The New Orleans Personal Computer Club Newsletter

Mother Board

Volume 24, Issue 5 May 3, 2006

This Month At NOPC

Whittle's Picks for the Digital Home

By

David B. Whittle

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Whittle's Picks

Join Us on May 3rd and Enjoy "Whittle's Picks for the Digital Home!" Are you enjoying the digital revolution that is transforming your home?

In the ideal digital home, PCs and consumer electronic devices are not only protected against Internet security threats, but work together to deliver digital media such as pictures and video and music to the parts of your home where you want it. Enabled by innovation's rapid pace, you can re-invent your lifestyle, waste less time, and have more fun. The possibilities for managing your own digital content and entertainment are more engaging than ever before. You can now take pictures and videos with digital cameras and camcorders, add your choice of background music, and moments later share them with family and friends via e-mail or CD or even by DVD, displayed on our television sets in "home theaters."

At our May 3, 2006 meeting, our speaker will be David B. Whittle, author of "Cyberspace: The Human Dimension" and named by Working Woman Magazine as "one of America's most original technological thinkers." Dave's been a leader in the PC revolution since 1979, and an opinion-leader in the PC industry since his days as OS/2 Evangelist at IBM in the early '90s. Most recently, he's been writing for Smart Computing. Now he's bringing to you his favorite discoveries from recent trade shows in order to show new products that open up new horizons of possibility or solve problems you might be facing.

Would you like a brief look at the latest gadgets, goodies, software, and services available for the digital home? Would you like to have software that takes your digital photos and video footage and almost magically transforms it into a movie on DVD or CD that is a surprising delight to watch? Ever wish you could rise above ordinary flat snapshots of those special places you visit and have an immersive, 3-dimensional picture of the place so you can revisit the scene looking in any direction? Is cable clutter and charger confusion and tangle a serious nuisance? Most importantly, do you ever feel as if there is more to know about Internet security than you're being told? Are you tired of being your own Internet security expert? Would you be interested in a service that brings, for a very reasonable monthly fee, comprehensive Internet security to your PC and peace of mind to you? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you won't want to miss Dave Whittle's presentation at our next monthly meeting!

Dave will introduce some of his favorite technologies, products, and services that solve real problems for real people and can help make life a little bit or a lot better for each of us. "Whittle's Picks" are hidden gems from companies large and small, old and new, with outstanding, innovative offerings -- including muvee™ Technologies (www.muvee.com), iSeeMedia (www.iseemedia.com), Zip*Linq and the Invisus PC Security Solution (http://myinvisusdirect.com/usergroups). See exciting new possibilities from these companies and learn how the digital revolution can enhance your life. You will come away from this meeting entertained and informed. Dave will provide time for questions and will bring valuable door prizes, informative handouts, and actual product for sale at significantly discounted prices arranged exclusively for user groups. If you'd like to take advantage of these special prices at the meeting and take product home with you, remember to bring cash, check, or a credit card. Mark your calendars, create an entry in your PDA, update Outlook and join us on Wednesday, May 3, 2006. The monthly meeting of the NOPC club starts at 6:30pm on the first Wednesday of every month. Location of the meeting is the J.D. Meisler school cafeteria at 3700 Cleary Ave.Metairie. Use the entrance through the breezeway on Pharr Street.

Introducing the "Grab Bag" Table

One highlight of our monthly meetings is the auction after the presentation. Club members have an opportunity to bid on computer related items that other members no longer need. There have been some great bargains offered at the auction, and that is one of the advantages of membership.

Most members do not realize that the proceeds from auctioned items may be paid to the donor with the club earning only a small handling fee. Most auctioned items are larger size computer items, both in size, weight and value.

Beginning at the May 3rd General Membership meeting for the New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC), our club will have a "Grab Bag" table available for members that want to help the club by passing on any computer related items they no longer need and that they feel may benefit other club members.

The "Grab Bag" table guidelines are::

- Any item placed on the table becomes a donation to the NOPCC and is the sole property of the NOPCC to sell or dispose of as deemed necessary.
- Only computer related items may be placed on this table and each item must be less than 5 lbs in weight.
- All proceeds from the sale of an item on the table go to the NOPCC.
- Any item consisting of more than one part must be placed in some type of container to keep all of the parts together (such as a plastic baggie, small box, carryall, etc.)
- Any person attending the General Membership meeting may purchase any of the items on the table for any amount they feel they are willing to pay in whole dollar increments. (Minimum amount of purchase is one $1.00)
- All purchase payments can be made to either the refreshments sellers (Ms. Virginia and Mr. Owen Kieran) or the *Secret Guide to Computers* (Mr. Tom Ford).
- Items may be selected from the Grab Bag table before and after the presentation, but NOT during the presentation.
- Be generous in your value estimation. Remember, all proceeds go to support your club.

The "Grab Bag" table should not preclude any members from bringing any items to the meeting that they would like auction. Auction items will differ from "Grab Bag" items in their greater size and value. ONLY Club members can bid on auction items .

The NOPCC makes no warranty, guarantee, suitability (or any other legal term you wish to use) on any "Grab Bag" table item. Caveat Emptor—Let the Buyer Beware. So please bring only usable items for the Grab Bag table. If the computer related item is trash, find the nearest trash can, not your club, for disposal.

spear phishing

Spear phishing is an e-mail spoofing fraud attempt that targets a specific organization, seeking unauthorized access to confidential data. As with the e-mail messages used in regular phishing expeditions, spear phishing messages appear to come from a trusted source. Phishing messages usually appear to come from a large and well-known company or Web site with a broad membership base, such as eBay or PayPal. In the case of spear phishing, however, the purported source of the e-mail is likely to be an individual within the recipient's own company, and generally someone in a position of authority. Here's one version of a spear phishing attack: The perpetrator finds a Web site for a targeted organization that supplies contact information for employees and other relevant data about the company. Using available details to make the message seem authentic, the perpetrator drafts an e-mail appearing to come from an individual who might reasonably request confidential information, such as a network administrator. Typically, a spear phisher requests user names and passwords or asks recipients to click on a link that will result in the user downloading spyware or other malicious programming. The message employs social engineering (fraudulent, non-technical) tactics to convince the recipient. If a single employee falls for

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the spear phisher's ploy, the attacker can masquerade as that individual and gain access to sensitive data. Most people have learned to be suspicious of unexpected requests for confidential information and will not divulge personal data in response to e-mail messages or click on links in messages unless they are positive about the source. The relative success of spear phishing relies upon the details used: the apparent source is a known and trusted individual, information within the messsage supports its validity, and the request seems to have a logical basis. At West Point in 2004, teacher and National Security Agency expert Aaron Ferguson sent out a message to 500 cadets asking them to click a link to verify grades. Ferguson's message appeared to come from a Colonel Robert Melville of West Point. Over 80% of recipients clicked the link in the message; in response they received a notification that they'd been duped and warning that their behavior could have resulted in downloads of spyware, Trojan horses, and/or other malware. IBM's Global Security Index research found that, in 2005, intercepted spear-phishing attempts rose from 56 intercepted attempts in January to over 600,000 in June.

*Submitted by **Tom Watkins***
Member, NOPCC

To defrag, or not to defrag? If you're looking for ways to speed WinXP machines, then the answer is Not.

By Carey Holzman,
freelance writer; co-host of the nationally syndicated talk show Computer America; instructor at Glendale Community College in Arizona; owner of a computer-repair business, and author of The Healthy PC.
He enjoys sleeping in his free time.
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Carey@CareyHolzman.com

Defragmenting, of course, is the process of reorganizing all data on a hard disk drive so that each file is arranged into a single uninterrupted, or contiguous, location on the disk. Many system builders and technicians have been taught, and still believe, that defragmenting hard disk drives on a regular basis keeps PCs operating at peak performance. But that idea is behind the times.

While it was true that defragmenting helped older PCs, it no longer applies. Today we have 7200-RPM (rotations per minute) hard disk drives with improved seek and latency times; many also contain an 8 or 16 MB cache buffer. Let's not forget Windows XP's ultra-efficient New Technology File System (NTFS). For PCs, servers, and workstations equipped with these innovations, defragmenting no longer makes much improvement, if any, to system performance.

This is even more of an issue with the new Serial ATA hard disk drives, which are quickly becoming the new standard. Examples of SATA drives include the Seagate Barracuda line <http://www.seagate.com/cda/newsinfo/newsroom/releases/article/0%2C%2C2733%2C00.html > and new 10,000-RPM IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics) hard-disk drives, such as the Western Digital Raptor.
<http://www.wdc.com/en/products/Products.asp?DriveID=40>

Still, defragmenting remains an important task. Why? For one, power consumption and heat can be directly related to an excessively fragmented hard drive. When the computer's operating system requests data, if a file is not contiguous, then extra seeking on the disk may be required. But a more important consideration is disk failure. Should a hard drive fail, the likelihood of successfully recovering data from the dead or damaged drive improves significantly if the data is contiguous rather than randomly scattered about the drive platters.

The software companies that create defragmentation software would like you to believe that their software does improve system performance. But my own in-house testing refutes that, as do recent findings from Steve Gibson, PC World and other system testers.

So What Works?
Since defragging the disk won't do much to improve Windows XP performance, here are 23 suggestions that will. Each can enhance the computer's performance and reliability. Best of all, most of them will cost you nothing.

1.) To decrease a system's boot time and increase system performance, use the money you save by not buying defragmentation software -- the built-

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in Windows defragmenter works just fine -- and instead equip the computer with an Ultra-133 or Serial ATA hard drive with 8 or 16MB cache buffer.

2.) If a PC has less than 512 MB of RAM, add more memory. This is a relatively inexpensive and easy upgrade that can dramatically improve system performance.

3.) Ensure that Windows XP is utilizing the NTFS file system. If you're not sure, here's how to check: First, double-click the My Computer icon, right-click on the C: Drive, then select Properties. Next, examine the File System type; if it says FAT32, then back-up any important data. Next, click
Start, click Run, type CMD, and then click OK. At the prompt, type CONVERT C: /FS:NTFS and press the Enter key. This process may take a while; it's important that the computer be uninterrupted and virus-free. The file system used by the bootable drive will be either FAT32 or NTFS. I highly recommend
NTFS for its superior security, reliability, and efficiency with larger disk drives.

4.) Disable file indexing. The indexing service extracts information from documents and other files on the hard drive and creates a "searchable keyword index."

As you can imagine, this process can be quite taxing on any system. The idea is that the user can search for a word, phrase, or property inside
a document, should they have hundreds or thousands of documents and not know the file name of the document they want. Windows XP's built-in search functionality can still perform these kinds of searches without the Indexing service. It just takes longer. The OS has to open each file at the time of
the request to find what the user is looking for.

Most people never need this feature of search. Those who do are typically in a large corporate environment where thousands of documents are located on atleast one server. If you have no need for this search feature, I recommend disabling it. Here's how: First, double-click the My Computer icon. Next, right-click on the C: Drive, then select Properties. Uncheck "Allow Indexing Service to index this disk for fast file searching." Next, apply changes to "C: subfolders and files," and click OK. If a warning or error message appears (such as "Access is denied"), click the Ignore All button.

5.) Update the PC's video and motherboard chipset drivers. Also, update and configure the BIOS. For more information on how to configure your BIOS properly, see this article on my site. <www.careyholzman.com/bios/index.html>

6.) Empty the Windows Prefetch folder every three months or so. Windows XP can "prefetch" portions of data and applications that are used frequently. This makes processes appear to load faster when called upon by the user. That's fine. But over time, the prefetch folder may become overloaded with references to files and applications no longer in use. When that happens, Windows XP is wasting time, and slowing system performance, by pre-loading them. Nothing critical is in this folder, and the entire contents are safe to delete. It will automatically rebuild itself with current frequently used applications in no time.

7.) Once a month, run a disk cleanup. Here's how: Double-click the My Computer icon. Then right-click on the C: drive and select Properties. Click the Disk Cleanup button -- it's just to the right of the Capacity pie graph -- and delete all temporary files.

8.) In your Device Manager, double-click on the IDE ATA/ATAPI Controllers device, and ensure that DMA is enabled for each drive you have connected to the Primary and Secondary controller. Do this by double-clicking on Primary
IDE Channel. Then click the Advanced Settings tab. Ensure the Transfer Mode is set to "DMA if available" for both Device 0 and Device 1. Then, repeat this process with the Secondary IDE Channel.

9.) Upgrade the cabling. As hard drive technology improves, the cabling requirements to achieve these performance boosts have become more stringent. Be sure to use 80-wire Ultra-133 cables on all of your IDE devices with the connectors properly assigned to the matching Master/Slave/Motherboard sockets. A single device must be at the end of the cable; connecting a
single drive to the middle connector on this type of ribbon cable will cause signaling problems. With Ultra DMA hard drives, these signaling

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problems will prevent the drive from performing at its maximum potential. Also, because these cables inherently support "cable select," the location of each
drive on the cable is VERY important. For these reasons, the cable is designed so drive positioning is explicitly clear.

10.) Remove all spyware from the computer. Use free programs such as AdAware by Lavasoft www.lavasoft.com or SpyBot Search & Destroy www.safer-networking.org.
Once these programs are installed, be sure to check for and download any updates before starting your search. Anything either program finds can be safely removed. Any free software that requires spyware to run will no longer function once the spyware portion has been removed; if you really want the program even though it contains spyware, simply reinstall it. The applications mentioned above are great for removing
Spyware once it's been installed. To prevent the installation of 80% or more of future Spyware, download and install Microsoft's FREE anti-spyware utility <wwwlmicrosoft.com> and installing JavaCoolSoftware's SpywareBlaster www.javacoolsoftware.com/spywareblaster.html
For more information about what Spyware is and how you unknowingly get infected with it, visit this Web
<http://www.tuglet.com/URLMRecordsTheURLThing.asp?nID=162957&f=www.webpronews.com/it/operatingsystems/wpn-22-20030610RemovingSpyware.html> Pro News page.

11.) Remove any unnecessary programs and/or items from Windows Startup routine using the MSCONFIG utility. Here's how: First, click Start, click Run, type MSCONFIG, and click OK. Click the StartUp tab, then uncheck any items you don't want to start when Windows starts. Unsure what some items
are? Visit the WinTasks Process Library at www.liutilities.com/products/wintaskspro/processlibrary/. It contains known system processes, applications, as well as spyware references and explanations. Or quickly identify them by searching for the filenames using Google or another Web search engine.

12.) Remove any unnecessary or unused programs from the Add/Remove Programs section of the Control Panel.

13.) Turn off any and all unnecessary animations, and disable active desktop. In fact, for optimal performance, turn off all animations. Windows XP offers many different settings in this area. Here's how to do it: First click on the System icon in the Control Panel. Next, click on the Advanced tab. Select the Settings button located under Performance. Feel free to play
around with the options offered here, as nothing you can change will alter the reliability of the computer, only its responsiveness.

14.) If you are an advanced user who is comfortable editing their registry, try some of the performance registry tweaks offered at Tweak XP <www.tweakxp.com/performance_tweaks.aspx>

15.) Visit Microsoft's Windows update site regularly and download all updates labeled Critical. Download any optional updates at your discretion.

16.) Update your anti-virus software on a weekly, even daily, basis. Make sure you have only one anti-virus software package installed. Mixing anti-virus software is a sure way to spell disaster for performance and reliability.

17.) Make sure you have fewer than 500 fonts installed on their computer. The more fonts you have, the slower the system will become. While Windows XP handles fonts much more efficiently than did the previous versions of Windows, too many fonts -- that is, anything over 500 -- will noticeably tax the system.

18.) Do not partition the hard drive. Windows XP's NTFS file system runs more efficiently on one large partition. The data is no safer on a separate partition, and a reformat is never necessary to reinstall an operating system. The same excuses people offer for using partitions apply to using a folder instead. For example, instead of putting all your data on the D: drive, put it in a folder called "D drive." You'll achieve the same organizational benefits that a separate partition offers, but without the degradation in system performance. Also, your free space won't be limited by the size of the partition; instead, it will be limited by the size of the entire hard drive. This means you won't need to resize any partitions, ever. That task can be time-consuming and also

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can result in lost data.

19.) Check the system's RAM to ensure it is operating properly. I recommend using a free program called MemTest86 www.memtest86.com/ The download will make a bootable CD or diskette (your choice), which will run 10 extensive tests on the PC's memory automatically after you boot to the disk you created. Allow all tests to run until at least three passes of the 10 tests are completed. If the program encounters any errors, turn off and unplug the computer, remove a stick of memory (assuming you have more than one), and run the test again. Remember, bad memory cannot be repaired, only replaced.

20.) If the PC has a CD or DVD recorder, check the drive manufacturer's Web site for updated firmware. In some cases you'll be able to upgrade the recorder to a faster speed. Best of all, it's free.

21.) Disable unnecessary services. Windows XP loads a lot of services that your customer most likely does not need. To determine which services you can disable, visit the Black Viper site <http://majorgeeks.com/page.php?id=12> for Windows XP configurations.

22.) If you're sick of a single Windows Explorer window crashing and then taking the rest of your OS down with it, then follow this tip: open My Computer, click on Tools, then Folder Options. Now click on the View tab. Scroll down to "Launch folder windows in a separate process," and enable this option. You'll have to reboot your machine for this option to take effect.

23.) At least once a year, open the computer's cases and blow out all the dust and debris. While you're in there, check that all the fans are turning properly. Also inspect the motherboard capacitors for bulging or leaks. For more information on this leaking-capacitor phenomena, you can read numerous articles on my site.

Following any of these suggestions should result in noticeable improvements to the performance and reliability of your customers' computers. If you still want to defrag a disk, that's okay, just remember that the main benefit will be to make your data more retrievable in the event of a crashed drive.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

A POEM FOR COMPUTER USERS OVER 40

A computer was something on TV
from a science-fiction show of note.
A window was something you hated to clean And
ram was the father of a goat.

Meg was the name of my girlfriend
And a gig was a job for the nights.
Now they all mean quite different things And
that really megabytes.

An application was for employment,
A program was a TV show,
A cursor used profanity,
and a keyboard was a piano.

Memory was something you lost with age,
A CD was a bank account
And if you had a 3-inch floppy
You hoped nobody found out.

Compress was something you did to the garbage,
Not something you did to a file.
And if you unzipped anything in public
You'd be in jail for a while.

Log on was adding wood to the fire,
Hard drive was a long Edsel trip on the road.
A mouse pad was where a mouse lived
And a backup happened to your commode.

Cut you did with a pocket-knife,
Paste you did with glue.
A web was what the spiders spun
And a virus, well, that was the flu.

I guess I'll stick to my pad and paper
And the memory in my head.
For I hear nobody's been killed in a computer
crash, But when it happens,
they wish they were dead!!

Submitted by Jeanne Okomato
NOPCC Member
Public Relations & Publicity Committees

Two fish swim into a concrete wall.

One turns to the other and says, "Dam!"

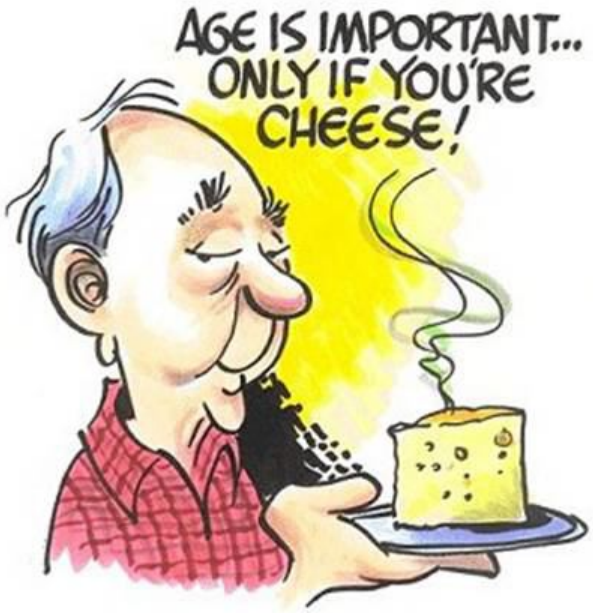
What do you call a fish with no eyes? A fsh.

CLUB SUPPORTERS

"A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm and says: "A beer please, and one for the road."
Patient: "Doc, I can't stop singing 'The Green, Green Grass of Home.'"
Doctor: "That sounds like the Tom Jones Syndrome."
Patient: "Is it common?"
Doctor: "Well, It's Not Unusual"

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 Tom Ford either at: secretary@nopc.org or (985) 643-3172.



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May 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 **Computer Programming** 6:30p-8:30p	2	3 **NOPCC General Meeting** **J.D. Meisler School** **6:30p—8:30p**	4	5	6 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a—11a
7	8 **Computer Programming** 6:30p-8:30p	9	10 **NOPCC BOD** **@ McCann's** **6:30p-8:30p**	11	12	13 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a—11a
14	15 **Computer Programming** 6:30p-8:30p	16 **Genealogy SIG** **7:00 pm Call 887.5746 for meeting location.**	17	18 **New User Sig** St. Francis Xavier Sc 444 Metairie Rd 6:30p-8:30p	19	20 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a—11a
21	22 **Computer Programming** 6:30p-8:30p	23	24	25	26	27 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a—11a
28	29 **Computer Programming** 6:30p-8:30p	30	31			

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.;

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	president@nopc.org	246-7759
Vice President	Ray Paternostro .	vp@nopc.org	737-9099
Secretary	Tom Ford	secretary@nopc.org	985-643-3172
Treasurer	Don Herrmann	treasurer@nopc.org	831-1284
Director At Large	Carl Henderson	director1@nopc.org	466-3954
Director At Large	Mary Prinz	director2@nopc.org	455-1412
Director At Large	Mike York	director3@nopc.org	

Standing Committees

BBS SysOp	Lanny Goldfinch	sysop@nopc.org	482-5066
Newsletter Editor	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	897-1205
Public Relations	Jeannie Okamoto	pr@nopc.org	455-0977
Publicity	Jeannie Okamoto	publicity@nopc.org	455-0977
Webmaster	Sherrie Henne	webmaster@nopc.org	504-913-5638

Special Interest Groups

Computer Programming	Elliot Mike York	mike@gnonug.org	738-5997
Digital Media	Ray Paternostro	dm@nopc.org	737-9099
Genealogy	Vincent Haupt	hauptv@aol.com	985-785-6288
Internet	Ray Paternostro	internet-m@nopc.org	737-9099
New Users	Tom Ford	new-user@nopc.org	985-643-3172
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 Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	***www.nopc.org***

Late Breaking News

Introducing the "Grab Bag" Table

One highlight of our monthly meetings is the auction after the presentation. Club members have an opportunity to bid on computer related items that other members no longer need. There have been some great bargains offered at the auction, and that is one of the advantages of membership.

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Please bring only usable items for the Grab Bag table. If the computer related item is trash, find the nearest trash can, not your club for disposal.

Yahoo and NOPC_HELP

What is Yahoo? **Yahoo is a combination search engine and search index to information on the World Wide Web.**

At the last NOPCC General Meeting, Tom Ford introduced the members the club's help group on Yahoo, nopc_help. This Yahoo group will provide NOPCC members with 24/7 access to help from the club.

Join via the group page:

Locate a group to join. On the front page of Yahoo! Groups, you can browse the Groups directory or search for a group by topic.

Click on the **Join This Group** button on front page of any group.

1. If you are not signed in, you will be asked to enter your Yahoo! ID. If you do not have a Yahoo! ID, you can click on the link **New to Yahoo!? Sign up now**.
2. Set your membership preferences. When you join, you can choose a profile you'd like to display to the group, select the email address at which you'd like to receive group messages, choose how you receive group messages, and more.

Joining the nopc_help group is required to assure that only club members can post messages. After entering your request to join, it may take a day or so for your request to be reviewed and access allowed. You will receive an e-mail letting you know when you are approved.