

# Mother Board

Volume 24, Issue 1

January 4, 2006

## *This Month At NOPC*

### *A Tale of Two Hobbies By Edward Jahncke*

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## **Norton SystemWorks 2006 Premier**

Norton SystemWorks 2006 Premier is the ultimate all-in-one solution that keeps PCs healthy and protects the valuable data that resides on consumers' computers. Norton SystemWorks 2006 Premier includes all the components in Norton SystemWorks 2006 plus additional data protection and problem-solving capabilities through Norton Ghost, Symantec Recovery Disk and Performance Test. Norton SystemWorks 2006 Premier also includes the new Norton Protection Center, Symantec's centralized management console that enables users to monitor the status of their computer's security.

Norton SystemWorks 2006 Premier also includes Norton Cleanup, Norton Anti-Virus, Norton Utilities, Norton GoBack, One Button Checkup, System Optimizer 2.0, Process Viewer 2.0. The suite is available as a single-user license and in 5- and 10-user Small Office Packs.

#### Leading Data Protection Technology with Norton Ghost 10.0

- New – Automatically detects when new storage devices are added to the computer
- New – Event Triggered Backups allow for personalization based on user initiated events
- New – Performance Throttling gives consumers the ability to throttle the amount of computer resources used when creating new recovery points
- New – Network Throttling limits the amount of throughput when backing up over a network to reduce impact on network performance
- New – Optimize Recovery Point Storage automatically monitors and manages the amount of disk space necessary to store recovery points
- New – Password protection and AES encryption up to 256 bit
- New – Backup and Recovery Status provide a single place to see all drives on the system and the levels of data protection assigned to each. Users are give recommendations based on backup activity

#### Comprehensive Recovery Tool

- Enhanced – Symantec Recovery Disk enables users to boot, restore a backup image, perform system fixes, and complete virus scans when the computer's OS is not responding

#### Valuable Benchmarking Capabilities

Performance Test — Evaluates a PC's system and hardware performance, comparing them to other systems.

#### Stronger Security and Protection

New — Automatic installation of Norton GoBack to provide out-of-the-box continuous rollback  
Protects consumers from possible damage cause by unwanted spyware programs

(Continued from page 1)

and faulty software installations

#### Less Interaction, Less to Do

- Automated One Button Checkup helps ensure computer is problem-free
- Continuous data and system recovery protection
- Optimize file storage for faster hard drive performance

#### Adaptive Personalized Protection

- New — Personalized Internet clutter and unwanted file removal
  - o Automatically imports browser favorites and trusted sites
  - o Additional removal lists include Google tool bar searches, recently used Microsoft Office files, Windows Media Player and Windows Search Assistant
  - o Enables Norton Cleanup for the entire machine or individual users
  - o Express Cleanup can be run from CD
- New — View processes running by CPU and programs running with Process Viewer 2.0

#### Increased Protection Against Malicious Code with Norton AntiVirus 2006

- New — Automatically detects and removes high-risk spyware
- New — Home Page Hijacking Protection blocks changes to a user's home page caused by hijackers that redirect the home page to a spyware Web site
- New — Symantec now supplies Norton AntiVirus 2006 users with free product technology and feature updates throughout the year, offering seamless protection against emerging threats

*Symantec software has generously provided a full copy of Norton SystemWorks 2006 Premier to the New Orleans Personal Computer Club. A copy of this software will be presented as the "Door Prize" at the January 4, 2006 General Meeting. Remember that only club members are eligible to win this prize. For additional information go to [www.symantec.com](http://www.symantec.com)*



## Don't be a loser at the rebate games

by Jim Sanders, Editor,  
North Orange County Computer Club  
[editor@noccc.org](mailto:editor@noccc.org)

Most of us have bought something that sounded like a great value — “After Rebate or Rebates.” Everywhere from a great price to FREE! Most are legitimate. Most require a fair amount of work to claim. Most are never claimed. Most say you will have to wait 6 to 10 weeks for a check (for some that turns into 6 to 10 months). Many have tricky fine print. A few are outright scams!

Below are a list of things that you should do, as opposed to just think about, if your going to buy an item with a rebate and have any real intention of claiming the rebate and actually getting it. Following that are three emails that dealt with a denied rebate claim for our new President Elise Edgell.

If you are going to buy an item with a rebate, while you are at the checkout stand, **NOT AFTER YOU GET HOME**, do the following:

- Write down the sales clerk's name then ask him to show you that you have all the items needed to claim the rebate. Ask him to put an X on the correct UPC barcode.
- Make sure you have a copy of the correct rebate form(s). Some are inside the box. You just paid for the item, it is yours, open the box and read the terms.
- If it is an upgrade rebate, it is better to find out if your old product qualifies BEFORE you go to the store. Check the vendor's website, call the store and ask!

### READ THE FINE PRINT! THEN READ IT AGAIN!

- Read the “Proof of Purchase” requirement list.
- Does it require the original “Sales Receipt” or is a copy OK. If the original is required, ask the store for a duplicate original that is acceptable for a product exchange if there is a problem with the product. Some stores provide a “Rebate Receipt.” Make sure that matches the requirement list.
- Check the postmark requirement, I have seen one that gave you only three days to get it post-marked. Don't wait till the last day to mail it.

(Continued on page 3)

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- Make sure a website address and/or telephone number is included that you can use to contact the rebate center about your rebate. Most of the upscale rebate centers include an 800 number.
- Make two copies of ALL documentation submitted. If a cheesy rebate center decides to tell you they never received your request, without copies, you're up the proverbial creek. I am working on an article about using your scanner for this purpose.
- I think it is a good idea to include one of the documentation photocopies with the submission to make the point that you have copies. Mark it "CC: Vendor, My Files." On the larger rebates, buying the \$0.95 proof of delivery service at the post office is cheap insurance. Having a witness to the mailing doesn't hurt. Error on your side of the game. If it says 6 to 8 weeks, check at 6 weeks, don't wait three months. Be reasonable with phone calls but check the website as often as you like. Mark your calendar to remind yourself to check on the rebate. Keep a folder for all of your rebates. Move completed ones to another folder. Once you get your rebate check, read how long it is good for. Some are good for 6 months. Most are void after 60 days. A few are void after 30 days. I got one that was expired when it was delivered. When you think you have been shafted, don't just grimace and bear it, complain. Complain to the retailer. Complain to the vendor. If all else fails, file a complaint with the FTC at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov). You can also file a complaint with the Better Business Bureau at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org). Taking the retailer to Small Claims Court is an option.

### **The email exchange with BFG Technologies, Inc.**

Dear Sir, My name is Jim Sanders, and I am the editor of the North Orange County Computer Club's newsletter, the Orange Bytes. PDF copies of the publication are available at <http://www.noccc.org>. For several weeks I have been gathering material for an article on the rebate games. Our members should see it in the next issue of the newsletter. This is a hot issue with our members as a number have been burned by various rebate offers. In a lot of cases it was due to not reading the fine print, not crossing all T's or dotting all I's, a claim that the request was never received or not received in time.

In some instances the rebate was a pure scam. A few refused rebates may be caused by human error on the part of the highly trained, intelligent, well paid staff of the rebate center. A common reason given for a rebate denial is that a required piece of documentation was not included.

All too often, that claim cannot be refuted as the original was sent in and the suggestion to photocopy all submitted documentation was not followed because of the hassle involved. In an interesting coincidence of timing, our club President, Elise Edgell, showed me the rebate denial post card that she received on 7/16/2005. The reason given for the refusal: "We did not receive a sales receipt with your request." She purchased a BFG GeForce FX 5500 OC at a special Fry's Electronics' one day sale where a \$50 rebate was offered on your product. In this case, Elise did scan all the documentation sent in with the rebate and kept it as a JPG file. In addition, the original documentation was stapled to a printout of that file and a notation was hand printed on that sheet, in bold marker pen: "CC: Vendor, My Files." That file is attached to this email. As both of us bought the product and requested the rebate in the same way, it will be interesting to see if I get the same post card.

I understand that you contract the rebate function to other companies, but the typical club member that has a problem thinks the problem is with the company that made the product and offered the rebate. It is your reputation that suffers, not the rebate center.

Would you express your opinion on which of the above reasons might be the cause of this rebate being denied?

Sincerely,  
Jim Sanders, Editor, NOCCC Orange Bytes

Hi Jim,  
Thanks for contacting BFG Technologies, and thanks for giving us the opportunity to clarify this particular rebate situation.

Looking at the picture in your attachment of Elise's submission, it appears there is not a copy of her "Sales Receipt" included along with the other required items.

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*(Continued from page 3)*

In addition to the “Rebate Form/Receipt” and the “Proof of Purchase” cut from the box, a copy of the “Sales Receipt” is required. With Fry’s it can sometimes be confusing because they label the Rebate Form as a “Rebate Receipt”. This could lead a customer into thinking that the form was both the rebate form AND the sales receipt, although they are actually two separate items.

Some additional information that may be of interest; this is one of two rebates that have the highest redemption rates we have ever run. This indicates to us that majority of customers are including all the correct documentation and getting the rebate for this particular program.

In this particular case, the rebate house did refuse the rebate on proper grounds. However, we will contact the rebate house and approve Elise’s rebate, and yours as well. We often do that for customers who contact us and believe that that they were denied incorrectly. We look into individual cases and make approvals where the facts support it.

Thanks again for giving us the opportunity to respond. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us.

Kind regards, John @ BFG

Hi John,

Thank you for your quick response and also for fixing the problem.

In an effort to resolve why it became a problem in the first place, I made a trip to the Anaheim Fry’s Electronics store. I asked to speak to the person in charge of dealing with rebates. The woman that responded to that request was pleasant enough, but not very helpful. I asked why Fry’s was having their checkout clerks tell customers that the “Rebate Receipt” is the same as the full sales receipt for rebate purposes. Her response was:

“Well, sometimes it is and sometimes it’s not.” The discussion lasted several minutes. It bogged down into questions of semantics, perception, lack of explicit wording, and responsibility. Her rebuttal to your assertion that it is a “Rebate Form/Receipt” was that if you cut that form in two just above the line “Rebate Form:” you have a

“Receipt” and a “Rebate Form.” That to help the customer by not having multiple, small, separate documents that are more easily lost, or difficult to match up with the appropriate rebate form, they are printed together. That the “Proof of purchase requirements:” Section 3, says “a copy of your receipt,” not “Sales Receipt,” not “Full Sales Receipt,” not “Rebate Receipt,” just “Receipt.” That obviously the “Rebate Receipt” is a receipt. I commented that the Fry’s IT department controlled what is printed and how it is printed. That it would be trivial for them to better separate the two forms with a couple of extra blank lines, a line of asterisks, and a line that says “Cut here.” That they could easily have changed Section 3 to explicitly state what kind of “Receipt” was required. That if printing the “Rebate Receipt” is supposed to be a courtesy to the customer, it would be trivial to have the computer print out a “Duplicate Sales Receipt” when that was required by the vendor. That if Fry’s is going to the effort to provide this courtesy service at all, they should go the extra step, and endeavor to do it correctly, rather than in the current, confusing, fashion. I commented that Fry’s apparently feels it is their responsibility to remind customers that they should make a copy of all documentation submitted for a rebate by handing out a yellow sheet with that warning, why not expand it to include a caution about the receipt problem.

Her response was in essence, I don’t have any control over what the IT department does. I counted to ten, thanked her for her time and left. I hope this feedback helps you with future programs.

Sincerely,  
Jim Sanders Editor, NOCCC Orange Bytes

On 7-23-05 we put on our best optimistic face and went to the <http://www.rebatestatus.com> website to see how well the rebate had been approved. We were hoping to see a message like: “The check is in the mail,” and lo and behold we did.

Pony Express or 4th Class, but in the mail.



## Amateur Radio and Computers

### *A Tale of Two Hobbies*

Edward Jahncke, Editor of the New Orleans Personal Computer Club Newsletter, the *Motherboard*, and club member for a long time, will provide insight on two hobbies (Amateur "Ham" Radio, and Computers) coming together. There will be a nostalgic review of his entry into these hobbies and where they are now. He will discuss hardware interfacing and display computer software that assists an Amateur Radio Operator when using their "rig".

Edward Jahncke first became interested in radio communications when he built his first Citizen Band Radio in the early 1960's. He moved up to Amateur Radio when he felt that the band was getting too "crowded", receiving his first Amateur Novice License in 1963.

His first computer was the Radio Shack Mod one Level Two which first became available in the late 1970's. He wanted an Apple that became available at the same time, but the home budget couldn't afford the initial price of \$1,000.

Come join us January 4th at the NOPC General Meeting for some nostalgia, technical input, and insight into how these two hobbies have progressed and how their paths have crossed.

## Windows XP Product Activation

Product activation relies on the submission of the Installation ID. The Installation ID is specifically designed to guarantee anonymity and is only used by Microsoft to deter piracy. The Installation ID is comprised of two different pieces of information — the product ID and a hardware hash (a hash is a numeric value derived through a mathematical formula and based upon some other, original value). The product ID is unique to the installation of Windows and is created from the product key used during installation. Each product key delivered with retail boxed software is unique, and the product ID it creates is unique. Microsoft uses the product ID for other purposes in addition to product activation such as when requesting product support. The product ID can be found by viewing the Properties of My Computer (an example of a product ID is 12345-123-1234567-12345).

The hardware hash is an eight byte value that is created by running 10 different pieces of information from the PC's hardware components through a one-way mathematical transformation. This means that the resultant hash value cannot be backwards calculated to determine the original values. Further, only a portion of the resulting hash value is used in the hardware hash in order to ensure complete anonymity.

Example A processor serial number is 96 bits in length. When hashed, the resultant one-way hash is 128 bits in length. Microsoft uses only six bits from

that resultant hash in activation's hardware hash. Due to the nature of the hashing algorithm, those six bits cannot be backwards calculated to determine anything at all about the original processor serial number.

Moreover, six bits represent 64 ( $2^6$ ) different values. There were over 100 million PCs sold last year worldwide. From those 100 million PCs sold, only 64 different hardware hash values could be created as part of activation.

Microsoft developed the hardware hash in this way in order to maintain the user's privacy.

Additionally, whether or not the PC can be put into a docking station or accepts PCMCIA cards is also determined (the possibility of a docking station or PCMCIA cards existing means that hardware may disappear or seem changed when those devices are not present). Finally, the hardware hash algorithm has a version number. Together with the general nature of the other values used, two different PCs could actually create the same hardware hash. The 10 different hardware values used to create the hash are outlined in the table below:

Table 1 Hardware hash component values  
Component Name, Example: Hash Value (# of bits)

1 Display Adapter	—00010 (5)
2 SCSI Adapter	—00011 (5)
3 IDE Adapter	— 0011 (4)
4 Network Adapter MAC Address	—1001011000 (10)
5 RAM Amount Range (i.e. 0-64mb, 64-128mb, etc)	- 101 (3)
6 Processor Type	—011 (3)
7 Processor Serial Number	—000000 (6)
8 Hard Drive Device	—1101100 (7)
9 Hard Drive Volume Serial Number	—1001000001 (10)
10 CD—ROM / CD-RW / DVD-ROM	—010111 (6)
"Dockable"	- 0 (1)
Hardware Hash version (version of algorithm used)	- 001 (3)

The product ID (nine bytes) and hardware hash (eight bytes) are used by Microsoft to process the activation request. When activation is done over the Internet, these two values form the Installation ID (in a binary format) and are sent along with request header information directly through secure sockets (SSL in HTTP) to the Microsoft activation system in a binary format. There are three communications made to complete Internet activation:

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1. Handshake request: Contains product ID, hardware hash, and request header data such as request ID (for linking the handshake, request, and acknowledgement) and activation technology version. 262 bytes total.

2. License request: Contains product ID, hardware hash, and customer data structure for holding voluntary registration information if provided. If registration is skipped, this structure is empty. Also contains request header data such as request ID and the PKCS10 digital certificate request structure. The PKCS10 structure can vary slightly based on the inclusion of voluntary registration information; about 2763 to 3000 bytes total.

3. Acknowledgement request: Contains certificate ID (returned to user's machine after license request), issue date, and error code. 126 bytes total.

If Internet activation is successful, the activation confirmation is sent directly back to the user's PC as a digital certificate. This certificate is digitally signed by Microsoft so that it cannot be altered or counterfeited. The confirmation packet returned as part of Internet activation is approximately 9 kbytes in size (the digital certificate chain accounts for most of the confirmation data packet size).

Source:

<http://www.microsoft.com/technet/prodtechnol/winxpro/valuate/xpactiv.msp>

## Save Windows Activation Files Before Reinstall

*Tips and tricks by Aviran Mordo*

Like any windows machine at some point you'll need to format your hard drive and reinstall Windows XP. If you didn't prepare for that you'll need to reactivate your Windows XP.

Now if you do not want all the hassle of reactivation you can save your old activation files and use them in your clean system (as long as you didn't make any hardware changes).

Follow these steps.

Backup your activation files:

1. Open Windows explorer and navigate to C:\Windows\System32
2. Copy the files Wpa.dbl and Wpa.bak to another media floppy, CD-R or another hard drive (if you have more than one installed)

Now you can reformat your drive and reinstall Windows XP.

At the end of the installation, when Windows asks you to activate your product, decline and do not activate.

Restore your activation files

1. Restart your system, and as your system boots up press F8 to access the boot options (Windows Advanced Options)
2. From the menu options select to start Windows in safe mode (minimal)
3. After Windows loads in safe mode, open Windows explorer and navigate back to C:\Windows\System32
4. If you find the files **Wpa.dbl** and **Wpa.bak** in this folder, rename the files to something like **Wpa.dbl.backup** and **Wps.bak.backup**
5. Copy your original **Wpa.dbl** and **Wpa.bak** from the CD or floppy back to C:\Windows\System32
6. Restart Windows

You should now have a clean and activated Windows XP

Source:

<http://www.aviransplace.com/index.php/archives/2005/09/18/keep-your-windows-activated-after-reinstall/>

### 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@nopc.org](mailto:secretary@nopc.org) or (504) 466-3954.



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# NOPCC Directory

## Elected Officers

President	Ray Paternoistro	<a href="mailto:president@nopcc.org">president@nopcc.org</a>	737-9099
Vice President	Clarke Kissel	<a href="mailto:vp@nopcc.org">vp@nopcc.org</a>	828-5678
Secretary	Carl Henderson	<a href="mailto:secretary@nopcc.org">secretary@nopcc.org</a>	466-3954
Treasurer	Don Herrmann	<a href="mailto:treasurer@nopcc.org">treasurer@nopcc.org</a>	831-1284
Director At Large	Albert Fox	<a href="mailto:director1@nopcc.org">director1@nopcc.org</a>	269-5786
Director At Large	Mary Prinz	<a href="mailto:director2@nopcc.org">director2@nopcc.org</a>	455-1412
Director At Large	Tom Ford	<a href="mailto:director3@nopcc.org">director3@nopcc.org</a>	985-643-3172

## Standing Committees

BBS SysOp	Lanny Goldfinch	<a href="mailto:sysop@nopcc.org">sysop@nopcc.org</a>	482-5066
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Publicity	Jackie Elliott	<a href="mailto:publicity@nopcc.org">publicity@nopcc.org</a>	455-6203
Webmaster	Sherrie Henne	<a href="mailto:webmaster@nopcc.org">webmaster@nopcc.org</a>	504-913-5638

## Special Interest Groups

Computer Programming	Elliot Mike York	<a href="mailto:mike@gnonug.org">mike@gnonug.org</a>	738-5997
Digital Media	Ray Paternoistro	<a href="mailto:dm@nopcc.org">dm@nopcc.org</a>	737-9099
Genealogy	Vincent Haupt	<a href="mailto:hauptv@aol.com">hauptv@aol.com</a>	985-785-6288
Internet	Ray Paternoistro	<a href="mailto:internet-m@nopcc.org">internet-m@nopcc.org</a>	737-9099
New Users	Tom Ford	<a href="mailto:new-user@nopcc.org">new-user@nopcc.org</a>	985-643-3172
Web Lab	Edward Jahncke	<a href="mailto:editor@nopcc.org">editor@nopcc.org</a>	897-1205

## Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	887-5746
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	<a href="http://www.nopcc.org">www.nopcc.org</a>

### *The Coins & Collectibles Shop*

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### **McCann Electronics**

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Dial-in numbers in New Orleans, Covington, Hammond, Slidell

John Souvestre  
[johns@sstar.com](mailto:johns@sstar.com)  
[www.sstar.com](http://www.sstar.com)

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## **The Computer Emergency Room**

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# January 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b>1 Computer Solutions</b> WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	<b>2 GNONUG</b> 6:30p-8:30p	<i>3</i>	<b>4 NOPC General Meeting</b> J.D. Meisler School 6:30p-8:30p	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<b>7 Living with Home Electronics</b> WTIX 690AM 10-11a
<b>8 Computer Solutions</b> WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	<b>9 GNONUG</b> 6:30p-8:30p	<i>10</i>	<b>11 NOPC BOD @ McCann's</b> 6:30p-8:30p	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<b>14 Living with Home Electronics</b> WTIX 690AM 10-11a
<b>15 Computer Solutions</b> WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	<b>16 GNONUG</b> 6:30p-8:30p	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<b>21 Living with Home Electronics</b> WTIX 690AM 10-11a
<b>22 Computer Solutions</b> WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	<b>23 GNONUG</b> 6:30p-8:30p	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<b>28 Living with Home Electronics</b> WTIX 690AM 10-11a
<b>29 Computer Solutions</b> WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	<b>30 GNONUG</b> 6:30p-8:30p	<i>31</i>				

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.;

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