

Mother Board

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April 6, 2005

This Month At NOPC

*PC Myths
and
Legends:
How many are
true?*

by

Jerry Seregni

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Calendar of Events

April Presenter and Presentation

Hey, I heard that wireless networks are not secure. Yikes! I heard a desktop will always outperform a laptop. Double Yikes! Have you heard or read about any of these "facts." Come out to our April 6th meeting and get the real story. Mr. Jerry Seregni will present "PC Myths and Legends: How many are true?". It will be a great and entertaining evening. Jerry is a Microsoft-Certified System Engineer who held various positions at WWL-TV for 26 years and currently is the network engineer for the Louisiana Supreme Court. He is a native of New Orleans and a graduate of St. Aloysius High School and UNO. Jerry also holds a law degree and an MBA from Loyola University and a certificate in Computer Information Systems from Tulane University's University College.

Mark your calendars, create an entry in your PDA (and set the alarm), update Outlook and join us on Wednesday, April 6, 2005. The monthly meeting of the NOPCC club starts at 6:30pm on the first Wednesday of every month. Location: J.D. Meisler school cafeteria at 3700 Cleary Ave. Metairie. Use the entrance through the breezeway on Pharr Street.

Microsoft Publisher—2003 Raffle

The New Orleans Personal Computer Club will be conducting a new raffle for the months of April and May for a new, sealed in the retail box copy of Microsoft Publisher 2003 with Digital Imaging. It helps the user create impressive marketing materials for print, Web, and e-mail. The Digital Image Pro program included in this package includes 200 filters, Adobe Photoshop Filter plug-in support, and a wide variety of brushes, distortions, and colorization options. This program retails for around \$200.

For more information on this program, visit Microsoft's site at: <http://www.microsoft.com/office/publisher/prodinfo/digital.msp>

Raffle tickets are available to NOPC members at the cost of \$1 per ticket, 6 for \$5. Help support the club by purchasing a few, and encourage friends and family to join the club so they can have the opportunity to buy tickets and have a chance to win this as well. The winning ticket will be pulled at the end of the May membership meeting. Maybe it will be you?

Secret Credit Reports

Tom Watkins of the NOPC suggest a recent : "TheNewOrleansChannel.com - Money - Secret Credit Records Keep Consumers In The Dark" article. Go to the link: <http://www.theneworleanschannel.com/money/4282777/detail.html> for the details.

Wireless Home Networking

Now that you have more than one computer in your house, wouldn't it be nice to hook them up so that they can "talk" to each other? There is the wired network and the wireless network. The wired network has to have Ethernet cables running from one computer to the other and, if there are more than two computers, a hub or switch is needed to connect everything together.

The computers need a network card and, if you are to connect to the Internet by cable or ADSL, a router is needed. I will not go into the basics of installing a network card because Windows XP makes that almost foolproof, if you follow the directions that come with the card.

A nice alternative to running cables all over the house (you know how messy that looks) is wireless networking. The first thing that you need to know is that there are several types of wireless networks. The cryptic 802.11 code you keep seeing on products in your local computer stores refers to the standard by which data signals are sent through the air. The newest, fastest standard is 802.11g (capable of transferring 54 Mega bits per second). The 802.11g is compatible with 802.11b which transfers data at a slower rate. Do not buy 802.11a products unless you have a combination 802.11g or 802.11b and 802.11a access point or router. The 802.11a standard is not compatible.

An access point is the receiver for the signal from your computers and will re-transmit that signal to the other computers on the wireless network. If you are just wirelessly communicating between two wireless computers, you can set them both up to communicate Ad-Hoc.

A broadband router with wired ports is almost

indispensable to connect a wired and wireless network to the Internet. Most of the broadband routers have a hardware firewall built in to "insulate" your computers from the bad things that can happen from the Internet (excluding viruses).

Once you have your hardware set up correctly, Windows will recognize that the PC has become part of a network, and you can then configure this by going to the Control Panel, click Network Connections, rightclick on the icon that appears, and choose Properties. If you run into trouble, try the Help and Support section of Windows or go to the Internet: <http://support.microsoft.com>.

You need to follow the directions that came with your router to set it up. This is usually set up by connecting with the router like it is a web page. Follow the directions. Once you can communicate with the router, you should make sure that it is as secure as possible.

The first step is to change the network name (or SSID) that the router broadcasts – if you leave the default name as it is (e.g. "linksys") it will be easy to guess.

The second thing is to disable Wireless SSID broadcast – this makes it even more difficult to guess the network name.

Next, enable WEP (an encryption protocol). This encrypts the information that is transmitted.

I know that this may seem a little difficult to understand, but go out to the Internet and do a little digging and everything will become clearer. Wireless networking is the "coming" thing. Nearly all of the notebook computers that can be bought now have wireless built in.

By David M. Huckabee
The Red River Monitor, NWLAPCUG, Inc.

Speech recognition software? Sorry. I could have sworn you asked for three exhibitionist au pains.



Hard Drive Housekeeping Is Vital

*by Dennis Schulman
Tampa Bay Computer Society*

For those of you who surf the net on a regular basis - and that includes those who use dialup access as well as cable or DSL - it is absolutely crucial that you take your hard drive housekeeping more seriously than you ever thought necessary. Many users think that by having a suite of utilities, such as Norton or McAfee, that you are protected. You might be, but I seriously doubt it for so many reasons I won't go into it now except for three:

You use auto update and auto scan. This requires that your computer be online at the time to run the auto update. In the case of cable or DSL, that is possible, but the computer has to be on at the time also. In the case of dialup, the computer won't go online unless your password is saved and used automatically. That, of course, defeats keeping friends and annoying children from messing up the computer without your knowledge. So, you might want to run your antivirus update manually, just to make certain it worked and there were no errors.

The second reason is based on the fact that if you did not clean house before scanning, you risk the possibility of the antivirus finding a virus it could not delete or quarantine and you did not know it. You also risk the possibility of not knowing if the auto update was not run successfully for one of many reasons (and time and space won't permit that discussion at this time) and consequently your subsequent full system auto scan may not be able to recognize the latest nastys you have managed to acquire.

There is a third, more obtuse, reason. If you don't really know if your system is truly clean and clear of all the bad stuff, how will you know what to do when you get a message that says something to the effect: "It has been determined that your computer has been sending messages infected with the Trojan horse virus to what appears to be the email listing of your address book. If you do not take appropriate action immediately, your email service will be discontinued. If your anti virus program has failed to protect you, please download the following Trojan horse removal tool and run it immediately."

So, here is a housekeeping procedure I use - which is manual - because then I am more certain that I know the status of my files than most of the "suite" programs. And it doesn't use much - if any - of my system resources except when I use it. Just in case you think you have all the utilities you need, let me comment that I am not an expert on your system, but I spend more time now than ever before on systems that have too many over-burdensome utilities that are truly unnecessary and in some cases more dangerous than what they claimed to be designed to do. What I am proposing is basically using 3 little free utilities that only work when invoked, along with utilities that already come with your computer.

Run Disk Cleanup (under System Tools under Accessories on the Programs menu) and process all options (don't worry about compressed files, but do them at a later time when you have nothing else to do, since it could take quite a while if you haven't done it the first time.)

Clear your browser cache (In Internet Explorer go to Tools, Internet Options. Delete cookies and delete all offline files.) In Netscape Communicator go to Edit, Preferences, Advanced, Clear Memory Cache and Clear Disk Cache)

Open Windows Explorer (right-click on My Computer, select Explore), Select the folders/View option and select show all files except system files (You can leave it this way.) Find any folders called tmp, temp, or cookies. Unless you have a good working knowledge of what cookies you need or do not need, you probably don't need the contents of any of the temp, cookies, or temporary internet folders except the index.dat file (you might want to save the contents of the History folder)

Empty the Recycle Bin

Update and run the latest core version of Adaware SE Personal Edition (currently version 1.05). Once the scan is complete, click on an object found, right-click a lined item and select all, click next and remove all.

Update and run the latest version of Spybot (currently version 1.3.) Before running the scan, run immunize. Then run Look for Problems. Once problems are found, select them all and click on Fix Problems.

Note: Some spyware may be associated with programs you want to use, so read the help section for a

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further understanding of the features and options on both of these programs. These spyware objects detector utilities can be downloaded from download.com or major-geeks.com.

There is a third utility, called a hijack remover. There are many available, but I like CWShredder.exe (current version 2.00) (use www.google.com to find the program) Just make certain you are not online and that your browser is not open when you run it. You may be surprised and pleased if it finds something and fixes it (generally really bad stuff).

Now you should be able to update and run your antivirus more successfully than ever before. The only catch is that it takes time. Once you figure out about how much time each step takes, you can determine whether you can walk away and come back later when it is done.

I recommend running HouseKeeping at the end of every day you go online - if you can manage it. (cough! cough!) Otherwise, run it every 3 days for certain.

Now, if you know your computer is clean and pure, then this is the only condition to justify running the defragmentation utility (once a week or twice a month). Defrag does not "fix" anything. It enhances the performance of a healthy environment. If you attempt to defrag a "sick" system, you could make it worse to the extent that the computer will fail to boot or run. If you have Windows 2000 or Windows XP, you can run defrag directly. If you have Windows Me, 98, or 95, run it in Safe Mode. I prefer running Defrag in Safe Mode as I have a UPS and the computer can complete the defrag, even if the lights go out in the house.

Now that you have successfully learned the housekeeping routine and understand its importance without the need for complex and sometimes dangerous free software utilities that can cause conflicts, you can set up the program scheduler to run your housekeeping routine for you and just check up on it from time to time to see that it is accomplishing your wishes.

Feel free to email me for further details and other fine, free utilities available for keeping your hard drive and system performing at its best.

Dennis Schulman, known as the PC Miracle Man, has been a practicing field consultant in Largo, Florida for over 22 years. He has been a member of the Tampa Bay Computer Society for over 15 years and was the editor of its sometimes 40-page newsletter for 5 years. He can be contacted at dschulman@myrapidsys.com.

Ergonomics for the Elderly

By Dr. Herbert A. Goldstein, Editor,
Sarasota PC Monitor,
Sarasota FL PC Users Group
(www.spcug.org - pcug@comcast.net)

As baby boomers reach retirement age the ratio of employees to retirees will equalize over the next twenty years. Considering that the foundation of Social Security benefits is generated from the workers it is evident that benefits will be inadequate for future retirees. In order to endure, the elderly will be forced to keep working beyond the current retirement age.

As our increasing knowledge of the aging process brings about breakthroughs in life extension technologies, the elderly will come to play a greater role in the productivity of our economy. Upcoming ergonomic developments will be critical in order to accommodate the elderly as viable and productive members of the workforce.

With the physical restrictions that naturally come with age we can expect that many elderly would be regarded as having disabilities and the ones who are not technically disabled could be considered physically and mentally compromised to some degree. Therefore, any workplace modifications that serve to overcome limitations in strength, coordination, endurance, sight, hearing and shift adaptability will accommodate the elderly into the workplace.

Visual restrictions can be overcome with a greater dependence on verbal communication with regard to instructions and assistive technology such as audio recorders. Labels should be in large, clear print with large, high-resolution computer monitors. Voice recognition software is also helpful. Other modifications include paper holders and bookstands that allow for optimal positioning of written materials, voice mail systems for messages and raised edges along the sides of work surfaces to prevent objects from falling off.

In personnel with hearing limitations any audible information should be supplemented with some form of visual presentation. Whole body vibration transmitted to chairs should be minimized by utilizing anti-vibration seating surface. Ambient noise should be minimized through workstation design, isolating noisy printers, sound dampening etc. Workers should have vibrating pagers, visual call indicators and sound amplifiers on telephones.

The elderly should have their work environment

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arranged in such a way as to avoid unnecessary reaching, lifting and carrying. Storage systems with pull out shelves and workstation carousels help to keep frequently used materials within 18 inches of the body. Containers should be provided to break loads into manageable units and the employee should have the means to slide any materials over 2 pounds. Mechanical reaching devices should be available for accessing supplies beyond the reach of the worker.

With the preservation of their mental faculties and the advent of ergonomic innovations for staff, the elderly will find themselves continuing to play a dynamic and productive role in society into the later years.



Simple But Powerful Tools Find Misplaced PC Files

By Gabe Goldberg

<gabe@gabegold.com>

As PCs have gotten more powerful in every dimension – faster processors, larger memories, and (especially) giant hard drives -- software developers have kept pace by bloating their applications. Where PCs once ran happily with 10 megabyte (not gigabyte!) disk drives, now most applications are many times that size, containing hundreds or thousands of files. As applications proliferate and users create their own blizzards of data files (documents, pictures, sound and video files, etc.) PC files become needles in a haystack.

Or, more annoyingly accurate, PCs are like gigantic haystacks hiding needles, since a PC's pile of files is always much more visible than the one file that's missing. Windows versions include a built-in tool for locating files. It's sometimes called Search and sometimes called Find; I guess that Finding sounds more optimistic than Searching. But they share problems: they don't search inside all file types (files' types are the second part of their names, what follows the dot, such as "doc" for Microsoft Word files), they don't always find all copies of files, they may completely skip files, and they run slowly.

Picking a file search tool is like choosing a Web browser or your favorite ice cream flavor: a matter of

very personal taste. The search tool (or browser or ice cream) you favor matters less than your knowing about choices.

Sometimes it's hard to escape an already-made choice, to try the unfamiliar -- though the pleasure of discovering a new favorite flavor helps the process along. This article describes two powerful utilities that can be your PC's lost-and-found. But remember that many other choices are available on software download sites such as www.tucows.com/.

Agent Ransack (a free download) and FileLocator Pro (\$25), near-twin-brother file-find utilities, greatly surpass Windows' native tools: they're faster, friendlier, more flexible, and more accurate. Both programs are easy downloads (less than two megabytes) and install by simply executing the downloaded .exe file. They offer many tasty features. For example...

- 1) They display file lines containing your search string with their filenames: an overdue facility, and much more useful than displaying only filenames!
- 2) They can search multiple unrelated (non-nested) folders: what a concept, and so much better than having to repeat searches!
- 3) They can save and reuse search criteria. So if you ever repeat file searches -- for example, to find all files containing your family name -- you'll save time.
- 4) They allow saving and printing lists of files found: very helpful if a file search is the first step in a larger process which manipulates found files.
- 5) Both programs provide basic and expert interfaces. This choice allows using only simple search functions or enabling more detailed search criteria.
- 6) The programmer's tool "regular expressions" provide a more powerful wildcard notation than "*" for specifying matching search strings and filenames. Nearly everyone gets along just fine without using these, but people who like them *really* like them.

You'll be encouraged to register Agent Ransack. This is optional but a friendly gesture towards the developer who makes the program available.

Big brother FileLocator Pro -- whose registration cost includes a year of updates -- adds several features: it searches additional file types (PDF, ZIP, etc.); it displays found file lines as they appear in the file, with customizable numbers of lines above and below each one; it allows immediate inspection of found files with a built-in viewer or tailor able external editor; it provides a detailed status line with

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found-file statistics; and it's programmable via scripting and plug-ins.

While it's perhaps a little unfashionable, I appreciate the 24-page FileLocator Pro manual. Full of screenshots illustrating basic and advanced facilities, it's a quick read revealing tips and nuggets that might otherwise be missed.

After paying for and downloading FileLocator Pro, you'll be given a registration key that enables using the program past the free evaluation period. You'll apply the key by executing a small registry update file or by copying a string from an e-mail into a dialogue box. Note that while you're safe executing the registry update file from a trusted vendor, caution is required with such files and they should *not* be accepted and executed from strangers.

A minor oddity is that invoking either product via right-clicking a folder in Windows Explorer -- a handy facility -- starts a new copy of the search tool rather than making an open copy the active window.

Until PCs can read our minds and do what we want without detailed instructions, tools like Agent Ransack and FileLocator Pro are great productivity enhancers. And don't neglect options available in Windows built-in search tools: they can tailor and refine searches to be more effective.

Specifications

Company: Mythic Software

Programs: Agent Ransack, FileLocator Pro

URL: www.mythicsoft.com

Price: Free (Agent Ransack); \$25 (FileLocator Pro)

OS: Windows 95 or newer

This article appeared originally on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, <www.aarp.org/computers>. (c) AARP 2004. Permission is granted for reprinting and distribution by non-profit organizations with text reproduced unchanged and this paragraph included.

Having The Right Tools

By Richard Rowley
NOPCC Member

If I waited till I had the right tools, I would never get anything done, so I have learned to improvise just about anything and move on with my life. As I would love to be a perfectionist, Murphy's Law and my "Always Low" bank account keeps that from ever being possible.

Upon my first investigation of the "Accessories" (Paint, NotePad, Calculator, etc.) which came already supplied with my Windows program, I thought that these were created for children and therefore I spent many years and money buying many other computer programs which basically did the same thing but (in my eyes) looked more professional.

The best part about having these "built-in" Windows accessories is that they already save me money, time, and I need not worry about where I put the serial number of each one of them or the amount of space that they take up in my computer.

My point is: Don't underestimate the value of any of these useful tools supplied with-in the Microsoft Windows environment, including all of those "hidden" key clicking techniques.

Now that I realize that I do have many of the "right" tools, I guess, I have to quit sending Microsoft anymore of my "Hate Mail"!



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. Or contact Carl Henderson either at: secretary@nopcc.org or (504) 466-3954.

Sherrie K. Henne

Internet Business Development

407 A West Sadie Street

Brandon, FL 33510

Tampa: 813.685.5838

New Orleans: 504.913.5638

Email: shenne@gmail.com

Mobile Email: 5049135638@mobile.att.net

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Vice President	Clarke Kissel	vp@nopc.org	828-5678
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NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	www.nopc.org

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April 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 Living with Home Electronics WTIX 690AM 10-11a
3 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	4 Computer Programming @ 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 690AM 10-11a
10 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	11 Computer Programming @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	12	13 NOPC BOD @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	14 WebLab SIG @McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	15	16 Living with Home Electronics WTIX 690AM 10-11a
17 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	18 Computer Programming @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	19 Genealogy SIG @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	20	21 New Users SIG @McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	22	23 Living with Home Electronics WTIX 690AM 10-11a
24 Computer Solutions WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	25 Computer Programming @ 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 690AM 10-11a

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New Orleans Personal Computer Club
P. O. Box 8364
Metairie, Louisiana 70011