reserve the right to edit articles, for length or to improve readability. Longer articles may be published in several parts. We will not knowingly promote unlicensed businesses.

Letters to the editor are encouraged. All articles and letters to the editor should be submitted to the editor via email as an attached file. Call him at (209) 667-1980 before submission. Please include your name, day and evening phone numbers, and email address for contact.

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