

Mother Board

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This Month At NOPC

Identity Theft
by
**Special Agent of
the FBI**
**P. Michael
Gordon**

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President's Message

Hello everyone, hopefully you and your families were able to pull through this potential hurricane threat to our fair city and surrounding areas without any major hassles or property damage. Let's also hope that our political leaders will improve their evacuation planning so that we can get out of the area as quickly as possible.

Speaking of disasters, one of the most important things to do to safeguard our accumulated data is to back it up. The most popular methods are on CDs, DVDs, and external hard drives. The first two types are the cheapest; the latter is easiest and allows for backups from multiple machines.

Looking ahead, we have some nice presentations planned for the next few months. Help spread the word and get friends and family to join the club so that they can purchase chances to win the latest version of this very popular office suite.

See you at the meetings and SIGs, Ray.

Raffle for Microsoft Office 2003

The New Orleans Personal Computer Club will be conducting a raffle for a new sealed retail edition of Microsoft Office 2003 Professional, starting with the October meeting. The ticket prices will be one dollar each, or six for five dollars. The winning ticket will be pulled at the end of the November 2004 meeting.

This is the full version in a retail box. It is not the upgrade version, so you don't have to have a previous version installed. It includes the 2003 editions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook with Business Contact Manager, and Publisher and has a selling price of around \$500 from most retailers.

Please help support the club and buy a bunch of tickets! Encourage friends and family to join up and purchase tickets as well.



Presentation Previews

With so many people trying to illegally obtain your valuables; money, data, private information, and much more, it only seemed proper to have FBI Special Agent Gordon come to the NOPCC to bring our members up to date on the latest scams, phishing, spyware, and hacks currently on the Internet, and how to prevent and avoid them. Learn to protect your important information!



Global Positioning System -- Where Exactly Are You?

By Joe Schmitt,
Tampa Bay Computer Society, Florida

For centuries, man has relied on the most rudimentary of tools to navigate. Things like a compass or sextant, and later a timepiece, were the best he had. In the past, the most difficult task of a ship's captain was to maintain the location and heading of a ship pounded by winds and currents. As time went on, those tools were perfected and improved. Though they worked well, they were not perfect. It was a time consuming process to mark position; early airplane pilots often navigated using existing landmarks and roads because the speed of their craft made traditional methods cumbersome.

A system called Loran (Long Range Navigation) was developed in the 1940's that utilized radio pulses which were projected on board a ship using a cathode ray tube, similar to your computer monitor. Though accurate to a degree, this system was expensive and offered only a limited area of use.

The global positioning system is a revolution in the way we navigate today. The global positioning system is a set of satellites that just like Loran that use radio signals to determine position. Popularly known as GPS, the system uses a "constellation" of 24 satellites in high orbit to determine position in latitude and longitude. In addition to position, the system also can determine altitude and speed.

GPS was first implemented in the early 1970s as a way for the military to improve its ability to navigate and position vehicles. This system eventually evolved to include civilian as well as military uses. In the early days of GPS the signal was intentionally diffused to deterio-

rate the accuracy of civilian receivers. This use of selective availability as the Department of Defense (DOD) calls it, rendered civilian receivers accurate only within a hundred yards or so. Imagine having the unit telling you make a turn on the next road after you've passed it. In 2000, President Clinton took a serious look at the system and its potential to the civilian population. Selective availability was disabled on May 2, 2000 making the system accurate to within thirty feet or so.

So how does all this work? Well, as mentioned previously, there are 24 satellites orbiting the earth that broadcast radio signals. To better understand the system, a simple idea of two-dimensional navigation must be explained. Suppose you are in a field with one of those sign posts that point to a bunch of different places with distances. The top arrow of the sign says Montgomery, Alabama – 139 miles. The next arrow down says Savannah, Georgia – 217 miles. The third arrow points to Nashville, Tennessee – 231 miles. Now sit down at your favorite map and draw a circle around Montgomery with a radius of 139 miles. Next draw a circle around Savannah and Nashville with the radius the distance on our imaginary sign post. Where those three circles all intersect is roughly Atlanta, Georgia. Easy enough to understand, huh?

GPS works with the same principal. The receiver determines its location by its distance from the satellites. Hold it one minute! But those aren't satellites stationary? Well the satellites move on a predictable path and within a consistent time frame. Inside each GPS receiver, is a programmed almanac of the position of each satellite based on time. Each satellite broadcasts a signal which moves at the speed of light. By measuring how long the signal

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THE SECRET GUIDE TO COMPUTERS

The Secret Guide is available at every New Orleans
Personal Computer Club General Meeting.

The latest printing is available for only \$15.00.

If you wish to reserve a copy, contact Carl
Henderson either at secretary@nopc.org or
(504) 466-3954.



HURRICANE EVACUATION GUIDES

takes to reach the receiver, distance from the satellite is determined. Using three or more satellites the receiver can then triangulate its position very much the same way we did with our imaginary signpost.

These kinds of accurate calculations with radio signals require precise timing, so on each satellite is an atomic clock which is monitored and corrected by ground stations. Using the accuracy of the atomic clock, a code pattern is broadcast from the satellite at a starting point. The receiver knows what time the signal left the satellite based on the portion of the code it is currently receiving. Measuring the time it took for the signal to reach the receiver by comparing the segment of code received with the time in the receiver, the distance to the satellite is determined. The distances from three or more satellites are compared and the position is formulated. That position is then displayed on your receiver as a set of coordinates, or graphically on an electronic map.

Using this pattern the receiver checks and adjusts its internal quartz clock to match that of the atomic clock. So, in addition to knowing where you are, you also know the precise time. Imagine having an atomic clock in your pocket! The receiver also can determine speed by measuring its change in position over time. This is a three dimensional arrangement and so altitude is also calculated.

This is all great and wonderful, but there are some issues. Gravitational pulls from the sun and moon affect the orbits of the satellites. Changing atmospheric conditions also can affect how well the signal travels from the satellite to the receiver. To combat this, the DOD has several ground stations that constantly monitor the signals and make adjustments in the satellites as necessary. In addition, there are two geo-stationary satellites which are in a fixed position in the sky on both sides of the earth. These systems are called WAAS, or Wide Angle Augmentation System. This system's sole purpose is to correct for the issues that affect the accuracy of the broadcast code.

Now with a simple receiver, John Q Public can use a multibillion dollar DOD system. At this time it is estimated that there are approximately 200 civilian users for each military user of the system!

Next month, I'll discuss the different types of receivers available to you as a consumer and some neat things that can be done with them. In the mean time, check out these interesting sites:

Official page for GPS management
Gps.losangeles.af.mil

NASA page on GPS
Gpshome.scc.nasa.gov

U.S. Navy GPS Timing Operations
Tycho.usno.navy.mil/gps.html

Block II specifications:
http://www.spaceandtech.com/spacedata/constellations/navstar-gps-block2_conspecs.shtml

Directory Print Out

*By Richard Rowley
NOPC Member*

Have you ever needed a (hard copy) list of files that are on a computer to compare with what's on another computer? One way to obtain this is through *batch programming*. It works even within the Windows environment, and can now help you.

There are many ways to create a batch file program, but for example:

From Windows; Open Notepad, or WordPad and type:
dir>dirtext. txt

Save this file using this name: **dirtext.bat**

Next create another file called: **dirtext.txt**

This is done again, by opening NotePad, click <New>, then select <Save As>, and name it **dirtext.txt**

Once created, both files should be in the same folder that you wish to have a "hardcopy".

From your file listing, double click "**dirtext.bat**", then double click **dirtext.txt** and you will then be able to send this information to your printer..

If you need to have these *files sorted by name*, change your. bat file to look like this: **dir sort>dirtext.txt**
The best part, is that you can also move this copy of your file directory to other Word processing programs and add your own description.

Using the Dos **dir** command, the ">" symbol is called a Redirection Operator and is used to redirect the output (of this file) to another (dirxt) file instead of merely displaying a directory listing only to the monitor's screen.

* When saving, make sure that you save in a .txt format, and that your file extension name ends with .bat and not .txt after the .bat

* * Batch commands can also direct file information directly to a printer, but this could or may will be another "How to " article.

Controlling Sound

*By Richard Rowley
NOPCC Member*

Quick Mute and Volume Control Panel

In your WINDOWS Taskbar (bottom right of your opening screen)... One click on the Speaker icon will bring up a small Volume/Mute Pop-Up or by double clicking it, should bring up a large Volume Control Panel (with more features).

As you change screens or if you happen to click anywhere on the screen the Control Panel will disappear but now, you only need to re-click the Speaker Icon to quickly return back to it, to change your volume settings.

If the Speaker icon is not there, you can add it:

Start - Settings - Control Panel - double click Multimedia. Select Audio and in the Playback Preferred device selection box... change the default from (Use any available device) to VIA Audio (WAVE).

The last selection box will now become active and all ready checked for you. Click Apply then OK.

Add your own sound... in the back of most computers next to the speaker (output) jacks, you should also find a mini female (microphone input) jack. Places like Radio Shack have a selection of small microphones(with the mini male jack) for under \$10.00.

Next you will need a program to record your sounds.

Included with most versions of Windows, you will find that a Sound Recorder Program has been included (free), and all you now need to do is to add it's icon to your Desktop:

Go to your Windows directory and right click on the Sndrec32.exe file. From the pop-Up, select Send To... Desktop (create shortcut).

This program is very easy to use and you can now add your own voice, etc. to your E-mail and other documents you create, using programs such as Word, Excel, etc.



Virus Attacks Continue at Record Rate

*By Ira Wilsker,
APCUG Board of Directors*

As most computer users have noticed, the number of attempted computer attacks from viruses, worms, and Trojans has increased to a record level. According to antivirus software publisher Panda Software, the average daily number of new viruses and variants appearing for the week ending April 16 was 122 a day, a rate that has been steadily increasing over the preceding few weeks. It might be of interesting historical note that on average, more new viruses and variants are now appearing on a daily basis than appeared during an average week just two years ago! For those who still follow the old, but now quite obsolete strategy of updating their antivirus software on a weekly basis, the likelihood of becoming infected by a virus is near certainty.

Many of the other former "truisms" about virus infections are also no longer true, such as "you have to click on an attachment to catch the virus". Virus authors have become more sophisticated and improved their programming and infection techniques. Although Microsoft released a series of patches over two years ago to close an Outlook and Outlook Express vulnerability, there are still millions of computers that remain unpatched and vulnerable. Several of the very common Netsky variants, some released as recently as last week, take advantage of this opportunity, and can infect a computer by simply having the email message appear in the preview pane of any unpatched version of Outlook. As is now common with many of the current crop of viruses and worms, once infected, any antivirus and firewall software installed on the computer is effectively killed, and ports are opened on the computer allowing continued access to the infected computer from persons unknown. Just because an icon for your antivirus and firewall software appears next to your clock, and it may also appear to update periodically, does not mean that your antivirus software and firewall are functioning. It is good security practice to periodically check all computers for virus infection and open ports by running one of the many free and reliable online virus scans and firewall checks. Personally I use Housecall (housecall.antivirus.com) for a free online virus scan to verify that my computer is indeed clean, and Shields Up (www.grc.com) to verify that my firewall is fully functional.

Our personal computers are being infected at a massive rate, estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands to millions, by innocuous files loaded onto our computers without our knowledge. Many of these new crop of viruses are designed to slip through our antivirus and firewall defenses. One method that unfortunately has been successful has been to rapidly create and disseminate many variants of the same virus payload, and

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Hurricane Preparation - The Real Story

I found the following in a local South Florida paper:

"We're about to enter the peak of the hurricane season. Any day now, you're going to turn on the TV and see a weather person pointing to some radar blob out in the Atlantic Ocean and making two basic meteorological points :

- (1) There is no need to panic.
- (2) We could all be killed.

Yes, hurricane season is an exciting time to be in Florida. If you're new to the area, you're probably wondering what you need to do to prepare! for the possibility that we'll get hit by "the big one." Based on our experiences, we recommend that you follow this simple three-step hurricane preparedness plan:

STEP 1: Buy enough food and bottled water to last your family for at least three days.

STEP 2: Put these supplies into your car.

STEP 3: Drive to Nebraska and remain there until Halloween. Unfortunately, statistics show that most people will not follow this sensible plan. Most people will foolishly stay here in Florida.

We'll start with one of the most important hurricane preparedness items:

HOMEOWNERS' INSURANCE:

If you own a home, you must have hurricane insurance. Fortunately, this insurance is cheap and easy to get, as long as your home meets two basic requirements:

- (1) It is reasonably well-built, and
- (2) It is located in Nebraska.

Unfortunately, if your home is located in Florida, or any other area that might actually be hit by a hurricane, most insurance companies would prefer not to sell you hurricane insurance, because then they might be required to pay YOU money, and that is certainly not why they got into the insurance business in the first place. So you'll have to scrounge around for an insurance company, which will charge you an annual premium roughly equal to the replacement value of your house. At any moment, this company can drop you like used dental floss. Since Hurricane George, I have had an estimated 27 different home-insurance companies. This week, I'm covered by the Bob and Big Stan Insurance Company, under a policy that states that, in addition to my premium, Bob and Big Stan are entitled, on demand, to my kidneys.

SHUTTERS:

Your house should have hurricane shutters on all the windows, all the doors, and-if it's a major hurricane-all the toilets. There are several types of shutters, with advantages and disadvantages:

Plywood shutters: The advantage is that, because you make them yourself, they're cheap. The disadvantage is that, because you make them yourself, they will fall off.

Sheet-metal shutters: The advantage is that these work well, once you get them all up. The disadvantage is that once you get them all up, your hands will be useless bleeding stumps, and it will be December.

Roll-down shutters: The advantages are that they're very easy to use, and will definitely protect your house. The disadvantage is that you will have to sell your house to pay for them.

Hurricane-proof windows: These are the newest wrinkle in hurricane protection: They look like ordinary windows, but they can withstand hurricane winds! You can be sure of this, because the salesman says so. He lives in Nebraska.

HURRICAN PROOFING YOUR PROPERTY:

As the hurricane approaches, check your yard for movable objects like barbecue grills, planters, patio furniture, visiting relatives, etc...You should, as a precaution, throw these items into your swimming pool(if you don't have a swimming pool, you should have one built immediately). Otherwise, the hurricane winds will turn these objects into deadly missiles.

EVACUATION ROUTE:

If you live in a low-lying area, you should have an evacuation route planned out. (To determine whether you live in a low-lying area, look at your driver's license; if it says "Florida," you live in a low-lying area.) The purpose of having an evacuation route is to avoid being trapped in your home when a major storm hits. Instead, you will be trapped in a gigantic traffic jam several miles from your home, along with two hundred thousand other evacuees. So, as a bonus, you will not be lonely.

HURRICANE SUPPLIES:

If you don't evacuate, you will need a mess of supplies. Do not buy them now! Florida tradition requires that you wait until the last possible minute, then go to the supermarket and get into vicious fights with strangers over who gets the last can of

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SPAM. In addition to food and water, you will need the following supplies:

23 flashlights.

At least \$167 worth of batteries that turn out, when the power goes off, to be the wrong size for the flashlights.

Bleach. (No, I don't know what the bleach is for. NOBODY knows what the bleach is for, but it's traditional, so GET some!)

55 gallon drum of underarm deodorant.

A big knife that you can strap to your leg. (This will be useless in a hurricane, but it looks cool.)

A large quantity of raw chicken to placate the alligators. (Ask anybody who went through Andrew; after the hurricane, there WILL be irate alligators.)

\$35,000 in cash or diamonds so that, after the hurricane passes, you can buy a generator from a man with no discernible teeth.

Of course these are just basic precautions. As the hurricane draws near, it is vitally important that you keep abreast of the situation by turning on your television and watching TV reporters in rain slickers stand right next to the ocean and tell you over and over how vitally important it is for everybody to stay away from the ocean.

Good luck, and remember: Its great living in Paradise. (Or Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, or Texas)

So it's not about Computers or Computing, but it does seem relevant to us folks that line in states that border on the Gulf of Mexico.... Editor

Funny Web Sites

*Taken from various issues of eWEEK magazine..
Rumor Central by spencer_katt@ziffdavis.com*

www.proudpickers.com *Who nose what you'll find here!*

www.khaaan.com *Let it all out!*

www.discosquirrels.com *You'll go nuts over this one!*



(Continued from page 4)

quickly flood the net, primarily by email, with the variants. By spacing each variant by a few minutes or hours over a day, it becomes extremely likely that we will encounter several virus bearing emails before our antivirus software is updated. The belief that updating antivirus software daily is an adequate defense is no longer sufficient to provide protection, considering the lag time between the discovery of a new virus, and the release of updated data files by the antivirus companies. The former holy grail of antivirus software publisher, "continuous updates" which many publishers commendably have now reached, is no longer adequate, as a new virus found right now may massively spread unchecked for several hours before updates are available. This lulls us into a false sense of security, believing that our frequent updates will protect us, while in reality dozens of new viruses will spread and infect countless computers before the next update can be released. It only takes one virus to slip through our protection, and we may be left defenseless from further attacks.

The other method of infection that has been around for years, but now becoming even more common is an attack by a virus or worm through our network or internet connections. All computers have "ports" or pathways into the computer. A good firewall should close all open internet or network ports except those being actively and intentionally used, and protect the open ports from unauthorized access. Many of the current worms and viruses try to impersonate legitimate data to penetrate firewalls, or will probe almost any connected computer looking for vulnerabilities. It is not at all uncommon for a home computer to be probed for open ports over 100 times per hour, which is the explicit justification for a firewall to be installed on all personal computers. Home computers, especially those using dial-up internet access, which had been in the past somewhat ignored by hackers, have now become prime targets for hackers and worm generated probes looking for vulnerabilities.

This has already created a very real security threat at all levels from our own computers to the national infrastructure. Many of these new viruses flooding our email boxes, or attacking us through our internet or other network connections, contain a "zombie", a small program either scheduled to launch a cyberattack at a predetermined time, or to silently wait for some external signal which will launch a cyberattack. It is not just possible, but now considered a near certainty that sometime in the near future we will be subjected to massive attacks on our critical infrastructures by millions of zombie infected computers, almost all of which will have antivirus and firewall software installed, but possibly neutralized. This is not just science fiction or some possibility, but a very real threat, as demonstrated in the past by the infamous CodeRed and Blaster attacks, among others.

It is absolutely imperative that we all have anti-virus software and a firewall that is updated as frequently as possible, and verified to offer us protection.

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ray Paternoastro	president@nopc.org	737-9099
Vice President	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	vp@nopc.org	246-7759
Secretary	Carl Henderson	secretary@nopc.org	466-3954
Treasurer	Don Herrmann	treasurer@nopc.org	831-1284
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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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Webmaster	Manuel Dennis III	webmaster@nopc.org	835-7656

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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

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October 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a
3 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a	4 VBLG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	5	6 NOPC Gen Mtg J.D. Meisler School 6:30p-8:30p	7	8	9 Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a
10 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a	11 VBLG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	12	13 NOPC BOD @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	14 NOPC Web Lab @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	15	16 Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a
17 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a	18 VBLG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	19 Genealogy SIG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	20	21 New User's SIG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	22	23 Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a
24 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a	25 VBLG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	26	27 Digital Media SIG @ McCann's 7:00p-9:00p	28 Internet SIG @ McCann's 7:00p-9:00p	29	30 Living with Home Electronics WTIX 890AM 10:00a-11:00a
31 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11:00a-12:00a						

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.

New Orleans Personal Computer Club
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