



mbug-pc newsletter

Established 1983 / Incorporated 1988

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What Can You Do

When Your Hard Disk CRASHES?!!

Do you know what a “disk crash” is? The term describes a variety of symptoms involving data loss or corruption. It’s caused by malfunctioning hardware or by “buggy” or badly-written software, and can happen randomly, slowly, or all of a sudden. The important thing is that you could lose all data (your files, photos, graphics, etc.) on your computer!

Do you know the warning signs of a crashing disk? Typically they are, the system won’t boot, weird noises, a lot of error messages, random slowness, and applications that used to work won’t or suddenly go crazy.

Do you think it’s a good idea to learn what to do to improve your chances to prevent crashes, or plan for successful data recovery? Then come to the July 3rd General Meeting to hear **Malcolm Rieke** and **Colin Barrett-Fox** of **Rediskme LLC, Santa Cruz**. They help people and businesses recover precious personal and work data and restore all types of desktop and laptop computers. Malcolm and Colin will talk about common causes of data loss, how to protect against it, available backup solutions, (including applications and remote services), and “Best Practices.”

Are these guys qualified to teach us? Heck, yes! Malcolm is a Principal Consultant experienced in network security, infrastructure/management system design, corporate investigations/digital forensics, technical consulting/support, and electrical engineering. Colin is a Lead Technician with experience in **Linux/Windows** systems administration, object-oriented programming (including **C++** and **Java**), LAMP server administration and configuration, web design (using **HTML** and **CSS**), and technical support.

Questions in advance? Need help with a computer crash immediately? Call (831) 466-3475, e-mail colinbarrettfox@gmail.com, visit rediskme.com, or stop by 500 Soquel Avenue, Suite E, Santa Cruz, CA 95062. ♦

Did you miss the great presentation on Social Networking by NICOLE GUSTAS?



photo: Bill Hylar, MBUG-PC

Don't despair: read Carolyn's review and experience in using FACEBOOK with Nicole's instructions, on page 6!

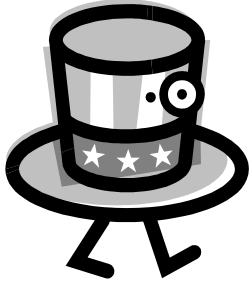
FRIDAY July 3, 2009

7:30 to 9:30 pm

**Pacific Grove Adult Education Center
1025 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove**

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It's a Patriotic Thing to Volunteer! Positions Available Now at MBUG !



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Benefits of MBUG-PC Membership:
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Monthly MBUG-PC Newsletter,
and a 15 to 20% Discount on
Computer Books at Borders and Walden-
books with MBUG-PC Membership Card
(see Don Slaiter for a card).

THINGS, THINGLETS & THINGASSOS

S. Jack Lewtschuk
MBUG-PC
Columnist



photo: Does He or Doesn't He, MBUG-PC

PRESIDENT'S MUMBLINGS

MBUGers Respond

We keep preaching about the benefits of the **MBUG Listserv**. Well, here is a testimonial from a real MBUG member:

"Recently, I decided to install a second monitor. I had a monitor with a four foot VGA cord, but that was not long enough. I knew that many of us, over the years, accumulate spare, computer related items. Sending a listserv message to our members resulted in immediate replies from three of our generous and helpful members. "Mission accomplished!" Thanks Star, Lee and Jeff."

THINGS, THINGLETS & THINGASSOS

Cloud Computing: A Very Brief Explanation

Cloud Computing is Internet-based development and use of computer technology. The "cloud" is a metaphor for the Internet and is an abstraction for the complex infrastructure it conceals. It is a style of computing in which Internet technology-related capabilities are provided, allowing users to access technology-enabled services from the Internet ("in the cloud") without knowledge of, expertise with, or control over the technology infrastructure that supports them.

Cloud Computing is a paradigm in which information is permanently stored in servers on the Internet and cached temporarily on "clients" such as desktops, entertainment



illustration: Regina Doyle, MBUG-PC

centers, table computers, notebooks, wall computers, handhelds, sensors, monitors, etc.

Cloud Computing is a general concept that incorporates **Software as a Service (SaaS)**, **Web 2.0** and other recent, well-known technology trends. The common theme is reliance on the Internet for satisfying the computing needs of the users. For example, **Google Apps** (www.google.com/apps/intl/en/business/index.html), provides common business applications online that are accessed from a web browser, while the software and data are stored on servers.

Back To Memory—Yours

According to the following article, searching the Internet does not only help us to become more informed and more familiar with our computers, but it is like going to a "memory gym":

"Workout for Brain Just a Few Clicks Away,"
by **Julie Steenhuisen** (edited by **Will Dunham** and **John O'Callaghan**), **Associated Press**

Searching the Internet may help middle-aged and older adults keep their memories sharp. Researchers at the **University of California Los Angeles** studied people doing Web searches while their brain activity was recorded with functional magnetic resonance imaging scans.

"What we saw was people who had Internet experience used more of their brain during the search," **Dr. Gary Small**, a UCLA expert on aging, said in a telephone interview. *"This suggests that just searching on the Internet may train the brain -- that it may keep it active and healthy,"* said Small, whose research appears in the **American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry**.

Many studies have found that challenging mental activities such as puzzles can help preserve brain function, but few have looked at what role the Internet might play.

"This is the first time anyone has simulated an Internet search task while scanning the brain," Small said. His team studied 24 normal volunteers between the ages of 55 and 76. Half were experienced at searching the Internet and the other half had no



Web experience. Otherwise, the groups were similar in age, gender and education.

Both groups were asked to do Internet searches and book reading tasks while their brain activity was monitored.

“We found that in reading the book task, the visual cortex -- the part of the brain that controls reading and language -- was activated,” Small said. *“In doing the Internet search task, there was much greater activity, but only in the Internet-savvy group.”*

He said it appears that people who are familiar with the Internet can engage in a much deeper level of brain activity. *“There is something about Internet searching where we can gauge it to a level that we find challenging.”*

In the aging brain, atrophy and reduced cell activity can take a toll on cognitive function. Activities that keep the brain engaged can preserve brain health and thinking ability. Small thinks learning to do Internet searches may be one of those activities. *“It tells us we probably can teach an old brain new Internet tricks,”* he said.

So, if you have any friends whose brains are aging, bring them along to the next MBUG meeting to learn more about surfing the Internet!

World’s First Battery Fuelled by Air

The world’s first battery fuelled by air, with ten times the storage capacity of conventional cells, has been unveiled. Scientists say the revolutionary **STAIR (St. Andrews Air)** battery could now pave the way for a new generation of electric cars, laptops and mobile phones.

The cells are charged in a traditional way, but as

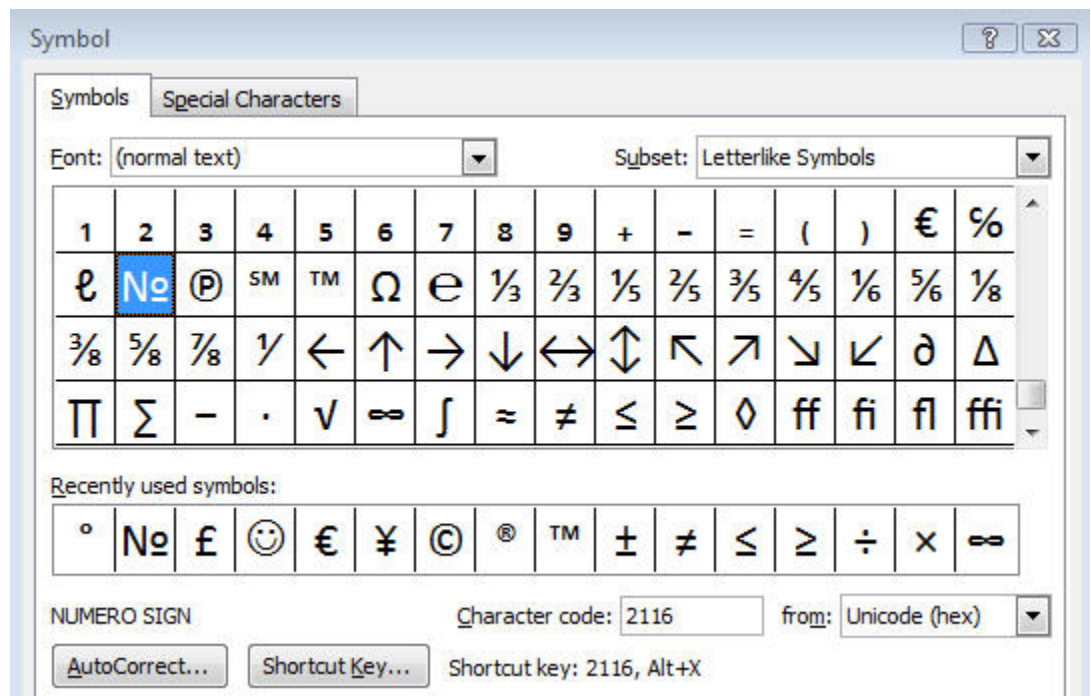
power is used or “discharged,” an open-mesh section of battery draws in oxygen from the surrounding air. By replacing the traditional chemical constituent, lithium cobalt oxide, with porous carbon and oxygen drawn from the air, the cell is much lighter than current batteries. And as the cycle of air helps recharge the battery as it is used, it has a greater storage capacity than other similar-sized cells and can emit power up to ten times longer.

Professor Peter Bruce of the **Chemistry Department at the University of St. Andrews** said: *“The benefits are it’s much smaller and lighter so better for transporting small applications. The size is also crucial for anyone trying to develop electric cars as they want to keep weight down as much as possible. Storage is also important in the development of green power. You need to store electricity because wind and solar power is intermittent.”*

NOVICE CORNER Inserting Symbols

How do you type the “real” number symbol? #, No., No, N°, N_o, N% ?

How about typing a real №? This looks like two characters but is actually a single symbol and a single character in a font called a “numero.” To enter this or any other symbol, you have various options depending on what program you’re using. In **MS Office** click on



the “Insert” drop-down list (in the top bar across the top of your screen), click on “Symbol ...” then search the “symbols” tab folder (illustrated on opposite page), until you find the “№” symbol (hint: it’s near the fractions and arrows).

Click on the symbol you want, then click on “Insert.” Once you insert a symbol, it will be added to your “Recently used symbols” list in the bottom of the symbols tab folder. If you use a particular symbol a lot, and want to type it in faster, you have several choices:

Alt + X Trick

In **MS Word 2003** and **2007** you can type the hexadecimal character number then the “Alt” key and the “X” key. For “Numero” type “2116” then Alt + X.

Creating Shortcuts

By clicking on the “Shortcut Key” button (in “Insert,” “Symbol”), you can create a custom shortcut for that symbol. Some characters have built-in Office shortcuts (shown on the bottom of the “Insert,” “Symbol” dialog box). Click around—you may find something you have never used.

Expand Your Knowledge

In MS Office, go to “Help” and type in the word “symbol.” For example, if you forget how to create a superscript or subscript character, highlight the digit you wish to alter, go to “Format,” and then “Font.” Look under “Effects,” make your choice, and click “OK.”

Memory

Is your computer running slow? If you’re poking along with 128 MB or 256 MB of random access memory, it may be time to up the ante. Installing additional memory may be the easiest task to perform inside the computer box. Buying memory is usually easy and though it was once costly, today it’s an inexpensive way to make a computer run faster.

Some computers require that memory be installed with the highest volume module in bank 0 (computers count from 0). In others, the banks used don’t matter. Check your computer manual. (I always start at 0 with the largest volume module. I put the second-highest volume module in bank 1, and so on.)

Online retailers have “configurators” that allow you

to look up your computer by manufacturer and model number. For example www.Crucial.com and www.Kingston.com, both have the configurators.

But what if you have a custom-built machine? You might not even know the maker of your motherboard. If that’s the case, check **Crucial Technology’s System Scanner**. In seconds, you’ll get a bunch of information about your motherboard, memory, and video card.

Of course, Crucial wants to sell you memory or a video card, but you can use the information there to buy elsewhere if you prefer. Computer stores sell memory, and there are also numerous retailers online.

When you get your new memory product, remember to always handle memory modules by their end edges and avoid touching the gold contacts. After installing memory, boot the computer by clicking on “Start,” “Control Panel,” and double-click “System.” The amount of memory you have installed will be listed on the “General” tab.

Macro Virus

A “Mac” or “Macro virus” is a type of computer virus that spreads to other computers through software programs that utilize macros. For example, **Microsoft Word** and **Microsoft Excel** are two popular and widely used programs that are capable of executing macros.

Macro viruses written for these programs can quickly spread by infecting other related documents each time the document is open. Because these types of files are commonly used and sent through e-mail, a computer network can be quickly infected by these viruses.

“Macros” are created for operations commonly performed on a computer: it is a series of keyboard, mouse actions, and/or other computer steps recorded to be run quickly and easily. Using a macro allows a user quickly to perform an operation with a press of a key or the execution of a command.

Turning On/Off Your Windows Firewall

In **Vista**, go to your Control Panel, double-click “Windows Firewall,” then click “Turn Windows Firewall on or off.” In **XP**, go to your “Control Panel,” “Security Center,” find “Firewall,” then toggle your Firewall on or off. ♦ blacklion@royal.net



MEETING REVIEW

photo: Nelson French, MBUG-PC



Carolyn Lake
Program & Publicity
Chairperson

Social Media with Nicole Gustas

Nicole Gustas, website and marketing manager for the **Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau**, gave us an aptly named presentation at the June general meeting: *The Online Cocktail Party: Social Media from Facebook to YouTube...and Beyond!* She provided an entertaining, convivial, and information-packed trip through the world of Web 2.0 websites, which facilitate user-to-user communication rather than just giving information from search results. The purpose of these sites is to share information, to carry on a conversation, and to engage with whoever has something interesting to say on subjects about which you care.

Social networking sites include **Facebook**, **Twitter*** (much in the political news these days), **MySpace**, **Flickr**, and **LinkedIn**, to name but a few. Nicole provided an excellent handout of sites and procedures, including how to do a Twitter search, Internet abbreviations, and popular blog addresses. If you would like a copy of the handout and/or a PowerPoint slide show of her presentation, send an e-mail to me.

Nicole suggested that Facebook is a good entry point for getting started with social networking, so I decided to try it out. First, I set up a separate e-mail account that I intend to use only for Facebook by creating a new **Gmail** account on **Google**. Then I went to www.facebook.com and filled out the simple "Sign Up" form: name, e-mail, password (for Facebook, NOT my e-mail password), sex, and birthday (the year can be hidden later from public view). So far, so good! Then, I had to fill in two of those distorted passwords used for security and to limit spamming. Reading these is always a challenge!

**(See related article on Twitter starting on page 12.)*

On the next screen, I was encouraged to enter my e-mail password so that Facebook could search my contacts for addresses of "friends" already in Facebook. **Nicole does not recommend this, so I skipped it.** Next, there was some self-explanatory profile information to fill in (can be skipped).

However, at the "View and Edit Your Profile" link, I clicked the link and looked carefully at the four sections on Basic Information, Personal Information, Contact Information, and Education and Work. I could fill out nothing, a little, or a lot, but this is information I would potentially be sharing with others, so I left it blank to be edited later, and it is also possible to restrict who can see it. The Basic Information section has a link to deactivate the account whenever I want to bail out.

The next important step was to click on the "Settings" link at the top of the screen next to my name; I took time to work through all three areas in the drop-down, which are Account Settings, Privacy Settings, and Application Settings, checking the options there and how they are set. I especially looked at "Profile" and "Search" under the Privacy Settings; here is where I could limit who sees my information: "Friends" only, a network group, or "Everyone."

Now I was ready to search for potential "Friends," and this was the fun part. Searches can be by name, e-mail address, high school or college, or business. If I saw someone I knew, or used to know, I could just play the snoop and check up on him or her, or request to be added to that person's "Friends" list, or just send an e-mail to catch up. Before I could add friends, I needed to confirm my account setup by responding to an e-mail that Facebook sent me.

As Nicole pointed out, Facebook can be used to find and share information on an infinite number of subjects with like-minded people. Although it is not difficult to go through the setup, it takes some time. There are many screens, and some caution is needed to maintain the degree of privacy desired. For those who really get into social media, there are the rewards of sharing, but Nicole cautioned us to be prepared to see many photos of other people's cats!

Thanks Nicole, for bringing us up to date in the social e-world! ♦ lakelyn@comcast.net

THE FRUGAL COMPUTERIST

photo: Bill Hyler, MBUG-PC



by Bob
"I Don't Do
Windows"
Stephan

The following articles are from *Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter* and are copyright 1996 - 2009 by **Richard W. Eastman**.

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Adobe Reader 9.1.2

(Vol. 14 No. 24 - June 15, 2009)

A few weeks ago, I wrote about the security vulnerabilities in all versions of **Adobe Acrobat Reader**. That article is still available at blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2009/04/update-time-to-get-rid-of-adobe-reader.html. Acrobat Reader is widely used on **Windows**, **Macintosh**, and **Linux** systems to read and print files that are independent of the operating system. Millions of PDF files are found on the Internet, including many genealogy-related documents.

Now Adobe has released a new version that supposedly fixes the security problems. I downloaded the new version on one of my Macintosh systems and found the installation was simple.

If you use Adobe Reader, I strongly suggest that you upgrade to version 9.1.2 immediately. It is available at www.adobe.com.

How to Read Office 2007's New Formats (Vol. 14 No. 23 - June 8, 2009)

Did anyone ever send you a file in **.DOCX** format? Or one in **.XLSX** format or **.PPTX** format? These are new file formats introduced in **Microsoft Office 2007**. Of course, opening such a file is trivial if you use Office

2007, but most people do not. Most computer users rely on older versions of Microsoft Office or on word processors made by other software companies. Trying to open a **.DOCX** or **.XLSX** or **.PPTX** was impossible for most people. However, you now have options.

All Operating Systems

The easiest and perhaps the best option is to use either the free **Google Documents** program or the free **Zoho Docs** program. Both of these are web-based applications that require no installation at all. Both are available online within a few seconds, and both are easy to use. You can quickly and easily open a **.DOCX** or an **.XLSX** spreadsheet in either of these applications, then select "Save As" to save in **.DOC**, **.XLS**, or some other format you prefer. Once saved in **.DOC** or **.XLS** format, you can then download the file and use it in your normal word processor or spreadsheet program. Google Docs is the more popular service at docs.google.com although I prefer Zoho Docs at www.zoho.com. Zoho Docs has a few more features and capabilities than does Google Docs. Both are available free of charge. Both work well with Windows, Macintosh, Linux, and other modern operating systems.

Next, several competitive word processors and office suites can open the new file formats. The most popular is **OpenOffice**, a free suite of office programs. The newer versions will read and write the new Microsoft formats. Best of all, OpenOffice is free and is available for Windows, Macintosh, and most Linux platforms. OpenOffice is a large download at 100 to 175 megabytes (depending upon which operating system version you need), but it does offer a lot of functionality. In fact, if you are in the market for a new word processing, spreadsheet, or presentation program, this might be a good choice for you. Details may be found at www.OpenOffice.org.

Windows Users Only

I will describe my least favorite solution, but one that is probably the most popular. **Microsoft** provides a free *Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2007 File Formats*. The Compatibility Pack adds the new file formats to **Office 2003**. On the downside, it is a huge download at more than 27 megabytes and provides another bloated piece of software on your Windows hard drive. It also is a solution only for anyone who is using Office 2003.



Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack works with Microsoft Office 2003 installed on **Windows 2000** (Service Pack 4), **Windows XP** (Service Pack 2 or higher), or **Windows Vista**. Anyone using Macintosh, Linux, or an older version of Windows is left out. Any Windows user who uses an older version of Office is also left out. (My favorite version is **Microsoft Office 97**, the last fast, unbloated version.)

The free Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack can be downloaded at www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=941b3470-3ae9-4aee-8f43-c6bb74cd1466&displaylang=en.

Macintosh Users Only

Macintosh users can use OpenOffice as described earlier. However, I suspect that most Macintosh users will prefer to use **NeoOffice**, a modified version of OpenOffice that is tailored for the Macintosh user interface.

I write most all of my newsletter articles, including this one, and most other documents in NeoOffice. NeoOffice is a great word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation program. Newer versions of NeoOffice will read and write the latest Microsoft formats. NeoOffice for Macintosh is available free of charge. For details, go to www.neooffice.org.

Of course, Macintosh users also can purchase Microsoft Office 2008 for Macintosh for prices that range from about \$150 to more than \$400, depending upon which options are included. This is the Macintosh version of Microsoft Office, and the latest version of Microsoft Office for Macintosh does fully support the latest Microsoft file formats.

Summation

You no longer need to be stymied when someone sends you a .DOCS, .XLSX, or a .PPTX file. Probably the fastest method of converting it is to go to Google Docs or to Zoho Docs. However, if you expect to receive a lot of new format files, you might prefer to install one of the other programs described above. Whatever solution you choose, you do have options.

Check for readers comments, questions, or corrections at blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2009/06/how-to-read-office-2007s-new-formats.html.

Another Way to Reduce Spam Messages (Vol. 14 No. 24 - June 15, 2009)

A Trick for Google's Gmail Service

Here's a method of creating unlimited virtual addresses to make it easier to sort mail and identify spam. For example, you can create a separate email address for each account you establish with an online merchant, such as **Amazon** (Amazon.com), **eBay** (eBay.com), or **Ancestry** (Ancestry.com). It even works for my newsletter. As long as you set up a "catchall" address with your e-mail provider, all of these will be forwarded to your main account, and you can use your e-mail client to sort and filter these as you see fit.

You can do this with **Gmail** (Google e-mail), without having to pay to set up your own domain or deal with mail servers. Just add a plus sign (+) and any text you want after your address but prior to the "at" (@) sign. Gmail will ignore anything from the plus sign forward and send the message to your normal Gmail account. You can then use Gmail's filters to sort your mail based on these suffixes.

Let's create a few examples. First, let's assume that your e-mail address is myname@gmail.com. Substitute your real Gmail address in place of "myname@gmail.com". You might be suspicious that some merchants are sharing your e-mail address with others, such as giving your address to spammers.

You can create "special addresses" for each merchant: you might create myname+ancestry@gmail.com and use that address only when signing up for Ancestry services. In a similar manner, you might create myname+facebook@gmail.com when signing up for **Facebook**. You could sign up with Twitter by using an e-mail address of myname+twitter@gmail.com.

That's all there is to it: in front of the "@" sign, simply insert a "+" sign followed by anything you want (no spaces or "funny punctuation"). You will receive the e-mail in your normal Gmail account, as always. However, when you receive a "spammy" message, you will know how they got your e-mail address. You can see that the message was sent to myname+facebook@gmail.com which reveals that the sender obtained your e-mail address from Facebook.

You can also invoke Gmail's filters to create a new rule

to automatically move all future incoming messages sent to that full address to the Trash. Simple ... and it works.

Do you have questions, comments, or corrections to this article? If so, please post your words at blog.eogn.com/eastmans_online_genealogy/2009/06/another-way-to-reduce-spam-messages.html. ♦

*Bob "I don't do Windows" Stephan has over 40 years of computing experience. He welcomes comments and questions that **The Frugal Computerist** can respond to by email to stephan.bob@gmail.com. Bob's home page is at www.bobstephan.net.*

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A TIP FROM JACK: Before subscribing or renewing, check if a publisher has the magazine available anymore (e.g., **PC Magazine** recently went digital, and more may follow suit; also, in the current economy, who knows when a publisher might go bust?). As well, there may be a more current, special price than listed here. ♦

blacklion@royal.net

SIZE Things UP

How to Find a Font that Fits by Joanna Safford

Reprinted with permission from *Smart Computing*.

Visit www.SmartComputing.com/Groups

to learn what they can do for you and MBUG-PC!

Reading information in **Windows Vista** and Internet browsers can become problematic when you have difficulty viewing the fonts, icons, and menus. Both Vista and **Internet Explorer** allow you to change text sizes so you can more easily read windows and Web pages.

Changing Font Sizes

In Vista, you can modify text in the windows you're using, the "Start" menu, the Taskbar, and other programs. Click "Start," "Control Panel," "Appearance and Personalization," and then "Personalization." Click "Adjust Font Size (DPI)" in the "Task" pane. By changing the scale of the dpi, or dots per inch, you can decrease or increase the size of the text. There are two choices: "Default Scale (96 DPI)" and "Larger Scale (129 DPI)." To enlarge text and other items, click "Larger Scale (129 DPI)."

Magnifier

The "Magnifier" tool is ideal for zooming in on particular areas. To activate the Magnifier, click "Start," "Control Panel," "Ease of Access," "Ease of Access Center," and "Start Magnifier." Vista lets you modify the scale, docking position (the location of the magnified region), and tracking (how you want to magnify an area, window, or text) in the Magnifier window.

Altering Icon Sizes

Vista lets you change the size of your icons on your Desktop, Taskbar, and Explorer. To alter the icon sizes on your Desktop, first minimize all open windows. Next, press the "Ctrl" key and use the scroll wheel on your mouse to increase or decrease the size of your icons by scrolling up or down. You can also right-click the Desktop, select "View," and choose from "Large Icons," "Medium Icons," or "Classic (small) Icons."

(continued on page 12)



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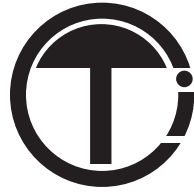
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Retired IBMer

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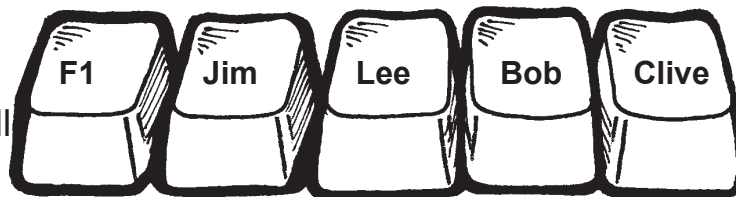
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Computer Help - Just a Click or Call Away with MBUG F1

You know you push the 'F1' button on your computer when you need help. But do you also know that you can call or e-mail **MBUG-PC "F1 for Help"** with your computer questions?



Our expert team of F1 Volunteers will share their experience on software and hardware. To get computer help:

- (1) Contact any of the people listed;
- (2) Ask questions during any MBUG-PC meeting break or Q&A session;
- (3) Leave a message for **Don Slaiter** (831) 655-4443 (voicemail) / or call 657-4154;
- (4) Send a message to all members through the **MBUG-PC Listserv** (mbug@listserv.redshift.com) **in plain text only** (NO html, please!)

■ Jim Anway

STRICTLY Wednesdays & Fridays
from 2pm to 5pm at 625-5618

■ Lee Keely

Prefers e-mail at Lee@leekeely.com
or call 233-6995

■ Bob Stephan

e-mail to stephan.bob@gmail.com
or call only between 9am-5pm
646-1373

■ Clive Sanders

e-mail to simbacli@pacbell.net
or call only between 1pm to 9pm
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Services are free of charge

(with the understanding that MBUG-PC, its Board of Directors, and the F1 Volunteers themselves are in no way responsible or liable for the accuracy or the outcome of any advice or suggestions).

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(continued from page 9)

Quick Launch lets you access programs with a single click. You can enlarge Quick Launch icons by unlocking the Taskbar. Right-click the Taskbar area. If you see a check mark by the words "Lock the Taskbar," uncheck this option.

Next, right-click the area that houses the Quick Launch icons (but don't click the icons themselves), click "View," and then choose "Large Icons" or "Small Icons."

If the icons in Windows Explorer seem too small to you, click the arrow next to "Views" to open the list of organizational and size options. Shift the slider to your preferred icon size: "Small," "Medium," "Large," or "Extra Large." Alternatively, you can click "Views" to decide which style works best for you.

Internet Explorer Text Size

As you're browsing numerous websites, you'll undoubtedly come across pages with overly large or far-too-small fonts and icons. IE includes a quick solution for font changes.

Click the drop-down arrow on the "Page" menu and move your mouse cursor over "Text Size." Select a font size option from the choices listed.

More Web Options

Keep in mind that certain websites provide built-in text size controls. For instance, if you're a Yahoo! member and use MyYahoo!, you can change the font size of the text on your MyYahoo! page. To make this alteration, click "Change Appearance" and "Font Size" and choose "Standard" or "Large." ♦

TWITTER

What You're Doing Right Now by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director, Columnist for The Beaumont TX Examiner, Radio Talk Show Host

This article is used by author's permission for APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author.

Several readers have asked me, "What is Twitter?" following the media reports that senators and congress people were "Twittering" during recent presidential speeches. "Twitter" (the Internet service and the person who does the posting) and "Twittering" or "Tweeting" (the posting of personal activities on Twitter) has become one of the most popular ways of communicating one's activities so that others can follow what is going on in the life of a Twitter.

The service is self-described as, "Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" Twitter.com quotes: "The New York Times calls Twitter '...one of the fastest-growing phenomena on the Internet.'" TIME Magazine says, "Twitter is on its way to becoming the next killer app," and Newsweek noted that "Suddenly, it seems as though all the world's a-twitter."

One may wonder why a Twitter user would post his daily activities as they occur; Twitter explains it this way, "Why? Because even basic updates are meaningful to family members, friends, or colleagues—especially when they're timely."

The Life of a Twitter

I went to www.twitter.com and signed up for a free account. The signup process was very fast and easy, only asking for me to create my user name and a secure password, and enter my e-mail address. After creating my account, I was given the opportunity to upload a photo of myself for display to anyone who views my Twitter page and to customize my page to control the way others view it. I entered my first short message that I was using Twitter, and it appeared on my now personalized webpage.

Since messages and other postings are intended to appear as text messages on cellphones as well as on a webpage, individual postings are limited to 140 characters, the maximum length of a text message (SMS) allowed on most cell phone systems. As I was typing this column, I posted a Twitter (message) that I was typing this column; if anyone were following my activities at this instant, they would receive this news as a text message on their cellphone, as an RSS feed on their computer, and e-mail, or by simply viewing my Twitter webpage.

On my view of my webpage is a text box where I can type my current activity, as long as I keep it under 140 characters, as shown by the counter adjacent to the text box. Postings can be made

or received by computer, cell phone text message, **Blackberry**, or other communications device. Postings can also be received on any newsreader that uses the RSS format news feed.

Twitter makes it very easy to find friends who also Twitter. By clicking on the “Find People” icon, a window is opened that says “Find people” and “Follow them.” To locate friends on Twitter, I chose to allow Twitter to access my e-mail address book to determine if any of my current correspondents were on Twitter. Twitter can access address books on Yahoo, Gmail, AOL, Hotmail, and MSN, but only with your express permission. It will quickly scan the online address book and match any e-mail addresses in the address book against the millions already in the Twitter database.

Twitter states that it does not save the e-mail addresses and passwords and does not send out e-mails to those located without express permission to do so. I also used the “Find on Twitter” feature to enter my last name to see if any of my relatives are on Twitter and add them to my “friends” list. Just as a lark, I entered the names of some of our elected officials and found that several of them do have Twitter accounts. If I want to invite friends by personal e-mail, I can enter their email addresses in the “Invite by E-mail” box, and Twitter will send them an invitation.

If I want to add celebrities to my friend’s list, I can click on “Suggested Uses,” and a list of celebrities who Twitter will be displayed. By checking the box adjacent to their names, we can

exchange Twitter posts and monitor each other’s activities. Some of the more interesting celebrities and online services that can be added to anyone’s Twitter friends list are **Jodrell Bank Observatory, The New York Times, 10 Downing Street, MC Hammer, CNN Breaking News, Al Gore, John McCain, Whole Foods Market, Lance Armstrong, Britney Spears, George Stephanopoulos, Women’s Wear Daily, Nightline TV News Show, Martha Stewart, Penn Jillette, 50 Cent**, and more.

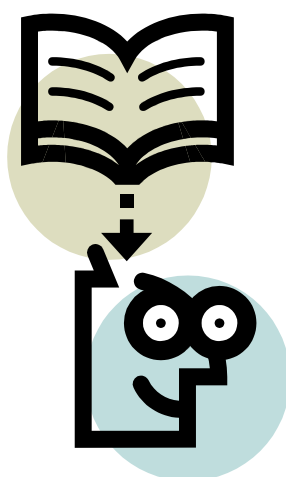
The business and news outlets listed post breaking news or special deals to their Twitter friends. One that I added, being the nascent bargain shopper, is *Woot.com*, which posts one deeply discounted bargain each day in each of its merchandise categories.

Twitter, the company, is

headquartered in San Francisco and was founded in 2006. It is a small company with only a few dozen employees, but it has millions of members. It has a marketing model to generate revenue, but the revenue model has not yet been implemented, leaving all of the posts and web pages currently free of advertising.

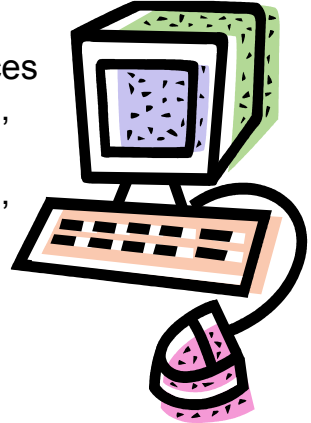
I am not sure how much I will be using Twitter on a regular basis by posting my personal activities and short commentaries, but I will check my page occasionally just to see who is following my activities. The main purpose of Twitter is to answer the question, “*What are you doing?*” For those who want others to be able to know the answer in real time, they can do so with Twitter. ♦

Iwilsker@apcug.net



Write a Hardware, Software, Service, or Website Review

Do you have a computer-related experience, good or bad, to share with MBUG?



Your hardware or software experiences with a favorite or most-hated website, program, OS, piece of peripheral equipment, cellphone, digital camera, or other “toys” are welcome.

Contact **Regina Doyle**,
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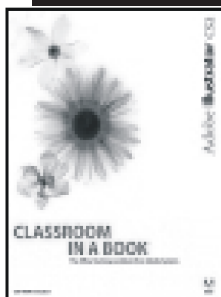
Want to know more?

Contact:

Jack

Lewtschuk

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AUGUST

GET STARTED WITH BLOGGING

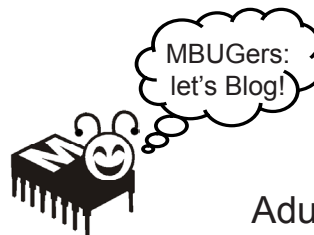
Dan Shafer

Guest Speaker

Friday, 7 August

7:30 to 9:30pm

Adult Education Center, PG



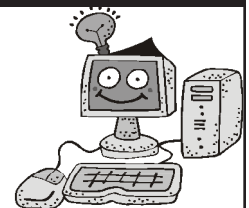
MBUG's newest Guest Speaker, **Dan Shafer**, will give a fast-paced, humor-laced presentation on all things "bloggy." Dan will discuss some why's, wherefore's, and how to's of Internet communication, including: What are blogs? Why are they interesting and useful? How can you start your own blog? What are the best blogging tools available to get started? Where can you learn more about blogging? How can you find and follow favorite bloggers? What are the top tips and pitfalls in blogging?

Dan, founder and President of **Shafer Media** (High-End Web Design, Monterey), has designed and developed for the web since the early 1990's when he was the first Webmaster at *Salon.com*. He spent four years as Master Builder at **CNET.com** and had one of the first blogs on the web. He still hosts a highly trafficked website with nearly daily updates at www.danshafer.com/onemind. He is the author of more than 50 books about computers and high technology. Questions? Call Dan at (831) 531-4679, see his website at www.danshafer.com, or e-mail revolutionary.dan@gmail.com. ♦

*RUN YOUR OWN SIG!

2nd and 4th Wednesdays are available for **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)**.

See calendar facing page.




Present topics, conduct discussions, or introduce speakers of your choice and interest in the format of your choice: lectures, demonstrations, tutorials, or discussion of general computer-related topics.

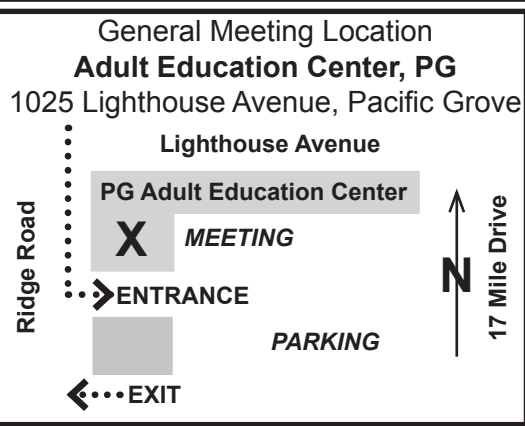
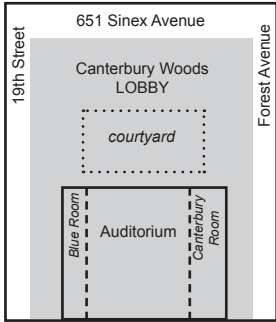
Contact **Jack Lewtschuk**, blacklion@royal.net or **Carolyn Lake**, lakelyn@comcast.net.

We'd love to hear from you! ♦

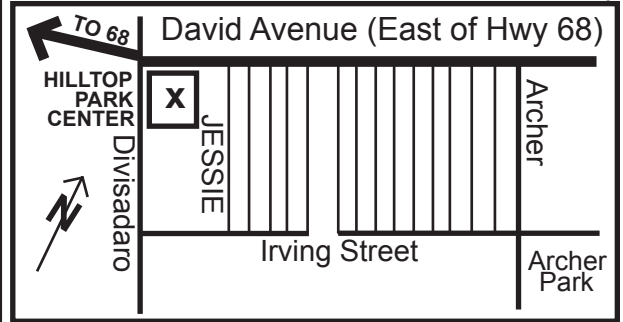
MBUG-PC Calendar of Events - JULY 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		JUNE 30 DIRECTORS MEETING Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm Everyone Welcome!	1	2	3 "REDISKME" Adult Ed Center PG 7:30 to 9:30pm Colin Barrett-Fox	
5	6	7	8 This date is available for a SIG * at CBW 7-9pm	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 This date is available for a SIG * at CBW 7-9pm	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Canterbury Woods
 651 Sinex Avenue
 Pacific Grove



Hilltop Park Center
 871 Jessie Street
 Monterey



Tentative Calendar August 2009 Check the August Newsletter for Final Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 DIRECTORS MEETING Canterbury Woods PG Begins at 7pm Everyone Welcome!	5	6	7 "Get Started with Blogging" Adult Ed Center PG 7:30 to 9:30pm Dan Shafer	8
9	10	11	12 This date is available for a SIG * at CBW 7-9pm	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 This date is available for a SIG * at CBW 7-9pm	27	28	29
30	31					



mbug-pc newsletter

Vol 28, No 7, July 2009

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