This Month At NOPC

Defense Integrated Military Human Resources Systems (DIMHRS)
by
Mr. U. Jin Her

Inside this issue:

Club Notes

**Ray Paternostro—
President, NOPC:**
The NOPC Board of Directors has been working for the past few months on revising the NOPC Charter. This is a legal document that the club is required to maintain in order to recognized by the State of Louisiana as a non-profit organization.

The revisions made to the Charter were done mainly to clean up excess wording and more clearly define the scope of operation of the club. The biggest change was to make the Charter agree with the NOPC By-Laws for the terms of the NOPC Officers.

This document will be made available to the members by the June general membership meeting and will be voted on at the July meeting.

Reminder
Raffle for the MS Works Suite 2004

The raffle for a new sealed copy of MS Works Suite 2004 has been extended until the June meeting. This contains Word XP and Picture-It 2004 among other programs, and is a nice starter program for most home users that need compatibility with Word and don't have access to an Office version. Tickets are $1 each, or six for $5.

Tech Links:
Have been browsing the following links

This Month's Speaker

Mr. U Jin Her will give us an overview of the Defense Integrated Military Human Resources Systems (DIMHRS) project currently underway here in New Orleans. All personnel and pay processes for every Soldier, Sailor, Airman and Marine will be handled by this system. This includes all Active, Guard and Reserve personnel. Check out their website for more information. http://www.dimhrs.mil/index.html

The estimated cost of this computer software project is $280 million dollars.

In May 2002, Mr. Her joined Northrop Grumman as the Chief Architect. Prior to joining Northrop Grumman, he was the Director of Engineering for VeriSign, Inc. where he restructured their order, fulfillment and billing applications. Before that, he was the Vice President and Chief Information Officer for eLink Communications bringing expertise in systems integration and development.

Mr. Her Jin graduated from the University of Virginia with a B.S. in Systems Engineering and Operational Research.

(Continued from page 1)

over the past few weeks, and there is
a treasure trove of good tech information contained on these sites. Each one contains a message base forum with many different topics, is moderated, and requires a free login account in order to post messages (browsing is unlimited):

http://www.computerhope.com
http://computing.net
http://cybertechhelp.com
http://www.help2go.com
http://helponthe.net
http://pcnineoneone.com
http://tek-tips.com
http://theeldergeek.com
http://pcguide.com
http://www.thetechguide.com

This is by no means a complete list as there are several other sites on the Internet that overlap these to some degree and can be found by reading the different message topics contained on these and by using the search engines. That said, if you (or friends/family) are having any sort of tech problem with Windows or other aspects of the PC platform, these are great places to start.

Word of the Day:

TODAY'S WORD: Minix
Read our complete definition with hyperlinks at
http://searchenterpriselinux.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid39_gci884703,00.html?track=NL-34&ad=483392
Minux (sometimes spelled MINIX) is an open source operating system with a user interface similar to that of Unix. Professor Andrew Tanenbaum, of Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, created Minix as an educational tool. To this end, Minix was developed with a small and well-documented microkernel-based design. The complete source code was made available with the system.

To learn the inner workings of Unix-like systems, students can run Minix on their personal computers. According to reports, even inexperienced students can acquire a good knowledge of the whole system within the few months of study typical of training courses.

Submitteed by Tom Watkins

California Lawsuit

Calif. Bill Requires 'Spyware' Notice
Published: 5/18/04
SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) - Consumers would have to be told before information-reporting "spyware" was added to their computers if legislation approved Tuesday by the California Senate becomes law. The measure by

Sen. Kevin Murray, a Democrat, was sent to the Assembly by a 36-2 vote.

Murray said consumers can unknowingly add the spyware to their computer systems when they buy software.

"These programs track what Web sites you visit, may steal your passwords, access your financial information, log your keystrokes, bombard you with pop-ups, track your purchases and remotely report your activity and personal information to a third party," Murray said

Republican Sen. Jim Battin said the spyware problem needed to be addressed on a national level, but action by California lawmakers would be a "good start."

Submitted by Tom Watkins

Hex, Binary, Decimal Numbers
By Charlie Paschal, PPCC

Ever wonder what people are talking about when they mention binary and "hex" numbers? It's the way computers "talk" and the language they understand. Our system, of course, is the decimal number system, which is 10 base. Binary is 2-based, while hex is 16-based. The binary is where you get the "1s and 0s" from because that's the only numbers used in that system.

For example, the number 11 in decimal is 1011 in binary and B in hex. Since 1s and 0s can easily show numbers from 0-9, hex is used to represent numbers from 10 through 16, meaning at A is 10, B is 11, etc. Because binary numbers can get complex, hex is used because it makes it shorter to write and it's easier for humans to remember.

If you ever want to do some conversions yourself without having to learn the mathematical way of doing it, use Windows calculator. Go to View and select scientific. Plug in a number in decimal and then click on Hex or Bin to see the number in that system. For example, 999 is 3E7 in hex. In binary it's 1111100111. See? You can remember 3E7 but it's not as easy to remember the binary version.

Distributed by APCUG
(Association of Personal Computer User Groups)

Deadly Mouse Virus
www.fudge.cz

Writing Viruses

A tactic in the multifaceted battle for computer supremacy
By: Jason Netherton

So you head off to cyberspace for the morning surf to your email account. Like most of America, as you pass through MSN or Yahoo for your mail, you can't help but notice the article on another friendly virus that has destroyed more infrastructures. Before opening your e-mail where you will cautiously look for the Smoocher-B virus or the Casino of Porn Trojan, you may have glanced over the article on the new virus. Usually the article is written in this format: virus destroyed computers at Boeing, 7 large banks, and in half of Europe; virus affects the Windows platform you use; virus originated in the Philippines; Microsoft will have an update available for the virus next month; and the FBI is looking for those responsible for writing the virus.

Nothing new here, but have you ever wondered why people write viruses? Well, you could take the easy way out and think the data-crackers are showing off to their community again (remember hackers are good guys, crackers are bad). You may think they want your ID, credit card, or personal surfing information (a little egotistical for a small potato isn't it?). And you may even think it is all part of a corporate conspiracy to keep your computer on the fritz (just because you are paranoid does not mean they are not out to get you). But I offer an alternative to these theories, one that has been gaining wider acceptance not only in law enforcement but in the general populous as well. That these attacks are one strategy employed in the larger effort to stop the world from using poorly written, copyrighted software. These consolidated and systematic virus attacks are conducted by the self appointed soldiers of the open source community. Primary Target: Microsoft.

You see, in a quick and dirty rundown of software you have two types: copyrighted software, which is programmed by a corporate team and quickly released for profit; and then you have open source software, where code is published, tested and rewritten by many, then finally released darn near error free. No copyrights are attached to the open source software because it is the intellectual property of many, not funded by one corporation. For copyrighted software, such as Windows, it is illegal (with the exception in a few countries) to reverse engineer, hack, and crack this protected code. In this main difference of their respective engineering, copy-righted software holds its greatest liability: Untested and unworked code that is riddled with bugs, security loopholes, and basic coding.

Many of those who are advanced enough in computing, security systems, and programming find the "push to profit" concept in sticking the world with buggy, insecure systems as irresponsible. Many data-crackers find it unacceptable and have decided to wage a kind of war against the use of this software. And in this warfare these self appointed teams exploit the holes necessary to destroy and render useless the operating systems and software.

Microsoft has setup security teams designed to react to the damage done by the exposed corrupt code and the malicious code designed to destroy their systems. This reactive coding (as opposed to the proactive coding done by the open source community) is what keeps the crackers easily winning this war. How does one advocate that this cracking and virus proliferation is winning the war? Well, here is one example: Europe just changed over to Linux. Not without a corporate fight though, Microsoft had an emergency conference in Rome to try and win them back over. And why will this change over remain. Well for one reason. Microsoft just cannot provide the solid code and the security required by the planet's ever growing critical systems. Our lives and welfare depend more on these computer systems every day. It is why I never ran a Command and Control System or a Missile System on Microsoft. Could you imagine launching a Tomahawk on a Windows computer? It would give new meaning to the Blue Screen of Death.

So next time you see an article on a Virus or a Trojan destroying computers, servers, and corporate profits, remember there is a reason this article is placed under our other war in the Middle East. The self appointed soldiers of Open Source computing are waging a bitter war to destroy non-secure computing systems. Your PC may be the next casualty.

The author of this article is a former US Navy IT member and a new member to the NOPCC and New Orleans Area. Please send any questions or comments to jnethe8@hotmail.com

Editor: The New Orleans Personal Computer Club does not condone the writing of malicious virus code. The views presented here are the author's and are presented as a "think piece". We welcome Mr. Netherton to New Orleans and to the club membership. He promises to keep us thinking with more provocative articles in the coming months.

For beginners only -- Using Internet to increase buying power

By Charlie Paschal,
Editor/Publisher,
Palmetto Personal Computer Club, Columbia, SC
Columnist, The (Columbia) State newspaper, SC

Buying on the Internet may intimidate some (not me) but the Internet can serve other purposes, such as a way to check prices against what you can find locally or in other nearby stores.

Ten years ago, I can't tell you the times I would buy something and then two weeks later find it for $50 or $100 less at another store in another city or town. After the normal fussing, I'd blame myself for bad judgment, although in those days I had no way of avoiding it.

Now, though, with the Internet, there is no excuse.

First, a couple of points to remember about the Internet:

• Items, in most cases, will be less expensive on the Internet.

• Shipping costs must always be added into the cost of an item.

• In some cases, you might save on taxes, but that depends on several factors.

• Chain stores, such as Wal-Mart, Target or Best Buy, usually charge the same for an item, even if it's in another state.

Some items might be refurbished or reconditioned, so make sure that the item you're looking at is actually new because used items will be priced less.

There's several ways to check the price of an item, but you must do some homework first.

• Get the item's name and model.

• If you can't get all that information, get as much as you can.

• Plug that information into a search engine site, such as www.google.com.

To get "real people" reviews of products, type that same name into www.deja.com.

Another way to use the Internet is to check the features of different models or the features of a model you're thinking about buying. This can reap dividends because while doing this research, you may find that the model you're buying might not have the features you really need.

Let's take digital cameras, for example. While using a broad search at google using only the term digital camera might bring up thousands of hits, it might turn up other digital cameras that have additional features you haven't thought about while shopping. As an example, you probably will find a site that lists digital cameras, feature-by-feature, giving you a better idea of what you need to look for in a camera.

Among those hits, too, could be information that can save you money in other ways. A good example is a modem, a device that hooks up to a telephone line to connect to the Internet. Most computers come with what's called a "soft modem," meaning it uses the computer's computing power rather than its own.

Although this might sound good, it's actually bad because these modems are cheap, cheap, cheap. If you're on a poor telephone line, you might want to get a "real" hardware modem so you can have a better chance at higher-speed connections. By reading the information you get on modems, you could learn that a hardware modem is more expensive but in the long run, will offer considerably better performance.

Sometimes buying higher quality pays dividends.

This also brings up another way you can use the Internet besides buying goods: reviews.

We all know the old saying about everyone having an opinion but on the Internet you can always find opinions and reviews of products. Despite everyone thinking the Internet is all about technology, the truth is that you can find information about every product known to man, including cars, furniture -- you name it.

The two sites mentioned above can help you find reviews of nearly every product or real time opinions about products. Remember, though, that you must weigh the opinions, reading several before making up your mind. There will be some fervent opinions on both sides.

To produce some of these, just type in the name of the product and the word review afterwards. For example, type in Ford Taurus reviews and hit search. Do this in each of the search engines to get not only reviews written by professionals but reviews written by "real people" who don't normally write for a living. Quite often, the real people reviews give you more information than the professional ones.

You don't always have to buy on the Internet to reap its benefits. Browse, search, research; all of them can make your life more interesting -- and safer.

The Music Wars

By Wayne Steen,
Q BITS contributing editor,
Quad-Cities Computer Society, Bettendorf, Iowa

The music industry is at war with itself and its fans. Who ever thought that a rock and roll band would sue its own fans? Talk about the ultimate in corporate greed. The music industry is full of corporate greed.

However, fear not my loyal readers help is on the way. Steve Jobs of Apple, Bill Gates of Microsoft, and Wal-Mart are coming to our rescue. I feel better already.

Apple has already introduced iTunes and the iPod. Soon, Microsoft and Wal-Mart will come out with their own online music services.

Roxio has brought Napster back from the dead. Napster was once the largest illegal file-sharing service on the Internet. Roxio has now brought it back as a good file-sharing service that pays the record companies and artists for their music.

Real Networks has their own online music service and Music Match has their own service. My head is spinning round, round, round.

Apple
Steve Jobs and Apple are the first ones out of the gate in the online music services race. However, remember back in the 1980s when Apple was the top dog in the computer box wars? They eventually lost out to Bill Gates. Will history repeat itself or has Steve learned from his past mistakes?

iTunes is currently the world's largest online music services company. They have recently added the muscle of over 25,000,000 AOL customers to their arsenal. iTunes works on both Apple and Windows computers. You must have Windows 2000 or Windows XP on your PC in order to use iTunes.

The download is simple and without a hassle. All you have to do is go to http://www.apple.com and click on the iTunes link. All you have to do is enter your e-mail address and then download the iTunes software.

iTunes does not charge a monthly fee that all the other online music services charge. However, you can only listen to a 30-second clip from the song that you are interested in. To listen to the whole song you must buy the song for 99 cents.

You can buy as many songs as you want through the Apple Music store. You will have to enter your credit card with Apple music store in order to download music from iTunes.

You can burn songs onto an unlimited number of CDs for your personal use. You can listen to your songs on an unlimited number of iPods. (I will talk about iPods in a minute.) You can play your songs on up to three Macintosh computers or Windows PCs.

You can also set up an account for your children. Kids now have a legal way to download their favorite songs with music allowance accounts. You set up the account using your credit card and then set up a monthly allotment of how many songs your kids can buy. Once they reach the monthly limit (and they will reach that monthly limit), they cannot download any more songs.

Another nice new feature from iTunes is you can now purchase audio books. At the time of this writing, Harry Potter books were not available from iTunes.

Napster
Napster is a monthly service that you pay $9.95 a month for downloading songs. You can download as many songs as you want to your computer. However, if you want to burn the songs to a CD or digital device such as the Dell Music Jukebox then you must pay 99 cents a song.

Real Networks and Music Match also use the Napster model. I like having the ability to download as many songs as I like (or how many songs my hard drive will handle) without having to pay 99 cents a song.

If you want to burn the songs to a CD or a portable digital device then the Apple model may be more to you liking.

Problems
iTunes will only burn to CDs and Apple's own iPod. The iPod is a 15 GB device that sells for $299.00 and will carry almost 7,00 songs. Let me see, 7,000 times 99 cents equals about $7,000.00. This is a very good moneymaker for Apple.

The Dell Digital Jukebox Music Player is very similar to the Apple iPod and costs $249.00. The math is the same, about $7,000.00 for 7,000 songs.

The problem is that iPod and Dell do not play nice with each other. If you use iTunes, then you are going to want to buy the iPod. If you use Real Network, Music Match or Napster then you are going to want to use the Dell Digital Jukebox Music Player.

The biggest problem is that not all famous artists are available for download with one of the online service providers. Therefore, you may only be able to listen to a favorite artist of yours on iTunes and another favorite artist of yours may only be available on Napster.

Once again, the consumer is on the short end of the stick with all of the big boys wanting to use their own standards. They are telling us, it is their ball, and you are going to play the game by their rules. We have danced to this song before!

Conclusion

Who will win the music wars? Let us do some calculations.

I remember being able to buy KISS records on sale at Music Land for $3.99. Let us do some math. Twelve songs on a typical album divided into $3.99 equals 33 cents. Today we pay 99 centers for a song or $9.95 for the whole album.

However, that is far better than the $18.99 suggested retail price of CDs that are currently on sale in stores. Let me see, $18.99 divided by 12 equals $1.58 a song. Ouch! I do not know who will win the music wars, but I do know who has lost. The music store retailers and the consumers have lost. I am against illegal file sharing, but I am also against record companies suing 12-year-old girls.

Whither the Yellow Box?
By Moe Norris,
Topeka PC Users Club, Kansas

Eastman Kodak Company, an icon in the photographic industry for more than 100 years, dropped a bombshell last September when it announced that the company would shift its focus from film and film-based products to *digital* equipment and processes! And it has resolutely continued down that path. In January 2004 the company announced that by the end of this year it would no longer be selling re-loadable film based 35mm cameras, including APS models, in the U.S., Canada, and Western Europe. The "throw away" (i.e., one-time use) cameras will be the only Kodak film camera available in the west. The number of different films provided to retailers will be reduced, concentrating on just the most popular lines. Production of its Carousel film projectors was scheduled to cease the end of 2003.

Kodak said that it plans to continue providing 35mm cameras in emerging markets, such as China, India, Eastern Europe and Latin America, and will introduce six new film cameras in those markets this year. It predicts rapidly growing markets for cameras and film in those countries, in contrast to what is being seen in the west where the demand for film-related products is shrinking much more rapidly than anticipated, while purchases of digital cameras continue to grow dramatically. Kodak's array of digital cameras now extends from point and shoot consumer models to high-end professional (read very expensive) digital cameras and camera backs. It will increase its production of inkjet printing papers, and plans to introduce a new line of consumer ink jet printer models to go head-to-head with the well-established offerings from HP, Epson, Lexmark, etc.

Kodak's landmark shift in focus represents a profound change for the world's largest filmmaker, and a huge gamble. The success of the move remains uncertain. Just when Kodak needs increasing film revenues to underwrite the costs (in the billions) of this transition, film sales are dropping substantially. Since 1997 Kodak has reduced its workforce by more than 30,000 jobs. Another 15,000 jobs will be eliminated in the next two years in a further effort to reduce costs. Success is not a given. If fortune does not smile on Kodak, then not only may the Yellow Box disappear, but the company itself may go down the same path—and it won't be a Yellow Brick Road!

NOPCC Directory

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Web Lab	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	897-1205

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*

June 2004

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 **NOPC Gen Mtg J.D. Meisler 6:30p-8:30p**	3	4	5 **Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a**
6 **Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a**	7 VBLG MCann's 6:30p-8:30p	8	9 **NOPC BOD McCann's 6:30p-8:30p**	10 NOPC Web Lab @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	11	12 **Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a**
13 **Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a**	14 VBLG MCann's 6:30p-8:30p	15 Genealogy SIG @ Mccann's 6:30p-830p	16	17 New User's SIG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	18	19 **Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a**
20 **Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a**	21 VBLG MCann's 6:30p-8:30p	22	23 Digital Media SIG @ McCann's 7:00p-9:00p	24 Internet SIG will **NOT** meet this month.	25	26 **Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a**
27 **Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a**	28 VBLG MCann's 6:30p-8:30p	29	30			

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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