

PC Post



Official Newsletter of the
Modesto PC User Group.
Modesto, California

30 YEARS OF USER HELPING USER

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The group meets at 6:30 p.m. at Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry Ave., for its Random Access Special Interest Group featuring questions and problems members are facing. At 7:30, following dinner, the presentation will start.

BOD Meeting – March 6, 7pm at Ridgeway's

"What ever happened to Kim Dotcom--the Internet's Bad Boy or the Cyberworld's Robin Hood?"

AND

"Is your Router Safe from Hackers and what can you do to Find Out?"

ALSO ADDED

What is "CAS"—ALA The "Copyright Alert System?"





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Is technology turning us into couch potatoes?

Do you remember the days before remote control? For those of you who answered “no” to that question, let me tell you that there was a time when you actually had to get up and walk across the room to change the channel on the television. When remote controls were first introduced, there was great fear that we would all be come “couch potatoes.” In fact, the first television remote control that was produced by Zenith was called the “Lazy Bones.” Now, more than fifty years later, we can truly assess whether this and other technological advances have made us lazy or have actually given us more reasons to get off the couch.

The television remote was just the first of many high-tech products that “did the work for us.” We now have many more. Whole-house music players like Sonos save you footsteps by letting you control the music for every room in your house with your cell phone.

If it is cold outside, there is no need to run out and start the car, then run back in the house to wait while it warms up. Many new cars have auto-start. Just press a button on the key fob and you can start the car remotely. If you don’t want to have to trek down the driveway for the newspaper, you can simply download the paper to your tablet or read it on the Internet. Oh, and you don’t have to open the door to check the weather. You can see it on your portable device or on your thermostat. (My Internet-connected thermostat even gives me the weather predictions for the next several days.)

For many tasks, you no longer have to walk into the computer room, now you can use your smart phone or tablet to surf the Web, check your email, read a book, or play a game. And if you keep your cell phone in your pocket, you can make and receive calls without running through the house to grab the landline phone. I believe that these devices have collectively saved us trillions of footsteps.

Today, robotic helpers also take the sweat out of home chores. iRobot’s Roomba, Scooba, Looj, and Verro will help you vacuum the floor, wash the floor, clean the gutters, and clean the pool.

And with the coming onslaught of Internet-connected appliances, you will work even less. Many manufacturers have Internet-connected washers and dryers which you can control from your cell phone. They let you know when the clothes are dry and even let you give them a few more minutes of fluff time if you can’t make it to the dryer to remove them as soon as they are done.

We've had timers on coffee pots for a long time, but the new Internet-connected coffee makers will coordinate with your alarm clock or cell phone to make the coffee at just the right moment, even if your schedule changes. Samsung has partnered with ADT to make a new home security system that shows up on your TV. So if you are watching TV at bedtime, you won't have to get up to check the door locks, turn off the lights, or close the blinds. You will be able to do it right from the TV.

Between 1950 and 2000 obesity rates in the United States have increased by 214 percent. Two out of every three people in the U.S. were obese or overweight in 2010. You don't even have to read the statistics. Just look around and you will see overweight people everywhere. Realistically, there are many reasons for this. We are consuming more calories, eating more junk food, and in general getting less exercise. It is also obvious, though, that our reliance on the technology that makes our lives easier is also to blame. Besides letting our devices do the work for us, we are also spending untold hours sitting in front of televisions and computers, and playing games with our fingers.

To be fair, technology is also presenting us with enticements to exercise and keep fit. Nike has pedometers that fit into their shoes and communicate with an iPod for later download to a computer. FitBit and others have wireless activity trackers, sleep trackers, smart scales, and mobile tools. In fact, there are hundreds of apps that will help you track your weight and motivate you to eat better. Take a look at the Apple App Store or the Android Play Store and you will see selections like Lose It!, Monitor Your Weight, iFitness, Get in Shape, and DailyBurn Tracker. There are also a wide variety of apps and devices like calorie counters, blood pressure monitors, and step trackers.

So I guess it comes down to whether more Americans will use technology to improve their health or to relax and let their high tech devices do the work for them. Although some people are choosing the healthier lifestyle, we know that most are not. In fact, it is estimated that if current trends continue in just a few years 75% of Americans will be overweight. I love technology, but I hate what it is doing to our waistlines.

Using a Small Portable Disk Drive
Jim Cerny, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
February 2013 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
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What do you save on your computer? Let's see, I have lots of photos and documents, some music, and lots of other stuff. Wouldn't it be nice to take all these things with you wherever you go? Well, you certainly can with a small portable memory device called a "flash disk" or "thumb drive". These are very small disk drives with no moving parts. It is a small electronic chip or circuit board which behaves just like another disk drive. These

disk drives are small enough to fit onto a key chain. They can be as small as only an inch long, yet they can hold tons of computer data and information. They come in different capacities, or memory sizes, and they plug into any USB port on any computer. Their cost can range from around ten dollars to fifty or more depending upon the capacity. If you are going to buy one (and you should) I recommend at least a 16 GB (that's Giga-byte or 16 billion bytes) size. Using a small drive like this can take the place of using many CD-ROMs, it is easily portable, and the contents can be easily changed – that is, files and folders can be added or deleted anytime. These drives are also pretty tough – I once left a thumb drive in my pants pocket and the pants went through the washer and the hot dryer, the thumb drive still worked fine!

After purchasing one of these drives, read the instructions carefully (if there are any) and follow them. They are not difficult to use, but each manufacturer MAY have some special considerations. Some manufacturers like to put “free” software on the drive which will pop-up on your computer screen when you plug it in. You probably want to refuse such software and delete it from the drive. The following is a general guideline for using a thumb drive.

1. Plug the drive into a USB port on your computer. Usually you will hear a double-note musical tone when you plug it in. This tone is generated by the Windows operating system to let you know that it “found” or “recognized” the new drive. A small window may also appear on your monitor screen saying that a new drive has been found AND it will tell you the letter designation for this drive. Usually the first time you connect a new drive to the computer you will see a message that it is loading the software needed to make that drive work with your computer. If you have used this drive before, the next window will list options of what you can do with the drive – I always click on “Open folder to view files”. When I do that, Windows Explorer opens and displays the folders on my jump drive (see step 3 below).



2. Remember the letter designation of that drive. This letter designation MAY be different the next time you plug in your drive, even on the same computer (this depends upon what other devices you have connected to your computer at the time). If you do not get or see this message, continue to the next step.

3. To see what is on your drive, open the “My documents” folder. Click on “Folders” on the tool bar to get a list of folders on the left side of the window. In that left pane, click on “My computer” to open a list of all the drives available to your computer. You should see your new drive letter on that list (along with the manufacturer’s name). Click on it to highlight or “select” it and the contents will appear on the right large area of the window.

4. Use the drive just like any drive – like you use your “C” drive for example. Create folders and copy files into them. My jump drive is big enough to hold all “My documents” and all “My Pictures” and that’s what I do -- I create a new folder with the name “Backup” and the date and copy everything into it. Remember when you move files from one drive to another you are really making a copy of the files on the new drive and they will not be deleted from the source drive. When I am done, I have backed up my computer!

5. To DISCONNECT your drive from the computer, you should first go to the system icons on the right side of the taskbar, by the clock. Look for an icon (in Windows 7) that looks like a USB plug with a green circle with a white arrow in it. If you move your mouse onto this little icon you a text box will appear that says “Safely remove hardware and eject media”. If you do not see this icon, try clicking on the “expand” arrow to reveal all the icons in this area. Click on this icon BEFORE removing your plug-in drive. It will display a list of all your drives and hardware devices that can be removed and you should click on the drive (by letter) you want to remove. This is the letter of the drive you noted in step 2 above. It will then tell you when it is all right to remove your drive. When you remover your dive you will again hear a double-note tone. Why is this step necessary? Because when the drive is in use, there is data that may be actively written to the drive. If you remove the drive while this is going on you may end up with a bad file which you cannot open. Many drives also have a light on them to show you it is actively in use.



So next time someone asks you if you have any photos of your family you can whip out your thumb drive and say “Certainly, here’s a few hundred, let’s plug this into your computer and I will show them to you.” Out of politeness I would reply “I’d love to see them, but please do me a favor, buy me a drink first!”

Living in the Past?
Computing in a Software Museum
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It was at a recent meeting of my computer user group that it hit me – I do my computing in a museum.

It's not my hardware. My printers from several presidential administrations ago, and parts from 286 and 386 laptops, have all been delivered to the local recycler. Ditto that 19-inch CRT monster. (Though I did keep the Leading Edge Model D that started me off – you never know when you will need a fallback.)

No, I'm talking about software.

It was at the PHP session. The topic was email, and the session leader was talking about scripting an HTML email message. He threw in the suggestion to include a fallback version in case a subscriber was using an email client that did not display HTML. It was as if he was talking about writing a webpage for someone who might be using Netscape Navigator 4 -- but I actually use an email program that does not display HTML pages, at least not with my setup. Not surprisingly, I was the only one in the group. And that got me thinking about how many software relics that I use at home, and even at work, and that I actually reinstall every time I buy a new computer.

Mail from Another Era

The email client goes back to the 90's. Java was a hot new platform, and OS/2 was competing with Windows as a PC operating system (that's a whole 'nother story). A developer built an email client in Java so that it could run on any operating system. It was called JStreet Mailer, and it was perfect for people like me who dual booted between OS's. I made it my email program.

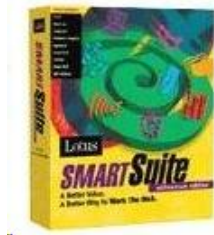
As good an idea as it was, it did not take off. The developer ceased working on the mailer, but he was generous enough to release the source to some volunteer coders. They maintained it for a while as Polarbar Mailer. The last update was somewhere around 2003.

It is a very well thought out program, but needless to say, the feature set is behind the times. And frankly, under Windows 7, it freezes up regularly. I still use it every day, though. At this

point, I have so many addresses and folders of saved emails that the task of migrating to a new program is too daunting to consider.

New Data, Old Base

My database program is even older. Back in the DOS days, when Lotus was its own company, they developed the 1-2-3 spreadsheet. When the transition to Windows came along, they purchased a great word processor called Ami Pro and renamed it Word Pro. And they purchased a database program called Approach. It was a relational DB, not flat file, and it was a good one. They put these together with some other programs and marketed the package as SmartSuite. They had both OS/2 and Windows versions, so this one was also perfect for dual booting.



Then came Microsoft Office -- enough said. The last version of SmartSuite was released around 2002. I bought that update for about \$35 from a vendor at a computer show. Approach itself was worth many times that amount. I used it to learn how to design and build databases. I did one for my passwords and another for our user group's attendance sheets, and I still use them both. The program may be behind the times, but it works, so I hang in there -- again, it's too much of an effort to

move.

A Pre-App App

Then there is my address book. I had forgotten this one until I went to do my Christmas cards.

I had a Palm III that I bought used from a guy back when Palm was the thing. It came with a nice desktop application that synched with the Palm and made it easy to enter information in either place. (You could also beam information between devices -- remember that? The original Near Field Communications.) The Palm itself has long been retired, but there were so many contacts in that desktop program, it was easier just to leave them there. So every December, I crank up the Palm Desktop program to retrieve my old addresses for the holidays.

From the Days of DOS

I go even farther back with my diary program. It's not even a Windows application. Lotus again comes into play. The story is that Mitch Kapor, the mind behind 1-2-3, had a habit of keeping notes on slips of paper. Looking for a way to organize information the way spreadsheets organized numbers, he had Lotus develop a personal information manager called Agenda -- running in DOS.



Agenda was my kind of program. It was a free-form database with calendaring functions and organization on the fly. I could create projects, enter notes, set up due dates, and track completions. I bought the first version from an online auction for a Boston PBS station, back when I used CompuServe for access -- pre-internet of course. (I bought a 2400 bps modem at that same auction to upgrade from a 1200 model.) The second version of Agenda came out in 1992, and that was the end of development. When Lotus developed SmartSuite for

Windows, it bought an organizer called -- yup -- Organizer. It just wasn't the same. For whatever reason, I can't find a program that works my way as Agenda does. These days I have to run it in DOSBox. People coming by my desk want to know what website I am using or whether the program would work for them. I just tell them to find something else. It's too much to explain.

A Pioneer's Second Act

The last example is not as ancient, but I have never heard of anyone else using it. In the early days of PC's, before Lotus 1-2-3, there was VisiCalc, a prototypical spreadsheet designed by Dan Bricklin. It was one of the foundations of the desktop computer revolution. Years after VisiCalc, Dan developed ListGarden, an application that lets web designers convert website entries into RSS feeds. I found it because I was looking for exactly that type of utility, and it was literally the only one that I could find. I have been using it for years, and I know that it is time to move to a CMS that will handle news feeds, but here again, there is a lot of work to make that transition. It's on my to-do list. But for now, ListGarden does the job, and I appreciate it being available. I have searched in vain to find anyone else using it, so I guess I am a leftover.

All of this is not to say that I don't keep up with new things. I'm writing this article on a dual-monitor system using Office 10 and saving the document to Dropbox. I keep notes these days in OneNote. And I am learning Access for my database management.

But the old software still works well enough for now. So I'll hang onto Agenda for now -- and wait for the next version.

Speccy: Another Useful Utility
By Phil Sorrentino, Member, Sarasota PCUG, FL
February 2013 issue, PC Monitor
www.spcug.org / [phirsorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:phirsorr@yahoo.com)

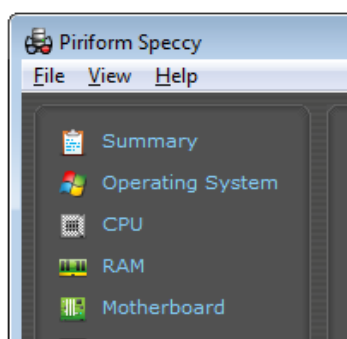


Way back in November 2009, in the heydays of XP, shortly after the release of Windows 7, I started reviewing useful utilities. Along the way I reviewed some very useful utilities such as Stickies, MP3Tag, CKRename, and UltraFileSearch. Just as a matter of review, Utilities are usually small programs that are intended to do a specific task or a small range of tasks, they are small software application. Today, after the release of the Apple iPad and in the current Tablet environment, we would call these Utilities "Apps".

These Utilities (or Apps) are usually designed to help manage the computer hardware, Operating System (OS), or assist a particular software application. Just as a matter of history, sometimes a utility becomes so popular that the functionality of the utility is included in newer versions of the OS. The functionality of one long-time popular utility, Snagit, which allows a user to capture a piece of the display into a graphics file, is now included in Windows as the Snipping Tool. The functionality in Windows may not be as complete as the commercial version of Snagit, but it is a part of Windows, which means it is integrated into the OS, and therefore available at no additional cost.

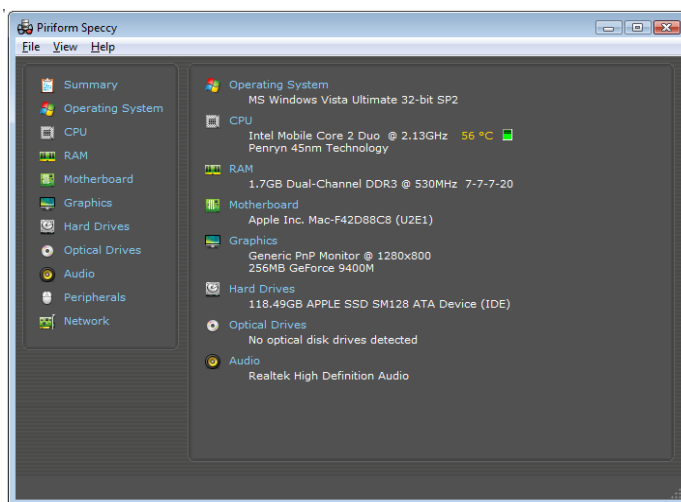


Useful Utilities can be found in a variety of places such as computer stores (internet or brick & mortar), Google searches, and The Computer Buffet, edited by our own Monitor editor, Herb Goldstein. The Computer Buffet is a treasure trove of useful software, some of which can be considered Utilities, like Speccy, and some of which are full-blown application, like Open Office. Speccy was originally discussed in a Monitor article in the December 2012 issue. Speccy was developed by Piriform, the same company that brings us Ccleaner and Recuva, two other useful utilities that many SPCUG members have used. You can download Speccy at www.piriform.com/speccy. When you download it, be sure to uncheck the boxes for other things like the Google Toolbar, unless you want them to come along with the Speccy download.



Speccy is a Utility used to provide information about your computer hardware and Operating System. Speccy is very similar to Belarc, a Utility that is fairly well known and often used at the Refurbishing Facility. Belarc goes a little further and additionally provides information about the software and the software versions, installed on the computer. Just remember "I have not come to bury Belarc, I have come to praise Speccy". There is probably more information provided by Belarc, but what I like about Speccy is the visual organization and presentation. The initial results are presented in a two window-pane format, much like Windows Explorer.

Highlight an item in the left pane and you get detailed results in the right pane. The left pane includes the Summary and all the major computer subsystems; Operating System, CPU, RAM, Motherboard, Graphics, Hard drives, Optical drives, Audio, Peripherals, and Network. The Summary that is shown on the right pane after the program completes its initial analysis phase has the answers to many of the basic questions regarding this specific computer. Immediately you know the Operating System name and the Service Pack (if applicable), and whether it is a 32 or 64 bit OS, and the type of computer CPU. Other basics in the Summary are the amount of RAM, the size of the Hard drive, along with the drive connection type, and the Optical drive and its connection type. From the main



menu you can Print any of the results or you can choose "Save as a Text file" and save the results for future review.

Details of the major subsystems, shown on the left, can be obtained by selecting the appropriate subsystem. Click on any of the major subsystems, and the details will be shown in the right pane. The details are very extensive, probably much more than the average computer user needs to know, but may be useful to someone trying to help solve a problem. Some of the detailed information provided by these subsystems is as follows:

- The Operating System subsystem shows the OS type (Windows 7, XP), 32 or 64 bit OS, the serial number, the Windows Update schedule, the Antivirus software installed and the age of its Virus Signature Database.
- The CPU subsystem indicates the number of Cores (today most modern CPUs are multi-core), the Bus speed, the Cache configuration, and the Average Temperature the CPU has been experiencing (if this is approaching 60 degrees C you may be in for some trouble, although the Critical Temperature depends on the specific CPU).
- The RAM subsystem shows the amount of RAM installed as well as the number of memory slots and the number of free memory slots (nice to know if you are thinking of increasing your memory).
- The Motherboard subsystem shows the motherboard manufacturer, the chipset (CPU and glue chips) vendor, and the BIOS brand and version number (things that you probably will never need to know).
- The Graphics subsystem provides information about your Monitor such as the Resolution, and the Graphics chipset (again probably never needed by the average user).
- The Hard Drives subsystem shows the Drive size, the File System type (FAT or NTFS), and the Partition information (nice to know if you think you will ever re-partition the drive).
- The Optical Drive subsystem indicates the Media type (CD or DVD), and whether or not you can write to the drive (Writer or Read-only).
- The Audio subsystem just shows the Sound Card and the Playback Device (usually speakers).
- The Peripherals subsystem indicates the type of keyboard and mouse, the Printers that are currently in use, and any external disk drives or USB memory devices attached.
- The Network subsystem provides all the IP addresses, DHCP status (enabled or not), the Computer Name and Workgroup (if it belongs to one), the Wi-Fi SSID (network name) and channel number (good to know if you are experiencing slow operation caused by interference on the network). Surprisingly, I didn't find the MAC (or physical) address of the communications adapters.

As you can see, Speccy provides a lot of information and is definitely a very useful utility. Download it and pin it to the task bar so it will be available and easily accessible

when you need it. By the way, a printed version of the results might be nice to have for reference if the computer is down for any reason.

Avoiding Web Ads and Cookies
by Penny Cano, member of the Cajun Clickers
Computer Club and Instructor for the Dumb &
Dumber Workshops
November 2012 issue, Cajun Clickers
Computer News
www.clickers.org / [ccnewsletter \(at\) cox.net](mailto:ccnewsletter@cox.net)



Web advertisements often take up half of the real estate on a webpage. Supposedly, they entice the viewer into buying the products. In actuality, they help to financially support the host website. Cookies, on the other hand, are outwardly invisible. They are put on your computer by websites to identify you. There are good cookies and bad cookies. A secure website (bank, credit card, prescription order, etc.) requires a cookie (good) on your computer to verify your identify. You cannot use the website unless you have their cookie. Public, retail, and other non-secure sites put tracking cookies (bad) on your computer to do things like determine which websites you frequent so they can customize all those ads to what they believe are your interests. Personally, I like to avoid both intrusions. Here is how it can be done on the two browsers I use, Internet Explorer and Firefox.

Firefox is the easiest because there are add-ons you can download and install from . On the Firefox toolbar, select Tools/Add-ons/ Get Add-ons.Mozilla.org/



The two I find most useful are Adblock Plus and NoScript. Adblock Plus doesn't require setting changes other than to be sure the updates are automatic. NoScript installs easily, but it takes some personal interaction to make it work to your advantage. Many ads on websites use Java script, Flash player, or other tools for the animation. NoScript gives you the option to choose which of these scripts you want to allow.

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ads on websites use Java script, Flash player, or other tools for the animation. NoScript gives you the option to choose which of these scripts you want to allow.

If an unknown script is attempting to execute, there is a yellow warning bar at the bottom of the Firefox window. Pressing the small “S” in the lower right corner of the status bar pops up a menu that allows you to trust (permit) scripts or block them. Usually I make “Untrusted” websites with “ads” (msads.net, adrevolver.com) or “click” (doubleclick.net), etc., in their name. If you make a mistake and block something you need, you can always press the “S” button and go back and “Trust” the script.



The third Add-on I find useful is BetterPrivacy which lets you choose which cookies to accept or deny. The same rule applies in choosing which website's cookies – deny “ads,” “track,” “click.” et c; accept “Discovercard,” “Chasebank,” and the like. Internet Explorer provides more of a challenge to block ads and cookies. I have not found an Add-on for IE that allows you to choose which scripts are allowed or blocks ads and tracking cookies on a wholesale basis. So it takes more effort on the user's part to accomplish the same thing. Somewhere in the IE settings there is a check box that says to tell websites you do not want to be tracked. But many of the websites do not honor this.

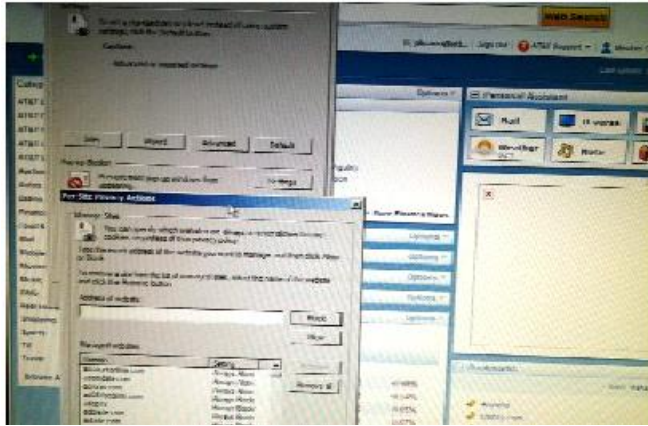
Also, you can use InPrivate Filtering (“Safety” button or under “Tools” on the menu) to block some sites. The most effective way I have found to block ads in IE is not in the IE settings. I use the Parental Control settings in my Virus/Internet Security suite. I use TrendMicro Titanium Internet Security. Under Parental Controls, I block the general category of “Web Advertisement,” but that doesn't get everything.



There is also a section of the Parental Controls that blocks individual websites. The same rule applies here as in Firefox – if the name includes “ads,” “click,” etc., it's usually a “Block.”

Cookie blocking can be done with IE settings under Tools/Internet Options on the menu or

the Internet Options icon in the Control Panel. Initially, it is a pain in the neck, but worth it in the long run. On the Privacy tab chose the “Sites” button. If you already know the name of the website whose cookie is to be blocked, you can enter it and choose “Block.”



If the website doesn't work right without the cookie, you can always come back and remove the block. The next part can be annoying at first. On the Privacy tab choose the “Advanced” button. Check the box to “Override automatic cookie handling” and mark “Prompt” for First-party and Third-party cookies. Now, each time a website tries to put a cookie on your computer, a Privacy Alert box will pop up. Hit the “Block” button.



They are persistent and my try 20-40 times before the website loads. But if you can do everything you need to do while denying the cookies, the next time you visit the website and the box pops up, you can check the box that says “Apply my decision to all cookies from this website.” Then when you choose block, the website is added to the “Sites” list and you won't get the alert again. If you do this, after a while you will get few alerts and the cookies will automatically be blocked.

Are We Really Under Cyber Attack? **by Ira Wilsker**

Ira is a member of the Golden Triangle PC Club, an Assoc. Professor at Lamar Institute of Technology, and hosts a weekly radio talk show on computer topics on KLVJ News Talk AM560. He also writes a weekly technology column for the Examiner newspaper <www.theexaminer.com>. Ira is also a deputy sheriff who specializes in cybercrime, and has lectured internationally in computer crime and security.



Normally I write about issues that may impact us strictly as individuals, including how to secure our personal computers, where to get good quality free software, hardware reviews, and software reviews. Many of us are blissfully unaware that our way of life is under cyberattack, which has the potential to adversely affect our quality of life. Many of us can discuss the latest sports news with vigor, debate the crazy lifestyles of our favorite celebrities, and argue the fine points of politics and public policy, but are blissfully ignorant about how our dependence on the internet has made us vulnerable to attacks that can close our banks, disrupt our communications, shut down our utilities, and otherwise lose much of what makes our life possible in the 21st century.

Buried in the news headlines over recent days are stories about how such icons as The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post, and Twitter have been successfully attacked by hackers. In the recent Wall Street Journal hack attack, according to AFP reporter Rob Lever, writing on Friday, Feb 1, 2013, "The Wall Street Journal has become the second major US media organization to accuse Chinese hackers of targeting its computers in an apparent effort to spy on journalists covering China. The announcement on Thursday came a day after The New York Times said hackers, possibly connected to China's military, had infiltrated its computers in response to its expose of the vast wealth amassed by a top leader's family. The Journal reported that the attacks were "for the apparent purpose of monitoring the newspaper's China coverage" and suggested that Chinese spying on US media has become a "widespread phenomenon."

Also on February 1, Washington Post reporters Craig Timberg and Ellen Nakashima wrote in the Post, "A sophisticated cyberattack targeted The Washington Post in an operation that resembled intrusions against other major American news organizations and that company officials suspect was the work of Chinese hackers, people familiar with the incident said. Post company officials confirmed the broad outlines of the infiltration, which was discovered in 2011 and first reported by an independent cybersecurity blog on Friday. But they did not elaborate on the circumstances, the duration of the intrusion or its apparent origin." Twitter, a major social media network with over 200 million current users, was also the victim of a cyber attack, according to a February 2 Associated Press story by Terry Collins and Anne D'Innocenzio. In this report, they wrote, "Twitter said in a blog post on Friday (February 1) it detected attempts to gain access to its user data earlier in the week. It shut down one attack moments after it was detected. But Twitter discovered that the attackers may have stolen user names, email addresses and encrypted passwords belonging to 250,000 users they

describe as a very small percentage of our users. The company reset the pilfered passwords and sent emails advising the affected users."

In the days and few weeks prior to the high profile newspaper and Twitter attacks, there were countless attacks on major banks, financial institutions, power companies, and other components of our daily lives and critical infrastructure. In the recent "Gozi Trojan" case, a small group of eastern European cyber thieves infected over a million computers with the "Gozi Trojan Virus". This virus which started stealing online banking information in 2007, and remained almost undetectable by most security utilities until 2012, which resulted in millions of dollars in banking losses over a five year period, making it (according to a New York U.S. Attorney). "... one of the most financially destructive computer viruses in history." (Source: krebsonsecurity.com/2013/01/three-men-charged-in-connection-with-gozi-trojan). These cyber criminals employed countless "money mules", mostly innocent and out-of-work individuals, who were recruited through work-at-home job scams. These money mules helped the cyber thieves launder stolen funds.

In addition to the more traditional cybercrooks, as in the NY Times and Washington Post cases above, cyber espionage is widely used to gather intelligence for political, industrial, and military purposes. In terms of political espionage, the recent attacks on the major newspapers may have been used to intimidate Chinese nationals who might want to talk to western media outlets. Mark Clayton, in a Christian Science Monitor article, February 1, 2013, "How large is China's campaign to control, intimidate?", he wrote, "China's apparent motives in infiltrating major news organizations, experts say, are to anticipate and respond to negative coverage of the country, and, perhaps no less importantly, to deter Chinese citizens from speaking openly with Western news organizations."

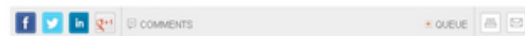


In terms of industrial espionage, Richard Clarke, the former cybersecurity and cyberterrorism advisor for the White House, said in a March, 2012 interview in the Smithsonian Magazine, that, "China has hacked every major US company." According to Clarke, every major company in the U.S. is regularly infiltrated by Chinese hackers employed by the Chinese government to steal research and development data, plans, and information. According to Clarke, "Every major company in the United States has already been penetrated by China. My greatest fear is that, rather than having a cyber-Pearl Harbor event, we will instead have this death of a thousand cuts. Where we lose our competitiveness by having all of our research and development stolen by the Chinese." (Source: www.zdnet.com/blog/security/richard-clarke-china-has-hacked-every-major-us-company/11125).

Sadly, this cyber industrial espionage also has strong military and national security

China's J-20 Stealth Jet Meant to Counter F-22, F-35, U.S. Analysis Says

By Tony Capaccio - Jan 6, 2011 5:43 PM CT



China's new stealth fighter likely was designed "to counter" the U.S. F-22 and F-35 jets, according to U.S. Navy intelligence analysts.

implications. According to a story in the Wall Street Journal, "Computer Spies Breach Fighter-Jet Project" (online.wsj.com/article/SB124027491029837401.html), U.S. officials have known at least since 2009 that Chinese cyber spies have "... broken into the Pentagon's \$300 billion Joint Strike Fighter project -- the Defense Department's costliest weapons program

ever ... Similar incidents have also breached the Air Force's air-traffic-control system in recent months, these people say. In the case of the fighter-jet program, the intruders were able to copy and siphon off several terabytes of data related to design and electronics systems, officials say, potentially making it easier to defend against the craft." The result of this cyber espionage on our national secrets can be seen in the newly released Chinese and Russian fighter aircraft that were explicitly designed to defeat our latest generations of fighter aircraft. According to an article in Bloomberg, "China's new stealth fighter likely was designed "to counter" the U.S. F-22 and F-35 jets, according to U.S. Navy intelligence analysts."

In the same Wall Street Journal story (above) about the Chinese cyber spies stealing our fighter aircraft designs is a chilling statement, "The latest intrusions provide new evidence that a battle is heating up between the U.S. and potential adversaries over the data networks that tie the world together. The revelations follow a recent Wall Street Journal report that computers used to control the U.S. electrical-distribution system, as well as other infrastructure, have also been infiltrated by spies abroad." Other, more recent reports indicate that China is greatly enhancing its cyberattack abilities to launch a devastating cyber attack on an adversary (the United States?) by shutting down its infrastructure using technical "cyber" methods rather than more traditional and violent methods.

Be careful to listen to snippets in the national and global news about such things as cyber attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities, such as happened in the recent past when the Stuxnet computer worm wrecked Siemens centrifuges. Richard Clarke has written about attacks on the electric power grid, trains, and the stock exchanges; listen in the news for more stories about continuing attack. Almost daily, there are news stories about "denial of service" attacks that can effectively



this

shut down the internet servers used by banks, credit card payment gateways, and the name servers which direct internet traffic. In an April 2009 story, "Electricity Grid in U.S. Penetrated By Spies", the Wall Street Journal reported that China and Russia had infiltrated the U.S. electrical grid and left behind software programs that could be used to disrupt the system, according to current and former national security officials (Source: online.wsj.com/article/SB123914805204099085.html). Think about this the next time you hear about a major blackout for reasons other than a major weather event such as a hurricane. Some cyberterrorism experts claim that the infamous August 2003 blackout that darkened much of Canada and the northeastern United States was due to cyberterrorism, a claim that was vehemently denied by government authorities, but still discussed in hushed circles. Al Qaeda documents indicate that they had been seriously planning to shut down our power grids, and evidence exists that there had even been surveillance on key components of the grid (Source: www.tactical-life.com/online/news/al-qaeda-calls-for-electronic-jihad-cybe-warfare-video/).

With the microcosm of information and sources referenced above, and now being more aware of the need to listen to contemporary news stories about cyberattacks and other cyberthreats, it should be evident that we are indeed now engaged in a cyberwar, and have been for several years. Do we really have anything to worry about? Sleep well tonight.

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From Ray Nichols

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Please also remember to bring your used magazines, books, videos, DVD's, and cassettes for distribution to Veterans in our area. If you have old household or device batteries, or used CFL (Compact Fluorescent Lamp) bulbs, bring them for legal recycling (it is against the law to dispose of them in the trash). Old Cellphones can be converted to Telephone Calling Cards for overseas Military Personnel. Old eyeglasses will be turned over to the Lions Club for reissuing to needy

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