

Mother Board

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This Month At NOPC

“Introduction to Linux”

by

Joey Kelly

&

“Louisiana Tech- nology Council”

by

Mark Lewis

Inside this issue:

*“In the Beginning” -
Part One* 2

*“In the Beginning”-
Part One Cont'd* 3
Reduce Boot Time
Shorten the Start Menu
Delay

Tips from the Internet 4

MS Word Time Savers 5

Computer Hints 6

NOPCC Directory 7-8

Calendar of Events

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

President's Message

Hello everyone, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a happy and safe new year. Knowing that computers and peripherals are fairly popular gift ideas during the holiday season, there are probably a few more people around the area that could benefit from an NOPC membership! (Referrals, referrals....)

The NOPC Board has been working hard behind the scenes to try to make this group as good as it can possibly be. There are some nice presentations lined up for the coming year and the SIGs are progressing nicely as well. (More referrals..)

On a personal note, I would like to announce that this January's meeting will mark my 10 year anniversary with the club. It was in January 1994 that I first started coming to the NOPC meetings, back when they were held at my alma mater, De La Salle High School in New Orleans. Obviously the computing industry as a whole has undergone several changes through the past ten years, as have the faces of the dedicated volunteers running the club. One thing that hasn't is the overall NOPC mission - to help each other get the most out of our system (and in many cases systems). It's been a fun ride, and I hope to continue on it as long as humanly possible.

I would also like to mention that the toner recycling effort is still running, although the toners being brought in have nose dived in the past few months. Let's try to increase the number brought in so NOPC can raise some \$\$! As always, inks can be either be brought to a meeting or mailed in using the individual bag mailers.

Ray Paternostro

January Meeting

Our presentation for January will be "An Introduction to Linux". Mr. Joey Kelly will give an overview of the history and philosophy of Linux, how it differs from and resembles Windows, what its strengths and weaknesses are, etc.. He will also demonstrate several Linux distributions, along with various applications (web, email, games, etc.). Mr. Kelly will have several CDs to pass out, should anyone desire to try out Linux.

Mr. Joey Kelly is a Linux consultant located in Metairie. He has been administering Linux servers for four years, and has recently founded KellyNet Computer Services, a Linux company specializing in integrating Linux into the Windows business network. His favorite flavor of Linux is the SuSE Linux distribution, which he has been using on his primary desktop PC for two years.

In addition to Mr. Kelly, we will get an brief update on the Louisiana Technology Council and technology developments in New Orleans. Mr. Mark S. Lewis, the President of the Council, will be the speaker. Come join us!

In the Beginning—Part One

by

Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.
Vice-president of N.O.P.C.C., Inc.

“In the Beginning” is a new article written for the new computer user, especially for those over fifty years in age just learning about computers. A growing number of senior citizens are starting to use computers or are trying to learn how to use a computer more effectively. A large number of these people are having a hard time adjusting from the days when they used a typewriter or just hand wrote their information. Some are intimidated, others are afraid of change; some think they will embarrass themselves, while others just do not want to get out of their comfort zone. Well this article is for you. We will try to explain various aspects of computer technology in a way that the new user, especially the senior citizen, will find easier to handle and manage. Please write the author with ideas and areas you would like information.

If you are like most people, you brought a computer or someone gave you one, and then you found a way for making the computer do something useful. There are better ways for a new user to begin working with a computer. For those who have not yet received their computer or have not put in their order, you are in a little better shape than most. Before getting a computer, you need to know what you want the computer to do for you. The best way you can do this is by getting a pen and paper and write down a dream list of the things you would like a computer to do for you. Go all out, put down your fantasies, beliefs, wild ideas, even some crazy ideas you may have thought would be nice for a computer to do. All this little exercise will do is help you establish some goals or directions that you will use toward making a decision about how you will use your computer. If you can think it than put that thought down, no matter how ridicules others may think. Remember, this is your wish list not theirs.

Once you have made this list than put it into some type of order. You want to form three columns that will indicate what things are very important to you and that you feel you must have, second, those things that are nice and you would like to have, and third, if they are available, things you wish for but could do without. Now take your wish list and start putting each of the items you previously wrote under a column that you feel best fits you want or need. When completed, go back to the first column and list the ten most important things from one to ten in that column that you need or want done. Now you are ready to find out if a computer can do what you want

done.

This next part will take some time and energy. Most people will not do this part or take enough time to find out that their expectations about computers or computer usage may be flawed. Here you will take you list and go to various stores, talk to friends, read books and other written information to find out what software will do the things you want done on your list. As long as you can find software that will do the ten most important things you wrote down you will have meet with success. This process may take hours, days, weeks, even months to accomplish. It is important that you match the specific software that will meet your needs and desires. You can stop when your first column of items has matching software for accomplishing what you want to do.

Understand, this little exercise is two fold. You are trying to find out if a computer can do what you want it to do and you are finding out realistic and unrealistic expectations about what a computer does. If you cannot find any software that meets at least the ten most important things you have written down on your list than maybe you should think long and hard about what you want a computer to do for you. Maybe you need to change some of your expectations about what you want for your top ten items list or maybe rethink what you want a computer to do for you altogether. Computers and software can do many things but a computer cannot do everything. If you need something done and there is no software for it, you may need to have someone write the program to do what you want or write the program yourself. As you may have already known, the software tells the computer what to do and the software gets the computer to do the work.

Once you know the software you will use, you need to find a computer that will run the software you have found. Please note, do not buy the software at this time. This will come later once the computer has been determined that will run the software. All you want to do is find a computer that will run the software you found that does the things you want done. There are many types of machines such as PC's (or IBM compatibles), apple or Macintosh compatible machines, large UNIX type of computers, and many more. This part should be easy to accomplish because you now know the software and it

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

will tell you what machine it will work on—well, not quite true. We will cover this information later.

After you decide upon the machine you will buy, it is time you decide how much you will pay for this computer system. Note, it was said computer system not just a computer. If you want the most use out of a computer, you will need more than a big electronics filled box, you will need peripherals that will make it easier for working with and retrieving information on the computer. That big box is the computer itself; you will need a monitor so you can see your information in the computer as you work. You will also need a printer for printing out a hard copy of your work. The mouse helps make working on the computer a little easier and a keyboard allows you to input the information into the computer. There are other devices for doing other interesting things with a computer but we will cover only the very basic needs at this time. If you do not have all of the aforementioned items working with a computer will be very hard if not impossible. The cost for all of this hardware (the items just mentioned) can be kept to a minimum. The important idea now is to decide what you are willing to pay for your system. Put this amount on paper. Do not just pull a figure out of the air; think hard about what is the most you will pay to get the things you listed earlier done in your life. A realistic budget will start from about \$400.00 and will go up from there.

Next, you will need a plan for a workspace where you will use your computer. Do you have enough space to keep the computer out in the open? Will you have to take the computer out and put it up after you use it each time? Will need to move about with your computer system because it cannot stay in the same place all the time? All of these questions need asking because it will determine how much you will use your computer and if you need to decide upon adding some furniture to your budget. It is very important for having a workable workspace for getting your work done when using a computer. The better or more at ease you are with working on the computer the more you get and done and the better you feel about your computer.

What was just covered is the proper way for acquiring a computer and for getting the most out of using your computer. This, of course, is not the only way for buying your computer, and depending upon your circumstances may not necessarily be the best way. Certainly, it will eliminate your having a computer that becomes a dust collector or a big paperweight that one slightly or never uses. There is still one problem and that is if you are truly new to computers you still will have a problem in

buying the right computer for your needs. This is because you still do not have some basic concepts about the computer and its uses.

Are you surprised to learn that maybe you still, after going through the foregoing exercise, will not have enough information to buy a computer? Not to worry, the reason for this and other articles is to help you become computer literate. You become computer literate when you have a certain expertise about computers, that is, you can understand what a computer is and does as well as how to make the best uses of a computer. In other words, you make the computer become a tool that makes you life easier to live and adds more enjoyment to living.

Editor: "In the Beginning" will be continued in the February, 2004 Motherboard

Reduce Boot Time

This piece of advice can speed up Windows more than any other tip. When Windows starts, it looks in several places for programs to run immediately on start-up. Some of these programs might run in the foreground, but most sit quietly in the background and eat up system resources.

Windows 98 SE and later versions have a feature called the System Configuration Utility. Type msconfig in the Run dialog or the Address bar (see "Customization" in this story) to invoke the System Configuration Utility, then choose the Startup tab. Here, you can disable items you think are unnecessary, such as media player launchers.

If you disable only nonessential programs, the only effect should be a speedier start-up. And because you're not removing these applications from the start-up—you're just disabling them—you can easily re-enable them later.

Another easy way to deal with unwanted start-up items is to use the PC Magazine utility Startup Cop, which you can download from www.pcmag.com/utilities.

Shorten the Start Menu Delay

If you have ever been annoyed by the built-in delay before a menu displays in Windows, you can eliminate it. To do this, open Regedit and navigate to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\ControlPanel\Desktop\MenuShowDelay. The default value is 400 (milliseconds); lowering the value will speed up how quickly menus display. This change will take effect after you reboot.

Tips from the Internet

Compiled by Ron Ingraham, Space Coast PC Users Group

Can you tell me what the gibberish at the end of a spam message means? Is this code or just random filler to fool a filter?

We have found that random text added to the subject line (for example, "Get Rich Quick!!!! xuyrr") is more common. There are two possible purposes for this random text: It could be an internal marker for the spammer; if anybody responds to such a message, the specific add-on text might identify a particular mailing or campaign.

More likely, the purpose is to foil antis spam tools that block specific message subjects. Spammers also attempt to evade this type of blocking by misspelling words or inserting punctuation, as in "Re'grow your H'air" or "Get out of D\$E\$B\$T," both of which are actual subject lines from messages sent to the User to User mailbox (pctech@ziffdavis.com).

Gibberish within a message may have the same purpose. Smart spam-blocking utilities attempt to detect spam based on patterns of text in the message. If a substantial chunk of the message is gibberish that varies each time it is sent, the spam blocker may have a harder time identifying the message as junk. Of course, the next generation of spam blockers may include a gibberish detector!

How to Find Anything Online

Searching through the petabytes of fact, fiction, and rumor that make up the World Wide Web is no mean task. It's like wandering through a library without a filing system or a card catalog. Portals like Yahoo! evolved as manageable entry points to this ever-growing repository. But even the best portals aren't doors into a virtual version of a library. They're doors out, from the safety of your information-barren home or office into a wilderness of pages, files, databases, and sites—too much ground for anyone to cover. That's where search engines come in.

While each search engine is different, they are more closely related than ever. Classic search engines spider, or crawl, the Web, indexing and categorizing the data on each page they have access to or the metadata that describes it. Frequent crawling is important, given that the Web is growing fast. And the crawlers are getting smarter. Many can find and index at least some of the PDFs and other content types that make up much of the "Invisible Web," unseen by spiders' (and search engine users') eyes.

Given the vast amounts of information on any given subject, simply indexing is not enough. A search engine has to weight the pages so that the most commonly useful links come up first. There are several ways to do this, but the best-known is based on the popularity of each site, as represented by the number of other sites that link to it. This is a simple way of describing the techniques pioneered by Google and adopted in one form or another by many competitors.

While some detractors point out that this strategy may ultimately drive popularity instead of following it, Google's success is undeniable: It's a household name. Who among us hasn't Googled?

Yet even Google has a long way to go. The latest challenge is the Deep Web, which represents data that can't be crawled, not because it's in pages that the spiders can't recognize, like PDFs, but because it doesn't exist in static page form (except as answers to database queries), or because it's hidden behind authentication screens. And this information is often the cream of the crop: magazines, books, peer-reviewed journals. To get to it, you need to research the database content yourself and then pay a hefty fee or, ironically, you need to go to a modern library (they're not so quaint and irrelevant, after all) that has access and, ideally, a reference librarian to help you get started.

Lose XP "New Program" Pop-Ups

Whenever I install a new program under Windows XP, I get an annoying little yellow message when I click the Start button. Is there any way to get rid of it?

Right-click on the taskbar, choose Properties, and click on the Start Menu tab. Make sure that Start menu is selected rather than Classic Start menu; click on the Customize button next to Start menu. Click on the Advanced tab, locate the box near the top titled Highlight newly installed programs, and uncheck it. Click on OK to accept the change.

For those who like to know such things, this feature is controlled by a value in the Registry, specifically the DWORD value Start_NotifyNewApps in the key HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Advanced. If it's set to 1 (the default), new applications will be highlighted in the Programs menu and the message balloon will appear. If it's set to 0, neither will happen.

MS Word Time-Savers

These 10 MS Word commands allow you to create documents quickly.

By Greg Harvey

Greg Harvey, the author of Microsoft Office 2000 9 in 1 For Dummies Desk Reference, shares his top 10 MS Word time-savers.

1. Restore a document in one step with multiple levels of undo.

Word keeps track of your actions each time you make editing changes to your document. You can restore a document to all or part of its original state after making a series of editing changes all in one step.

Click the pop-up menu on the Undo button (located on the Standard toolbar), then highlight all the actions you want to undo. When you click the last action in the list you want undone, Word restores to document to the state it was prior to undoing the selected actions.

2. Use the Insert key to paste text from the clipboard.
Set up the Insert key so that it pastes text or graphics saved in the Clipboard into your document.

1. Choose Tools, Options.
2. Click the Edit tab.
3. Choose Use the INS key for paste.
4. Choose OK.

3. Right-click a word to find a synonym for it.

You can use the Thesaurus, or you can simply press Shift+F7 when the cursor is in a word. You can quickly select a synonym with these steps.

1. Right-click the word to open the shortcut menu.
2. Choose Synonyms at the bottom of the menu.
3. Click the synonym you want used in the cascading menu.

4. Change the case of selected text. Word offers you a wide selection of change-case options. This makes it easy to change the capitalization of lots of text in one action.

1. Select all of the text in the paragraph or title to be changed.
2. Choose Format, Change Case (Alt+E).
3. Select the appropriate radio button.

5. Use the AutoCorrect feature to have Word automatically correct your misspellings.

1. Choose Tools, AutoCorrect.
2. With the AutoCorrect tab selected in the Auto Correct dialog box, type a word you often misspell (such as perceive) in the Replace text box.
3. Type the word the way it's supposed to be spelled (perceive) in the With text box.

4. Choose Add, then repeat the steps or choose OK.
After adding a word in this manner to the Auto-Correct dialog box, Word will automatically correct that misspelling of it anytime you incorrectly enter it in any document.

6. Inserting text or graphics quickly as AutoText entries.

You can use the AutoText feature to insert stock phrases (Biloby, Biloby, Sax, and Tipton) or stock graphics (such as the company logo).

1. Select the text or graphic to be automatically entered.
2. Press Alt+F3 to open the Create AutoText entry.
3. Type the abbreviation (such as corplogo) you will use to insert the text or graphic (don't use spaces) and choose OK.

To insert the stock text or graphic in the document, type in its abbreviation, then press F3.

7. Using Document Map view to navigate a long document.

The Document Map feature makes it easy to move to a particular place in a long document that has been formatted with headings.

1. Choose View, then Document Map or click the Document Map button on the Standard toolbar to open the Document Map pane to the left.
2. The Document Map pane shows all the headings that you have entered in the document. To move the cursor directly to that place in the document, click the heading in the Document Map pane.
3. To compress the list of headings, right-click somewhere in the Document Map pane, then select highest level of the heading that you want shown in the pop-up menu.

After moving the cursor to the desired heading in the document, click the Document Map button to close its pane and begin editing.

8. Use the Format Painter to format document text on-the-fly.

You can use the Format Painter button to copy the formatting from any paragraph or heading to the rest of the document.

1. Format the paragraph text or heading as needed.
2. Click the cursor somewhere in the formatted text.

(Continued on page 6)

Computer Hints

(Continued from page 5)

3. Double-click the Format Painter button on the Format toolbar.
4. Drag the Format Painter cursor through the paragraph or title you want formatted in the same manner.
5. Paint all the paragraphs or heading text that you want formatted with the Format Painter button.
6. When you've finished painting, click the Format Painter button to turn this feature off.
9. Insert AutoText into document headers and footers. In Word 2000, you can create headers and footers that use stock text (such as page numbers, author's name, filename, created on date, or the date last printed) in a flash by using the Insert AutoText feature.
 1. Choose View, then Header and Footer to open Header area and display the Header and Footer toolbar.
 2. Position the cursor at the place in the header where you want the stock text inserted.
 3. Click the pop-up arrow on the Insert AutoText button, then select the type of text to insert (such as page for page number).
 4. Press the down arrow if you want to insert text in the document header.
 5. Repeat step three.
 6. Choose the close button when you've finished adding text to the document header and/or footer.
10. Email current document.

You can email a copy of the current document you're editing without having to open your email program.

 1. Click the Email button on the Standard toolbar.
 2. Enter the recipient's email address in the To text box (or click the To button and select the address

from you address book).

3. Click the Send a Copy button.

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Submitted by Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.

Get Hardware Details from the Device Manager

When you run into a problem with Windows or an application, support technicians will likely ask for complex details about your hardware configuration. You can get all the information they request without ever opening your computer's case. Right-click on My Computer and choose Properties, or launch the System applet from the Control Panel. Depending on your Windows version, either click on the Device Manager tab or click on the Device Manager button on the Hardware tab. You'll find an exhaustive list of your system's hardware, organized by type. Double-click on a device for its detailed information and, on some platforms, a Troubleshooter option.

Help Word users find and open your files

Make WordPerfect documents coexist peacefully in a Microsoft Office world by saving them with the filename extension .doc. This lets Word open them automatically and display them in its File | Open dialog box. When you save a file, simply add .doc at the end of the filename. When your coworkers double-click on the file, Word will open it and transparently convert it into Word format.

If you don't have Word on your system, you can assign the .doc extension to WordPerfect so that all the files you create on your system will have that extension and will open automatically in WordPerfect. Use Tools | Settings, go to the Files tab, make sure that Use default extension on open and save is checked, and replace .wpd with .doc as the extension to use.

Source: The Space Coast Journal, December 2003



NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ray Paternostr	president@nopc.org	737-9099
Vice President	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	vp@nopc.org	246-7759
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Director At Large	Clarke Kissel	director2@nopc.org	828-5678
Director At Large	Albert Fox	director3@nopc.org	269-5786

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Publicity	Jackie Elliott	publicity@nopc.org	455-6203
Webmaster	Manuel Dennis III	webmaster@nopc.org	835-7656

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VBLG	Manuel Dennis III	vblg-owner@listbot.com	835-7656
Web Development	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	web@nopc.org	246-7759
WADSIG	Manuel Dennis III	wadsig-owner@listbot.com	835-7656
Web Lab	Sherrie K. Henne		913-5638

Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	887-5746
NOPCC BBS	Bulletin Board System for members. The original way to PC communicate.	486-7249
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	www.nopc.org



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January 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Happy New Year!	2	3 <i>Living w/Home Electronics</i> WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
4 <i>Computer Solutions 11a-12p</i> WSMB 1350 AM	5 VBLG SIG 6:30p-8:30p McCann's	6	7 NOPC Mtg 6:30p-9:00p J.D.Meisler	8 Web Lab 6:30p-8:30 McCann's	9	10 <i>Living w/Home Electronics</i> WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
11 <i>Computer Solutions 11a-12p</i> WSMB 1350 AM	12 VBLG SIG 6:30p-8:30p McCann's	13	14 NOPC BOD 6:30p-8:30p McCann's	15 New Users SIG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	16	17 <i>Living w/Home Electronics</i> WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
18 <i>Computer Solutions 11a-12p</i> WSMB 1350 AM	19 VBLG SIG 6:30p-8:30p McCann's	20	21	22 INTERNET SIG @ McCann's 7:00p-9:00p	23	24 <i>Living w/Home Electronics</i> WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
25 <i>Computer Solutions 11a-12p</i> WSMB 1350 AM	26 VBLG SIG 6:30p-8:30p McCann's	27	28 Digital Media SIG @ McCann's 7p-9	29	30	31 <i>Living w/Home Electronics</i> WTIX 690AM 10a-11a

The New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC) is a private non-profit organization chartered under the State of Louisiana. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for discussion and education of the membership in the use and application of PCs, peripheral equipment and software. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the NOPCC, its members or its officers. The club does not verify for accuracy the articles in this newsletter and leaves verification of accuracy to its readers. Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated as long as credit is given to the author (s) and the NOPCC. Annual Dues Schedule: Regular Member, \$40/yr.; Family Membership, \$60/yr.; and Students (under 21), \$20/yr. Meetings are held at 6:30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month at J.D. Meisler Jr. High School on Cleary Avenue in Metairie, Louisiana.

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