



SAN FRANCISCO PERSONAL COMPUTER
USERS GROUP

eBLUE
NOTES

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Who We Are, What We Do and How You Can Join the Fun!

The San Francisco PC Users Group, founded in 1982, serves as a regional volunteer forum for the exchange of ideas, industry insights and solutions to problems, etc. related to using personal computers having the Intel x86 or compatible processor.

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Annual membership in The San Francisco PC Users Group includes, among other benefits, monthly meetings, a one year subscription to *Blue Notes*, and Internet access. Cost: \$25 for individuals, \$30 for families and \$50 for businesses. E-mail our Membership Registrar, membership@mail.sfpcug.org, or attend a monthly meeting (see details inside and calendar). An application form can be found on the last page of this issue. Once completed, mail it with your payment to the SFPCUG Membership Director, 3145 Geary Blvd., Box 284, San Francisco, CA 94118-3300

Internet Services for All Members

Internet access is a major incentive for SFPCUG membership. Visit our web site: <http://www.sfpcug.org> where you will find, information about *Blue Notes*, the club's dial-up Internet services, activities of our various Special Interest Groups. etc. PPP accounts are available - e-mail: help@mail.sfpcug.org or contact our WebMaster at webmaster@mail.sfpcug.org or 415-665-3599.

The Internet SIG offers access to a shared account for experimenting with Web technology, including CGI scripting. Contact the WebMaster for details.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Users gather in SIGs to explore and solve specific problems related to software and/or

hardware. The Calendar will list dates and venues. If a SIG addressing your interest(s) does not exist, call 415-665-3599 or 415-346-2644 to organize one.

Write a Review on New Software and it's Yours, Free!!

Vendors frequently offer new software or books to the SFPCUG so that an interested member can give it a test run and keep the product in exchange for a published review in *Blue Notes*. Our Product Review Coordinator can arrange to obtain software you want to review. Guidelines for reviews appear regularly in *Blue Notes*, or ask the Product Review Coordinator for a copy.

Steering Committee Meetings

The SFPCUG Steering Committee Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at the upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza on Geary Blvd. and 16th Ave.

The SFPCUG Steering Committee discusses issues of immediate importance to the Group and makes plans for future activities. Steering Committee meetings are open to all SFPCUG members. Any Group member having attended two of four preceding Steering Committee meetings is eligible to vote.

General meetings

General meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Doors open at 6:15 PM for SIGs and the general meeting begins at 7PM and end by 9PM

First time guests are admitted free, repeat guests are asked for a donation of \$4.

Location: Meetings now take place in the auditorium of the Community College District Office, 33 Gough Street, (a half-block south of Market Street) San Francisco, CA There is ample free parking in front of the building. Civic Center BART and MUNI is ½ a block away.

The latest information on programs and location for upcoming general and steering committee meetings is available on our web site <http://www.sfpcug.org>. Always check for late breaking news.

Publication in Blue Notes

Follow the structure of a previous article in *Blue Notes*.

* **Name/version of the subject program/book.** What does the program do and on what operating platform (s)? Does it satisfactorily fill a genuine need, e.g. task, entertainment, utility, etc.?

* **Reviewer:** name and email address.

Name and reputation of the company distributing the product. Available mail address and phone number(s)

* **At A Glance:** A 1-to 4 rating

* **Price:** MSRP, retail or street

* **System Requirements:** (self-explanatory)

* **Pros:** Ease of use, learning, etc? Documentation: comprehensive, intelligible? Support? Does it deliver as advertised? If a book, is the author's style smooth or challenging? Is the Index useful?

* **Cons:** Shortfalls, if any

* The body of your review

* Graphics welcome and requested if possible

When addressing technical, complex issues, endeavor to be as comprehensive and street-level clear as possible.

* Use one space between sentences, two carriage returns at the end of each paragraph

* Re-read your work carefully, objectively, checking word, sentence and logic flow to ensure you say precisely what you mean to say, clearly

* Do not use indents or tabs

* Spell-check your work

Procedure for submitting articles for publication.

Save your article as a pure ASCII file with line breaks, and a **.TXT** extension. You may alternately save your files in Rich Text Format (**.RTF** extension) then send them to bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org. Should special formatting be necessary, forward a hard copy to the Editor. Contact *Blue Notes* staff by e-mail, bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org.

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Don't Forget the Ghosts, And Back to the Eighties

by President, Butler Crittenden



After three days of six-hour stints at the Robert Austin Computer Show, Oakland, serving as the anchor of the Tech Bench, a few computer-user problems are becoming clearer. Robert Austin is kind enough to offer free tech support to anyone who attends the show. The help requested ranges from questions of opinion (What brands of motherboards do you like?) to technical questions (How do I install my new 30gig drive?) to installation of components in the boxes the petitioner has bought at the show or brought to the show. It's a real kick "taking on all comers" and succeeding a good bit of the time.

This said, *I must issue the standard warning that some detail of this article may not be right.* If you spot a detail that should be changed or expanded, let me know. If you spot an error that really matters, let me know even faster. The objective is to be helpful; the fear is that someone may follow my advice to the letter and end up with a problem. For safety sake back-up at least your data files before doing anything to your computer. And don't forget your email files, personal address data (e.g., **Outlook**, **Palm**, etc.), **Quicken** or financial data, passwords, network and Dial-up networking settings, phone numbers to dial, **My Documents**, etc., on all hard drives you intend to "work on." Do a Search/Find for all files dated recently as one way to jog your memory of data files that you need. A good, cheap way to back-up is a ZIP drive, with the added benefit that the 100MB or 250MB disks can be removed from the premises.

Ghost-busting

At the last show perhaps the most powerful help-strategy was ghost-busting. Despite the best efforts of lots of tech support articles and even during *Random Access* at our club meetings, a surprising number of people don't know about Windows' ghosts. Even the by-far-the-best hardware and software tech guy I know had let this one slip by.

When first starting the computer, go into **Safe Mode**. This is done by *slowly* tapping the **F8** key after the black screen flies by few seconds, which if done

right brings up a menu. If you miss it, let the computer completely start, then **Shut Down / Restart**, and try again. The faster your computer, the harder to get into Safe Mode. Once the menu is up, the third option is Safe Mode, which installs the bare minimum drivers to open Windows. Your CD, for example, will not be available.

The next step is simple enough: go into **Device Manager**. (Right-click **My Computer**, left-click **Properties**, and touch the Device Manager tab.) **Expand** (touch the plus [+] sign before) each item and view the entries beneath it. If you find two or more CD-ROM drives, for example, and you have only one CD in your computer, you've got a ghost. *Remove both of them*. Or all three, or however many. Windows will find only the one correct one when you Restart.

Often there will be numerous hard drives, floppy drives, floppy drive controllers, video cards, sound cards, Network Adapters, COM and printer ports. In each case remove all of the items. It will NOT work to remove one COM1 and leave the other COM1, for the next time you check in Safe Mode you'll have two COM1s again. Toward the bottom of **Device Manager** there's **System Devices**, which typically has several correct multiple entries, such as several "motherboard resources" and several "PCI Steering" entries. I generally don't mess with **System Devices**, but upon occasion I've cleaned it out pretty much entirely and Windows found the proper correct entries after a Restart or two. If you've installed ME over 98SE, which you installed over 98, which you installed over 95C, don't be surprised to see ghosts everywhere, and even **System Devices** may be so convoluted as to make you suspect that some multiple entries should be removed. My luck to date is that removing even **System Devices** entries does no harm. (Guiding rule of medicine and computer tech support: First, do no harm.) An extra Restart or two may be required, but patience and Restarting has worked for me so far.

At the last Oakland show there was a new USB scanner that wasn't working: we removed ghosts from a couple of prior Windows installations. Another person had a new **Adaptec** SCSI card that wouldn't recognize the external CD-Burner: we found the ghost of old SCSI card that had to be removed.

Occasionally you'll remove a **System Devices** entry, only to have it come right back, although not duplicated. If the component is not what you want, keep in mind that the computer thinks it's there. Usually a little patient searching of www.google.com or www.dogpile.com (check USENET) will turn up some new drivers. From within **Device Manager**, click on the offending item, then **Properties / Update Driver / Browse** to the folder where you put the new drivers.

Back To the Eighties

When *SFpcUG* was founded a major purpose was for people to help each other with the fundamentals of computing. DOS was definitely a foreign language, and although only a few dozen commands and in simple English at that, you'd have thought that we were all being required to learn to read

and write Chinese. I remember well the near panic of typing something at the DOS prompt, and I remember being particularly irritated with the dBase authors, who expected me to actually study and learn something rather than just type in menu entries. Early in 1990 Windows 3.0 came out, and slowly everyone forgot what little DOS they knew. More importantly, I'd guess that 90 percent of today's computer users never learned any DOS, and have been happily point-and-clicking away for the past decade.

Microsoft's latest 9X version of Windows, ME, tries very hard to pretend DOS is not even there. However, there is one little problem--those damnable but glorious new 20-80gig hard drives, with no end in sight as to size. We used to think 20megs was a huge hard drive, now we think that's a reasonable size for a single audio or movie file. I have found that people do not know how to FDISK and FORMAT these or any other drives, perhaps the most frequently asked question at the Oakland computer show.

How to fdisk and format in Windows 95, 98, and ME

First, get to an A:\ prompt or a C:\ prompt. While occasionally there is an opportunity or reason to drop to a DOS window and execute fdisk while Windows is open, this is to be done with caution. It's primarily done in order to see what the hard drives and partitions are. Generally, use a boot disk to get to A:\, or slowly tap F8 upon start-up to get to C:\. *The discussion below assumes larger hard drives and newer machines are being used.* If in doubt, and especially if your OS is Windows 95 or before, or if you have a data recovery or virus problem, check with an expert. Once your data are gone . . .

A topic worthy of another article, the limitations of HD size on older computers has to do with both ROM BIOS (your computer's hardware) and OS. FAT16 operating systems (Windows 95 and before) have a limit of 2gigs that will be recognized on the HD. Old computers from the early '90s limited the HD size to 540MB in the BIOS, which can be overcome with one of the "disk manager-type" programs that trick the ROM BIOS translation to get it up 2gigs in FAT16, into "seeing" larger HDs. FAT32 OSs (Windows 98 and ME) have no practical limit on how large HDs can be. There are cards that can be bought inexpensively and installed into the motherboard that will handle both larger HDs and the newer ATA66 speed as well.

FDISK

Type [fdisk] then hit the **Enter** key. (Ignore all brackets, note that [E] means depress **Enter** key)

Text comes up asking if you want to enable Large Block Support. Type [Y], then [E]

Menu comes up with 4 or 5 entries, depending on whether one physical hard drive or two

1. Create DOS partition or Logical DOS drive
2. Set active partition
3. Delete partition or Logical DOS drive
4. Display partition information
5. Change current fixed disk drive [*IF 2 HDs in computer*]

Enter choice: [1]

Generally start with choice # 4 to view what you have. Or # 5 to view the two drives and change to the one you want to work on.

What do you want to do? FDISK the drive for the first time? Completely re-do the current hard drive? Format an already-FDISKed drive or part of a drive (an Extended partition and Logical DOS drive)?

COMPLETELY RE-DO THE CURRENT DRIVE:

If you already have a DOS partition (typically C: drive) or Logical DOS drive (typically D: drive in the Extended DOS position), these have to be removed first. Start with # 3, Remove D: drive first, then Remove Extended DOS partition, then Remove C: drive. After each action press *Esc* to return to prior menu. You must be able to enter # 4 and see no drives or partitions on the physical hard drive. When done and after pressing *Esc* once or twice to finish, you will have to restart the computer for fdisk to take effect.

FDISK FOR THE FIRST TIME:

After # 4 to verify what you have, start with # 1, and then # 1 on the next menu: "Create primary DOS partition."

If you want the whole hard disk as your C: drive, say YES to next question.

If you want to divide the drive into smaller partitions, say NO and then either select a percent of the drive you want for C: (e.g., 50%) or the number of megabytes. After C: is established, select # 2 and Set it active. Then Select # 1 again, and then # 2 on the next menu to "Create Extended DOS partition." Say YES to the entire remaining number of megabytes, then divide it into two or more "Logical drives" (such as D: and E:) as the next step, or keep as one (recommended if whole drive is 15gigs or less).

Once FDISKING is finished, check your results by typing [fdisk]) at the A: prompt. Select # 4 and # 5 to review your work.

FORMAT

Using your boot disk, type `[format c: /s] [E]` . The `/s` means that the operating system will be transferred to your C: drive. `[format d:] [E]` at the A: prompt will format the D: drive, then E: drive, etc., if you have more. Do not format with a Windows 95 boot disk if you plan on installing Windows 98 or Windows ME. **More important**, do not format with FAT32 Windows 98 or ME if you plan to install Windows 95. There are several versions of Windows 95, and it's important to make a boot disk with the files from the version you are already using. Except for `mscdex` and `oakcdrom` (below), don't mix operating system versions.

BOOT DISK & CONFIG.SYS / AUTOEXEC.BAT

In order to `fdisk`, format, and then install your Windows 95, 98, or ME OS (operating system), your boot disk must include **`fdisk.exe`**, **`format.com`**, and **`sys.com`**, all of which are in `C:\Windows\Command`. You can create a boot disk using **Control Panel / Add-Remove Programs / Startup Disk** (tab at top), but it won't have all these on it, so drag any missing item from the `C:\Windows\Command` folder and drop it on the A: drive after the boot disk has been created. Also handy to have on the boot disk are: **`edit.com`**, **`xcopy.exe`**, **`xcopy32.exe`**, and **`xcopy32.mod`**.

MOST IMPORTANT, for your CD to work you will need **`MSCDEX.EXE`** and **`OAKCDROM.SYS`**. For Windows 98 users these are in `C:\Windows\COMMAND\EBD` (or "search/find" for them). Windows 98 handles the installation of the CD-ROM or DVD drive required programs onto the boot disk pretty much automatically, but Windows 95 does not. To make Windows95 boot up so that the CD-ROM is available, there must be a **`config.sys`** on the boot disk that includes the line:

```
[device=oakcdrom.sys /D:cd001]
```

and a line in **`autoexec.bat`** on the boot disk that reads

```
[mscdex.exe /D:cd001 /L:D]
```

These "files/programs" must be on the boot disk for it to work. You can use the `MSCDEX.EXE` and `OAKCDROM.SYS` from a Windows 98 computer on the Windows 95 boot disk, which is the easiest way to get the boot process to include the CD-ROM drive when you're working with Windows 95.

As long as the `EDIT` program is on the disk or "on the path" you can type `[edit config.sys] [E]` , which will bring up a blank `config.sys`. You then simply type in `[device=oakcdrom.sys /D:cd001] [E]`. The reason I recommend having the `EDIT` command on the boot disk is to allow easy creation and modification of the two essential files, `config.sys` and `autoexec.bat`. These two mean, by the way, configure the system and then automatically execute

the following batch of instructions. Config.sys happens first, followed by autoexec.bat.

Once the hard drive is FDISKed and formatted, you boot one last time with the boot disk, this time selecting the second option of the three that pop up, which starts the computer with the CD-ROM accessible. (If a Windows 95 boot disk, it'll recognize the CD and drop you at an A:\ prompt.) At the **a:\ prompt** type [md c:\Win95] [E] to create a folder on C: named Win95. Or [md c:\Win98] [E]. Better yet, if you have a D: drive, type [md d:\Win98] [E]. If you're at the **C:\ prompt**, type [md Win98] [E]; if you're at the **D: prompt**, type [md Win98] [E]. To get from c: to d:, simply type [d:] [E]. To get from C:\ to C:\Windows, at the C:\ prompt type [cd windows] [E]. To get from C:\Windows to C:, simply type [cd \] [E]. At any folder or drive, type [dir] [E] to see the contents of the directory, or add a /p after **dir** to have it pause at the end of each page. E.G., type [dir /p] [E]. This is perhaps all the DOS you need to know, but you do need at least this much.

Once the folder for Win98 or Win95 is settled upon (C:, D:, E: drive), then "log on" to the CD-ROM drive, in which you have placed your copy of the OS (e.g., Windows 98 disk), by typing [D:] [E] (assuming the CD is the D: drive). Then change directory to the Win98 folder by typing [cd win98] [E]. Then type [copy *.* c:\Win98] [E], assuming you put the Win98 folder on the C: drive. You may have to repeat the process if the CD is not spinning, but you should see all the files being copied to the target folder. Then go to that folder and type [setup] [E] for a new installation of your OS.

FINAL TIP: In situations where you have a version of Windows on your HD, if you try to install Windows 98 or 98SE and get a message that you have the wrong version, **Cancel** the installation and **Shut down to the DOS prompt** -- you should land in C:\Windows. Type [ren win.com win.xxx] [E] (where xxx = your initials).* Then type [cd\] [E], followed by [cd win98] [E]. (Or first log-on to the drive where the Win98 folder is located.) Type [setup] [E]. *If a box pops up* that Windows will be installed in C:\Windows.000, **DO NOT** click *OK*. Click **Other** and another box pops up with C:\Windows.000 in it. Delete the .000 [*dot000*] so the installation goes into your existing C:\Windows folder. This assumes you have copied Win98 from your Windows 98 CD to your C: or D: drive. (*If the installation fails to proceed, you can reverse by [rename win.com to win.123][E]), followed by [rename win.xxx to win.com][E].)

I hope this helps. But if all this is too much, don't hesitate to call, email, or come to **SFpcUG's Second Tuesday SIG**. Check our WEB site www.sfpcug.org for the latest detailson the SIG meeting.

Annual AUCTION

and

Holiday PARTY

Tuesday 19 December 2000, 6 PM

The auditorium of the Community College District Office,
33 Gough Street, (a half-block south of Market Street)
San Francisco, CA

computers, hardware, software, books

ham, turkey, salad, bread, desert

bring cash and party hat

Entry Level Questions Answered

by Lowell Shatraw, CUGG

Q : WHAT IS THE TASKBAR AND THE TOOLBAR?

The TASK BAR is the area at the bottom of your WIN9x screen that shows the applications that are currently running. The active application will show differently, while the others will show the names of the applications. Clicking a non-active application will cause the application to be displayed on the screen; on top of whatever else you may have displayed.

The TASK BAR on all WINDOWS systems can be relocated to the side or to the top of your screen if desired. To move it, just click and drag on a blank area on the TASK BAR and let go when your mouse is located within about one inch from either side or at least halfway up the screen from the bottom.

The TOOL BAR is a row or column of icons that appear, typically, at the top of the application screen. The functions will vary according to the application being used. For example, the tool bar for my Internet Explorer shows the BACK and FORWARD icons, as well as the STOP, REFRESH, HOME and others. Netscape COMPOSER shows the NEW, OPEN, SAVE, PUBLISH, PREVIEW, and others

Generally, the TOOL BAR is displayed below the MENU BAR which is

located in the topmost area, under the title and which contains the names like FILE, EDIT, INSERT and others.

Q : WHAT ARE THE SHORTCUTS TO **WINDOWS EXPLORER** AND TO **FIND**? ALSO, WHAT WILDCARDS WILL WORK WITH THE **FIND** COMMAND?

A: Here is a list of some of the methods to access **EXPLORER**

1. RIGHT click the START button
2. RIGHT click MY COMPUTER
3. Click the START button, select RUN, and then type in EXPLORER and press ENTER.

Here is a list of some of the methods to access FIND-

1. Click the START button, scroll up to FIND and then over to FILES or FOLDERS
2. Access WINDOWS EXPLORER and then TOOLS, then FILES or FOLDERS The wildcards available are the QUESTION MARK ?, and the ASTERISK *. The question mark replaces a single character in the search string, while the asterisk replaces up to 8 or more characters in a search string. Remember that you're looking for file names or folder names.

For example, let's search for the filename EXPLORER. First type in the "NAMED" window the characters EXPLORER. Now type in the window "LOOK IN:" this drive letter and path name C:\. Be sure the check mark

is in the INCLUDE SUBFOLDERS option and now click the FIND NOW button to start the search. As you will see if you try this, many possible results will be displayed. But, we're looking for the WINDOWS EXPLORER filename icon and it must be an icon, not a (yellow) folder. It's located in the C:\WINDOWS directory (folder) and is named EXPLORER.EXE.

If you had typed in EXPL* and searched, less results would appear and the name

EXPLORER.EXE would still appear. This is because the * replaces ALL characters from the position it is placed to the 8th character of the standard DOS 8.3 format filename notation. But, if you have long file names, as allowed in WINDOWS, anything that STARTS with whatever you type in, up to the * will be found. And that can be MANY names. For example, if I had typed LOW*, then any filename or folder with LOW, in either uppercase or lowercase would be found. On my system, on just my C: drive, 1986 names were found. That's Nineteen hundred and eighty six file names and folder names. Try this one. Type ME* and see what results you get.

Q : WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE WINDOWS KEY?

A: The WINDOWS key is an additional key found on certain keyboards that allows the user to select functions without having to use the normal, multiple, keystrokes to accomplish a task. The functionality of the keyboard WINDOWS key is implemented when the OS recognizes the special keyboard and installs drivers, or by manually installing the special drivers that came with the system.

Here is a list of the shortcuts assigned to the WINDOWS key.

Press the

WINDOWS KEY and The START menu will be displayed

WINDOWS KEY + PAUSE opens the SYSTEM PROPERTIES dialog (Key may be named PAUSE/BREAK)

WINDOWS KEY + TAB toggles the selection of the applications on the TASKBAR with each press of the TAB key.

WINDOWS KEY + E opens WINDOWS EXPLORER

WINDOWS KEY + F1 displays the HELP screen

WINDOWS KEY + F displays the FIND ALL screen

WINDOWS KEY + CTRL + F opens the FIND COMPUTER dialog box

WINDOWS KEY + M causes all applications to MINIMIZE

WINDOWS KEY + M + SHIFT causes all MINIMIZED applications to be restored to being open on desktop (opposite of m above)

WINDOWS KEY + R opens the RUN window

Q : SHOULD I TURN OFF MY COMPUTER AT NIGHT?

A: Only if you are not working on it! Seriously though, if you have the PC connected to the power through an UPS you can safely leave it on all the time, but be sure to turn the power off to the monitor.

WHY you ask? Well, each time you power ON the computer, which consists of electronic circuits, the surge of the electricity through the circuits in the system and the drives has the potential to cause something to burn out. I use the following analogy to help understand this when I present to my hardware troubleshooting class. When do you generally

see a light bulb burn out? When you turn the switch ON of course. The electrical surge causes a temperature change as well as the filament being subjected to the electrical flow and this has the potential to burn out the filament in the bulb. (Of course this does not apply to fluorescent lamps.)

So, if you have an UPS (Uninterruptable Power Supply), and not just a SURGE Protector, you can safely leave the power ON. If the power happens to fluctuate during the night, or even go off for a short period of time, the UPS continues to power the PC. It has a battery that constantly converts the DC power to the AC power used by the PC. This battery allows the PC keep running for a time.

I ran a BBS (Bulletin Board System) for 10 years and of course the PC had to be left ON all the time so callers could connect to it. Hmmmm, did my mention of BBS happen to DATE me? These were the method of communicating with other PC users through one central PC, much like the Internet, but on a smaller scale. Anyway, I left the PC ON all the time, except for periodic shutdowns for upgrades and maintenance.

To sum it all up, leave the PC ON but turn the monitor OFF, or at least have a screen saver running to prevent the possibility of the image being burnt into the monitor screen.

Q : WHAT IS WALLPAPER? HOW CAN I CHANGE IT? CAN I USE A PICTURE FROM THE INTERNET OR A PICTURE THAT I HAVE SCANNED?

A: The background on your desktop is called WALLPAPER. The picture, or graphics displayed are found in the system or can be added from other

sources. Mine is a space shot showing the shuttle and arm of an astronaut looking down on the Great Lakes.

To change the wallpaper, RIGHT click the desktop, select PROPERTIES and select the WALLPAPER TAB or BACKGROUND TAB as some systems name it. In the displayed window there will be a list of installed wallpaper scenes to select from. Scroll through the list, and if you have a favorite, select it. You also can have it centered in the desktop window, or tiled--multiple images of the picture or graphics used to fill the screen. I prefer CENTERED. These images can be .BMP, or JPG files; pictures of the kids, or your favorite ski trail, or whatever you desire can be used.

If you find a picture on the Internet and would like to use it as a wallpaper background, here's how to install it. Right click the image and the selections SET AS WALLPAPER, or SAVE PICTURE AS are available. I prefer to save the picture and then access the desktop properties as explained above to later try it. Save the picture in the C:\WINDOWS folder and you are all ready to change it when you want a different wallpaper setting.

Scanned pictures can be used in the same way that Internet images are stored and used.

Q : WHAT ARE SCREEN SAVERS? WHY DO WE NEED THEM? CAN I DOWNLOAD SCREEN SAVERS FROM THE INTERNET AND RUN THEM ON MY PC? HOW?

A: The image on a monitor has the potential to burn itself into the inside surface if kept there for a long period of time. (Newer monitors are much less likely than the monitors of 5 - 10 years ago.) Electrons exciting the

phosphor on the inside of the display glass create the monitor image. The persistence of the phosphor (the ability to 'light it up', and keep it light so it can be seen), is much less with today's monitors than with those of yesteryears. With this persistence being lower, the chance of the phosphor actually being burned is much less also.

Screen savers today are more of a personal choice of what you want to see when you are not using the PC, but still want to keep the monitor turned on. They are used more for cosmetic, than for protection against burning the screen. Swimming fish, the Frank & Louie Budweiser scene and others are solely for your enjoyment.

There are many FREEWARE and SHAREWARE screen savers available nowadays. With an Internet Connection, users can quickly download a new ones, with seemingly unlimited choices! To see which ones you currently have, use the FIND command to search the C:\WINDOWS folder for *.SCR files. SCR is a screen saver type file. When downloading new ones, place them directly in the WINDOWS folder so your DISPLAY PROPERTIES can see them when you want to change the one you have running to a different one. (If they are not in their SCR format, you may want to download them to a different location, extract them from whatever format they were in--ZIP or EXE--and then place them in the C:\WINDOWS folder. Some others yet will require 'installing' them if they are of the type that include special features--like the Frank & Louie Budweiser frog one.)

Q CAN I CHANGE THE WORDS UNDER MY DESKTOP ICONS? HOW ABOUT THE COLOR BEHIND THE WORDS? ALSO, CAN I MAKE THE WORDS BIGGER

SO I CAN READ THEM?

A Yes you can change the wording. One way is to RIGHT click the icon and select RENAME. Another is to LEFT click the name twice, in slow succession--at least two seconds between each click-- or you'll launch the program associated with the icon. The name will change to a box showing the entire name and be highlighted in BLUE. Use the ARROW keys to, position the cursor where you want to insert new text and start typing. While the text is BLUE, pressing the BACKSPACE key will remove all the current text. Then just type new text, keeping in mind there is a limited amount of characters that will display when your finish, and press the ENTER key.

To make the color behind the words different, do this. In the CONTROL PANEL access the DISPLAY and double click it. Select APPEARANCE. Look in the lower half of the open DISPLAY PROPERTIES window for the ITEM: and the word DESKTOP should be there. If not, select it. Then off to the right is the COLOR: selection. The current color shown is what you see as the color behind the desktop words; change the color to suit your desire.

To make the desktop icons text bigger, while still in the DISPLAY PROPERTIES window, select ICON in the ITEM: window. Notice just below is the FONT: setting window? Select a larger font than the default SIZE 8, click APPLY and see if it's the size you want. If not, change it until it is.

Q: WHAT IS A FOLDER? CAN I CREATE NEW FOLDERS WITH MY OWN TITLES? HOW DO I MOVE FILES IN AND OUT OF FOLDERS? CAN I GET

RID OF FOLDERS I DON'T NEED?

A: A folder is much like the manila folder you may use for storing your monthly receipts and bills. Each folder contains different information in your file cabinet. Each folder in your computer also has different information that has been placed there. NOTE: A computer folder may contain the same information that exists in other folders--if the information has been COPIED there. Each system has some folders that are named the same--like WINDOWS, PROGRAM FILES, etc. just as some homes have the same folders found in everyone's file cabinet--i.e. PUBLIC SERVICE, GREELEY GAS, TELEPHONE. Folders contain program files, data files and files used to support a program--like WORD is a program file that has DLL and COM files to support the WORD program when it is executed.

Folders can be created with whatever title the user wants. For example, to create a folder names TEST on the C: drive, several methods can be utilized to accomplish this. Right click MY COMPUTER and select EXPLORE when the drop-down menu appears. Now click ONCE on the C: drive ICON. Now, go up to the menu bar and select FILE | NEW | FOLDER. A new folder ICON is created and now you can just type the name you want. When the name of the folder is BLUE and highlighted, just typing text causes the name to change to the newly typed text.

To remove a folder, click it once to highlight it, then press the DEL key on the keyboard. You have just deleted the folder and ALL THE CONTENTS of the folder. So, be sure what is in the folder, if anything is there, is not wanted. Once you have deleted the folder, all the files and folders within that folder go away as well.

The above article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs. Lowell Shatraw is Secretary to the Computer User Group of Greeley, in Greeley Colorado. Lowell has worked in computer support call centers supporting Macintosh and PC environments; has developed and taught computer troubleshooting and repair; and is currently a UNIX system Administrator who also works with WINDOWS 9x, NT and WINDOWS 2000.

Ken's Korner

by Ken Fermoye

Content Copying Poses Legal, Ethical Questions

The growing trend of copying content, especially from the Internet, disturbs many of us involved in the creation and use of material for newsletters and websites. In viewing hundreds of newsletters and websites in recent years, I've seen many examples of plagiarism, copyright infringement and downright theft of intellectual property. The same holds true on many of the group and personal websites I visit.

I'm not the only one concerned. Knowledgeable editors and UG officers, including APCUG (Association of PC User Group) representatives, told me they also view it as a problem.

Actually, everyone should be concerned. Unauthorized copying could create legal difficulties for a group; it certainly poses ethical questions. Closer to home, if you have a personal or business website, you should be aware of copying do's and don'ts.

I believe illegal content copying usually results from lack of knowledge, not malicious intent. Material is so readily available on the Web, and we're so accustomed to unrestricted access, that it's easy to assume everything on it is up for grabs.

I'm no expert on copyright laws but over the past 50 years I have learned practical rules of thumb that most editors follow. However, advent of computers and the Net has raised all sorts of new questions, both legal and ethical, about copyrights and "intellectual property."

That said, let me give you my views on the subject.

First, fair game for use in UG media includes articles written specifically for such purpose: my Ken's Korner pieces, Bob Click's Deals column and articles distributed by APCUG. Most UGs allow other groups to reprint material from their newsletters, subject to some restrictions. More free material is offered on Microsoft's Mindshare website, microsoft.com/mindshare/default.asp, and the User Group Network, user-groups.net.

Vendors' public relations releases also are legitimate freebies for use by editors and webmasters. A caution here: it may be a disservice to members to run such material "as is." It's a form of propaganda or advertising, remember, and often gives a much rosier review than a product or service deserves. I sometimes use PR releases as a basis or

background for columns, but I research and/or get hands-on experience to provide a balanced, more objective article.

Now for the no-no's.

Do not pick up magazine articles and reprint them in your newsletters or website without permission from the publication! The fact that they appear on a website does not mean they are public property.

The same goes for clipart, photos and illustrations. Unless specifically identified as available for use, free of charge, reprinting such material without permission is thievery. If you are a business owner, be aware that some material on the Web is available for reprint without charge to not-for-profit organization but not for commercial use.

Be sure to read the fine print, however on ANYTHING you reprint from the Internet. There usually are conditions attached. Some "free" material may not be used in publications that have a subscription fee, cover price or that contain paid advertising.

Quoting from external sources in articles or reviews is acceptable, if done judiciously. Use a short excerpt to illustrate a point but don't lift a significant number of pages and make it part of your article. Always identify such material by using quotation marks. Always give proper credit to the source.

Typically, publications (and books) contain language like this.

"All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by electrical or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing by the publisher."

Often, in books, this phrase appears: "except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review."

Before using any material from a Website, look for a statement that says that content on the site is freely available for copying and reprinting. Then read the fine print to be sure you understand the conditions of use. Only then can you legally and ethically copy and reprint text or images in your group or personal newsletter or Website

If you don't find such a statement, look for a button or link marked "Copyright" or "Terms of Use." In commercial Websites, such a link takes you to a statement, similar to the following, on "Reproduction of Images and Other Copyrighted Material Found on Web Sites."

"You should be aware that it is illegal to reproduce or distribute copyrighted material without the permission of the copyright owner. Accessing images or text provided on Websites does not give you any rights to use them as you wish. Only the copyright owner, or the owner's legal agent, can give you permission to copy, distribute, or publicly display protected material. The copyright owner in most cases is the creator. Images are generally owned by the photographer; text is owned by the author."

The wording may be different, but the intent is always the same: To establish legal ownership of the publication or website content, and to warn off those who attempt to copy any or all of the content that it is illegal to do so without specific permission.

You might say to yourself, "My newsletter only goes out to a few hundred people; they won't mind if I copy this one article or photo."

Not so! That's somewhat like, if not exactly analogous to, a counterfeiter saying, "I'm just going to print up a few hundred \$20 bills so Uncle Sam won't mind."

Now the wrath of a copyright owner may not descend on you with the fury that the Treasury Department would bring down on a counterfeiter. Illegal copying could have embarrassing consequences if the copyright owner learns about the infraction and chooses to be hard-nosed about it. Even if there are no legal repercussions, improper reprinting of material casts an ethical shadow over any organization or individual that does it.

Ken's Korner NewsByte

by Ken Fermoye

Relief in Sight from Barrage Of Irsome TV Commercials?

Are you fed up with the seemingly endless barrage of commercials crammed into your favorites TV shows and sports events? If so, join the club! But relief may be in sight, according to Electronic Digest (Sept. 5, 2000 issue).

The magazine reports that sophisticated new integrated circuit controllers will improve performance of Set-Top Boxes and Personal Video

Recorders (STBs/PVRs). The new ICs will make the devices less expensive and more versatile. This should eventually change their status from novelties with appeal to a limited market of "early adopters" to appliances that gradually will take the place of today's VCRs.

Electronic Design also notes that the new controllers "can be used to manage arriving and departing data streams, into and out of set-top boxes, storage devices, digital TVs. PVRs," from a variety of sources, including broadband cable, satellites, terrestrial and IP (Internet Protocol) networks.

What does this have to do with computers? PVR technology is digital, like computers, not analog like VCRs, and data is stored on a hard drive, like computers, not on magnetic tape. A PVR will do everything that a VCR can, but with significant improvements.

For example, I have about given up on watching a lot of TV when it is aired, especially movies. Instead, I record them on a VCR and play them back later, fast-forwarding through commercial breaks. This scenario works even better with a PVR. You can record a program in real time but pause it at any point, at a commercial break, for example.

The PVR keeps recording the program while you get fresh coffee, go to the bathroom or whatever. When you return and hit the Pause button again, the recorder picks up where it left off, playing the program back from the hard drive. Now you can fast forward quickly through the commercials and enjoy what you really wanted to see.

You will also be able to do your own instant replays; just rewind, then replay segments you want to view again. You can also preprogram a

PVR to record favorite program automatically, just as with a VCR.

(Ed. Note: If you currently use a PVR and service like TiVo, Ken Fermoye would love to hear about your experiences with these technologies for possible use in a future article. E-mail him at kfermoyle@earthlink.net.)

Ken's Korner TidByte

by Ken Fermoye

Dell Computer Provides Web School for Teachers

Teachers returning to classrooms this fall have an opportunity to become students themselves.

Dell's Web School is ready to help them learn to use the Internet for research, lesson plan development and classroom instruction.

The Web School, a virtual classroom launched in mid-September, was developed by the computer maker after a recent Dell-commissioned survey of third, eighth and 12th-graders. The study found most students are more likely to learn about the Internet from their parents at home or from trial and error than they are to learn about it from teachers in school.

The study also found students are predisposed to use the Internet for

education and Research.

The Web School, located at www.dell.com/thewebschool, is part of a broader company initiative to help prepare students for success in the digital world.

According to the University of Texas Center for Electronic Commerce, Internet jobs increased by 36 percent last year in the United States to account for 2.5 million new jobs. As businesses continue to build their businesses on the Web, demand for tech savvy employees is expected to rise dramatically -- becoming a competitive issue for businesses of all sizes and an opportunity for students with technology and Internet training and know-how.

"With 95 percent of all public schools wired for Internet access, we believe teachers and schools are our best hopes for training our students and overcoming social or economic barriers to Internet access," said Bill Rodrigues, vice president of Dell's education division.

The Web School includes a self-paced Know the Net course, developed by Dell and based on similar training provided to all Dell employees. Know the Net for Teachers helps beginning Internet users expand their knowledge of the Internet and its classroom uses. The Web School also contains links to useful teacher resources such as the ePALS Classroom Exchange and Blackboard.com; education news; products and services for teachers and schools, and information about Dell grant programs.

Know the Net for Teachers takes educators through a 20-question quiz that helps them master the history and navigation of the Web. It also introduces them to important research sites, lesson plans, and teacher and

student community groups. Dell's K-12 customers, including teachers and school district officials in Round Rock, Texas, and Nashville, Tenn., helped develop and test the site. Round Rock and Nashville are Dell's principal U.S. locations.

"This is a valuable resource for teachers, particularly for those with limited understanding of the Internet and even less time to learn about it," said Barbara Logan, instructional technologist for the Round Rock Independent School District. "Teachers can take the challenge in about 30 minutes and it's available round the clock."

(Author's note: We can only applaud this example of enlightened self-interest by Dell. Teachers, students and the computer makers all stand to gain from it. We can only hope that other high-tech firms see fit to develop more such innovative programs to help teachers of today prepare students for the demands of technology in the world of tomorrow. - K.F.)

Send To

Quick Tip

Did you know that you can add another place to send the file in the *Send To* menu of File. Find the *Send To* folder using FIND then add another short cut to it - e.g. your zip drive.

RIO 500

Reviewed by M.K. Carol Lee

S3 Incorporated
2841 Mission College Blvd.
Santa Clara, CA 95054-1838
(408) 325-7000
www.S3.com

At A Glance Rating: *****

Price: \$269

System Requirements: Pentium 90 or greater, Microsoft Windows 98, 16-MB available RAM, USB Port, CD-ROM Drive.

Pro: Extremely portable digital audio player.

Con: Full version of Rio Audio Manager software is not included.

The Rio 500 is the latest portable digital audio player from S3 Incorporated (S3 gobbled up Diamond Multimedia who originally developed the device). Included with the device are earphones, USB cable, carrying case, AA battery, and a free version of Rio Audio Manager software. The Rio 500's palm size (3.59" x 2.46" x 0.74") and lightweight (2.75 ounces) makes it extremely portable. I could tuck it into

my pants pocket or hang it off the waist of my pants without it pulling on my clothes.

The version of Rio Audio Manager, which comes with the Rio, can also be separately downloaded for free from the Rioport web site (Rioport.com). The software is made to resemble that of a jukebox, which plays digital audio files. In addition, the software can be used for encoding (or "ripping"), downloading (from the Rioport web site), and organizing (on the computer or portable digital player) digital audio files too. New features added to Version 3.2 of the program is the ability to write WAV files to audio CDs by converting them from WMA and MP3 files. In addition, the software also plays back streaming audio and video clips. The free version of Rio Audio Manager only allows for 50 free MP3 encodings and 25 free audio CD burnings. Unlimited MP3 encoding (\$9.95) and unlimited audio CD burnings (\$9.95) can be purchased from Rioport.com as individual software upgrades or together as a packaged upgrade (\$18.95).

After installing and running the Rio Audio Manager software for the first time, I made up a playlist of selected MP3 files. After plugging one end of Rio's USB cable to my computer's USB port and the other end to the Rio, I selected MP3 songs for download into the Rio. The software does not offer the option of automatically overwriting the internal or external memory with new downloaded files. I had to either manually delete them one at a time or reformat the memory. In addition, it did not offer a warning as I selected the files that I had no more room on the Rio until after I finished selecting all the files and pressed the OK button. There is also no option of moving the excess files over to the external memory card (purchased separately) or visa-versa; internal and external memory file transfers must be performed separately. Consequently, I had to uncheck files until I reached just below the maximum allowed for the

memory installed. Once selected, the USB cable transferred the songs fast -- it took approximately 2 minutes to download 63 MB (18 MP3 files) or approximately 1 hour of music. Other than the minor annoyances noted above, the software worked fine.

The audio playback of the Rio 500 was great too. I could not discern any difference between the playback from my computer and that from the Rio 500. In addition, because there is no moving parts to this device, the audio playback is skip free, no matter how much I jiggled and shook it. It runs on one AA battery for a relatively long time; one alkaline battery allows continuous operation for approximately 13 hours.

The Rio 500 comes with 64 MB of onboard memory (which holds about 1 hour of music) and is expandable with one SmartMedia memory slot. Originally, the memory slot could only use up to 32MB of SmartMedia memory. Subsequently, S3 released a firmware update that allowed the product to work with up to 64 MB SmartMedia cards. I hope that S3 continue to improve their firmware updates to allow the use of even larger SmartMedia cards as they come out.

The Rio 500 is a great product. It is indeed the Walkman of this decade. I only wished that the device had more internal memory and SmartMedia cards were cheaper. I have more MP3 files than the Rio 500 can handle at once. However, because the transfer process is quick, I can change files in the device within minutes. Moreover, the music it can hold is about the right for a daily workout or jog session. Maybe one day, the Rio will come with 1GB of memory with no increase in retail price. I can dream, can't I?

VOQUETTE CASSETTE NETRECORDER

Reviewed by M.K. Carol Lee



Voquette Inc.

1510 Fashion Island Blvd., Suite 115

San Mateo, CA94404

(650) 356-3700

www.voquette.com

At A Glance Rating: **

Price: \$59.99

System Requirements: Microsoft Windows 95, 98, NT 4.0 operating system; 32 MB RAM; 30 MB hard drive space, CD-ROM Drive, sound card, Internet connection, Internet Explorer 3.0 or later or Netscape 3.0 or later.

Pro: Handy for those on a limited budget who want to record web casts or digital audio files on audiotape.

Con: NetRecorder's recording capabilities are limited in length and quality.

The Voquette NetRecorder package includes Voquette's Netlink Adapter and Media Manager software and Philips Cassette Recorder AQ6341 (Mono and Voice Actuated). The Voquette Media Manager is a free audio management program that can also be downloaded from their web site (www.Voquette.com). After the Media Manager software is installed and initiated, the Voquette Basket is a resident box (about 1" by 1" in size) which appears on the computer's desktop on top of all other running programs. Using this Voquette Basket, the user can create a playlist of their favorite web audio that they can listen to through their computer or to record onto a device, such as the NetRecorder. The user uses the drag-and-drop feature to add content into the Voquette Basket, where they can be latter organized to the user's preference. Audio formats (such as Real Audio®, Windows Media Player® (WMA), Streaming MP3's and MP3's) can be combined into one playlist and recorded. To insert Internet links, the links must also be dragged to the Voquette Basket. After a link is dragged into the Voquette Basket, the Media Manager software routes the link to a relevant content channel in software (i.e., streaming audio, music, or documents). If Voquette does not recognize a link, a window appears listing the channels and file types used by Voquette. With the Voquette Media Manager Plus Upgrade (\$19.95), emails, Word documents, Text files and Web pages can be converted automatically to voice and recorded onto your NetRecorder so that emails can be heard (instead of read). The Media Manager software can audibly play the selected content items or record them on a digital device such as the NetRecorder or a computer. The recording can be initiated manually or programmed to record automatically. Linked web broadcasts can be recorded at their programmed time. Unfortunately, Media Manager does not allow for the recording of segments of a web broadcast or digital audio file. For example, I was only interested in recording a 10-minute segment of a

web broadcast. I could play the web broadcast to the beginning point of where I wanted to record but I could not turn the recorder on because Media Manager was in PLAY mode. I had to stop PLAY mode and begin RECORD ALL mode to record the audio stream. However, I had to make sure as not to have other links I did not want recorded attached to Media Manager or else they too would be recorded. There are only PLAY ALL or RECORD ALL modes; a single stream or digital audio file can not be played or recorded alone. Moreover, the Voquette Media Manager will not save any live audio file if the recording is manually stopped. A time limit to cease recording must be set in the software to be able to record a digital file. Although the program worked acceptably with these limitations, the hardware was somewhat disappointing too.

The Voquette NetLink connects the user's computer to the Philips Cassette Recorder for the recording of audio files using the Media Manager software. The NetLink has two pairs of cables: one for connecting it to the computer (pass-through keyboard plug and Line-out receptacle) and one for connecting it into the Philips Recorder (DC power connection and microphone plug). In addition to transferring audio, the NetLink is also a power adapter for the Philips Recorder; the pass-through keyboard plug obtains power from the computer and provides it to the Philips Recorder. Without the NetLink connection, the Philips Recorder runs off two AA batteries.

The Voice Activation feature of the Philips Recorder conserves tapes usage by not recording dead air. The NetRecorder runs on Record mode for about five seconds as it initializes. Then upon detecting no sound, it stops and is ready to record input from the computer. Once sound is detected, it begins recording. Although the Philips player/recorder has a built-in speaker, I used headphones (not included) to hear the audio better on playback and to hear what is being recorded. No sound plays from

NetRecorder's speaker or the Media Manager software when it is in recording mode. I found the Voice Activation feature both helpful and a hindrance. It conserved tape but required that the microphone sensitivity level (the VOLUME wheel on the NetRecorder acts as the control for the microphone) be set relatively high to ensure that the NetRecorder would record consistently. Until I figured it out, the NetRecorder stopped frequently during recording process because it did not receive enough of an audio signal. Because the sound sensitivity was set high, I heard distant and background sound, such as the noises that my Science Fiction Theme projected. I had to disable the computer sounds during the recording process. The recordings from web broadcasts are limited to the length of the cassette tape. Only one side of the cassette tape can be recorded at a time. The user must manually flip the tape over to continue recording. Hence, recordings of web radio broadcasts, which last longer than one side of a cassette tape, will be incomplete unless the user is at hand to flip or change tapes quickly.

I was also disappointed by the quality of the recording on the tape compared to that quality coming from my computer speakers. Even if no noise got into the recording, I would still be disappointed by the mono recording/playback. In their User's Manual, Voquette acknowledges the fact that the recording quality of the tape itself is limited and to not expect hi-fi quality. They recommend their higher level models (such as the Rio 300/500 and Sharp MD Recorder packages) for high quality recordings.

This NetRecorder package is a handy gadget to have for those on a limited budget who want to play back web broadcasts or MP3 files in their car or portable stereos (with tape players). However, don't expect a recording of a complete web radio program without some effort or a hi-fi quality recording, and don't be surprised by background noise.

Here are a few handy shortcuts most folks don't know.

1) To bypass AutoPlay when inserting a compact disc press the SHIFT while inserting the CD-ROM.

2) To copy a file in another location rather than moving it while dragging and dropping, press CTRL while dragging the file.

3) To create a shortcut while dragging and dropping press CTRL+SHIFT while dragging the file.

4) To delete an item immediately without placing it in the Recycle Bin press SHIFT+DELETE.

5) To display Find: All Files F3.

6) To refresh the contents of a window press the F5 key. Works for reloading a web page too, but only in IE.

7) To rename an item press F2.

8) To select all items press CTRL+A.

9) To view an item's properties ALT+ENTER or ALT+DOUBLE-CLICK.

<http://resources.rootsweb.com/>

SCREEN SAVER CREATOR DELUXE 5.0

Reviewed by M.K. Carol Lee

Individual Software Inc.

4255 Hopyard Road, #2

Pleasanton, CA 94588-9900

(800) 822-3522

www.individualsoftware.com

At A Glance Rating: ***

Price: \$29.95

System Requirements: Pentium 100 or faster processor, Microsoft Windows 95/98/2000/Me, or NT, 16-MB RAM, 5 MB of free disk space, SVGA Graphics.

Pro: Cheap and easy-to-use screen saver creation utility.

Con: Does not offer capabilities of reducing image or audio file size to reduce on size of screen saver generated.

Screen Saver Creator does as its name implies; it creates screen savers. The screen savers are comprised of various user-dictated elements, such as photos (i.e., .jpg), text, sound (i.e., MP3), and backgrounds. The program creates the screen saver in segments. Each

segment can have up to 10 graphics with accompanying audio file, background, and text. A screen saver can be created with up to 1000 segments. Transition effects and movement can be applied to each segment to enhance their presentation.

The program's Logo Wizard and the Slide Show Wizard are available tools that can make the process of making screen savers even easier. The user fill in the blanks and the program creates a screen saver that can be saved into a Windows-ready screen saver module (.scr) or a executable file (.exe). The screen saver can be distributed to friends and family. The program's license restricts distribution of created screen savers to those provided for free distribution. If any customized screen saver is sold for commercial purposes, then a commercial license version of the program must be purchased (\$269.95 for registered users; \$300 for non-registered users).



I like Screen Saver Creator Deluxe. The only limitations that I found in using the program was that of my imagination in creating the screen savers and the program's non-existent capabilities of reducing image and audio file size. The program would identify those image and audio files that were large and recommend that they be reduced to reduce the resulting size of the screen saver. However, it should be noted that the program is cheap, and its job of creating fun screen savers is accomplished with ease.

Windows Washer 3.0

Reviewed by Yves Barbero

P.O. Box 3531

Boulder, CO 80307

1-800-772-9383

Webroot (downloadable or by mail)

<http://www.webroot.com>

Rating: ****

Price: \$30 (plus \$5 shipping if you want it on diskettes)

Minimum System Requirements: Minimum Pentium machine that will run Windows 95/98 or NT 4. Five megabytes of hard disk space.

Reviewer: Yves Barbero (415) 285-4358 -

<http://www.yvesbarbero.com> -

ybarbero@yvesbarbero.com

Pro: It works well and does exactly what it claims. Nice simple boxlike interface. Ideal for older machines with small hard disks that require periodic cleaning to recover Window's sloppy use of space.

Con: Installing plug-ins requires some rudimentary knowledge of computers.

Like most elegant ideas, this one is simple, small, and fairly easy to use. Basically, it removes the accumulated junk that Internet use leaves behind. This is desirable for two reasons. One is security, and the other is hard disk space. In addition, it can be set to remove

temporary files and registry traces of your activities. You can also automatically empty your recycle bin (I don't recommend this option as you may accidentally remove something you need the recycle bin is best emptied by hand from time to time, when you are sure that you have good backups remember that unlike caches and temporary files, these are items you deliberately erased, so make a point of deliberately emptying the recycle bin).

There are several programs that do elements of what Window Washer 3.0 does. One, that I've been using for years, is Fast and Safe Cleanup that comes with Symantec's CleanSweep. It's great and somewhat configurable. But it is not as thorough as Window Washer. Taken as a whole, various programs that I've grown accustomed to use since the advent of Windows 95/98 in all its manifestations, including several native Windows utilities, will do (almost) everything WindowWasher does. But Window Washer is in a very convenient package, especially for people who are "nerd challenged."

If you pound away on an old Pentium with a small hard disk, and your only activities are the Internet, a word processor and perhaps a check-book program, but your nephew, Freddy, warns you that you're running out of hard disk space; that there is so little space that the system is actually slowing down because the swap file is becoming negligibly small, you can get this program and probably recover many megabytes. Even though you live a clean life, free of paranoia, and innocent of computer skills, and you just want Old Betsy to hold on for another year and so you don't care about the security features, this program is a great buy.

For the seriously paranoid with all the latest equipment and with some computer skills, this program is ideal. At home, Freddy, likes to look at Playboy pictures while daddy is designing software down the peninsula. He's afraid daddy won't approve, and knows that the computer skills daddy has could easily uncover his boyhood curiosity. The program not only allows Freddy to remove any trail of his surfing, but allows him to remove any trace of his looking at Miss November in daddy's PhotoShop program. Using one of the plug-ins, downloadable from the Webroot site, he always cleans those annoying "recent files" from the File Menu of

PhotoShop (Many other major applications have this usually useful shortcut) before closing down the system.

There are dozens of these plug-ins available for many popular programs. But they require the use of an unzip utility and manually placing the files in the Window Washer directory. This can be a problem for the seriously paranoid devoid of all but basic computer skills. Fortunately, a lack of skills is not a problem for Freddy, or for his Dad, who is doing the same thing down the peninsula so his computer-savvy boss doesn't find out he runs a small private business on company time.

Of course, there are plenty of very good reasons to concern yourself with security. Lawyers and doctors may want to put an extra layer of protection on client and patient records. But the same car that can drive Grannie to Church on Sunday, can be used as a getaway car when robbing the local convenience store on Monday. Technology is like that.

One of the things I really like about Window Washer is that it is very configurable. You may not want to delete the cache from your browser since you've set it at five megabytes and that's a comfortable level for you. Why re-download all those "gif" files. You may selectively want to keep certain cookies (I read the New York Times every morning. If I keep the cookie, I don't have to re-enter my user name and password). You can set aside certain cookies in Internet explorer, Netscape, Opera, AOL, and Neoplanet, so they are not removed. This, to a sophisticated user, is what makes the program worth its dime. These features are all built in.

To those unfortunate enough to still be using Juno, there is a plug-in that will periodically remove those tons of ads that Juno downloads and leaves forever on your hard disk (very sloppy of them). A long time ago, I learned that it took me only a few seconds to empty the ads from Juno from my clients' computers, and do it as part of a service call, recovering three or four megabytes on average. Someone has now figured out how to do it automatically. Of course I haven't looked at the latest Juno, and in their wisdom, they may have put that removal option in because they really care about their clients.

Window Washer contains one other nice feature that I particularly like. It is "add bleach to wash items." Instead of just deleting the offending files, it overwrites them with numbers, and then sets the length to zero before deleting the file. You can set the level of overwrites. The National Security Agency recommends "seven." Unless you still believe that UN black helicopters are preparing to take over the country from our national parks, the default of "two overwrites" should be plenty.

I review a lot of programs, and even ones I like a lot are usually removed from my hard disk because I don't need them for my own use. Frankly, I have other ways to do all of the things Window Washer does. But I'm keeping it. I do appreciate the convenience of having all those security features in one package.

Note concerning other security concerns: More likely than an attack on our sacred institutions by black helicopters is the certainty that someone will try to secretly trace your Internet behavior for the purpose (horror of horrors) of marketing. Marketing is fine, but doing it without your okay is not fine. Especially if they leave "spyware" on your hard disk. Spyware usually comes with "free" stuff that you download. In some cases, it comes with software you actually buy. It is more common than you think, but most companies do not include it in their products.

Now, whenever I download something, or install a program from a strange company, I check.

Two tiny downloads do this well. One is Opt-Out, by Gibson Research (of SpinRite fame), and it can be found at <http://grc.com/optout.htm>. The other utility is Ad-aware from Germany at <http://www.lavasoft.de>. Removing "spyware" may cause some programs to not function. Tough!

COMPUKER TIPS - AOL Browser Tweak

by Boogie Jack

This is for our friends using AOL. I get a lot of requests for help from AOL users that can only save images as .art files, rather than as jpg or gif files (which they actually are). This is because by default, the AOL browser compressions images, and you can only save them in their .art format.

The good news is that you can correct that behavior...the even more good news is that you will finally view the web as it was intended - in full color. Yes AOL users, you have not been viewing most images at full quality, and the difference may amaze you.

This will take 60 seconds, is immediate, you can stay on line and there is no need for an anesthetic, deodorant, or chocolate fix.

- 1) Click MY AOL at the top of the screen
- 2) Click PREFERENCES.
- 3) Click WWW
- 4) Click WEB GRAPHICS
- 5) Un-check USE COMPRESSED GRAPHICS
- 6) Click APPLY

All done.... Except.

If you return to a previously visited page AOL will load the old compressed graphic, so lets clear out your temp files while you are still in MY AOL - PREFERENCES

- 1) Click GENERAL
- 2) Click DELETE FILES
- 3) Click APPLY

All done. Now explore the Internet as it should be done and enjoy the show.

Do you have some good web sites for shopping?

I use various web sites for comparison shopping or finding something to purchase - here are some interesting sites:

<http://www.us.buy.com/>

<http://www.pricewatch.com/>

<http://shop.outpost.com/>

<http://beyond.com/>

For a look at changing borders: <http://www.HistoricalAtlas.net/>

What do YOU use - send e-mail to BLUENOTES@SFPCUG.ORG with your preferred ones.

Annual AUCTION
and
Holiday PARTY
Tue. 19 December 2000, 6 PM

**The auditorium of the
Community College District Office,
33 Gough Street,
(a half-block south of Market Street)
San Francisco, CA**

computers, hardware, software, books
ham, turkey, salad, bread, desert

SEPTEMBER 5, 2000 MINUTES

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of September 5, 2000, was held at Round Table Pizza, 16th and Geary.

Present were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, Harold Charns, Dorothy Walker, Tom McLoughlin, Steve Shank, and Don Oclassen.

The meeting was called to order at 19:09, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the August 2000 meeting were distributed. A motion was made and seconded that they be approved. The minutes were approved.

The Treasurer's report followed. The bottom line on the treasurer's report was that we have a healthy balance. The Treasurer's report was approved.

The Vice President's report was to question where our banner is. Discussion led to a decision that since the old banner was not in good shape anyway that we would authorize Butler to get a new one. He will talk to Sam Wasserman who is a sign maker and past member, and see what we can get inexpensively.

The President's report started with a mention that we could have two short presentations at the October meeting. Butler was still planning to have a phone-bank evening at his house and he will let us know when he can schedule this. He stated that he would try to arrange for us to have a table at the Cow Palace for September 23rd. He also began a discussion about what services we have to offer new members. It was suggested we reestablish the SIGs either before the meeting or on another day at another place. Then we could demonstrate the benefits of the club to new members more easily.

The Webmasters' report – the webmasters were not present but Butler mentioned that there is still a problem with DNS numbers for dial-in and Butler will contact Joseph re this.

The Membership Committee stated that there were four memberships paid this month: 1 new, 2 rejoins and 1 renew. Dorothy suggested that she

hand out a small piece of paper at the next meeting to have people rank the presentation and give suggestions and comments. This was approved.

The Blue Notes Editors' report was that Blue Notes is pending Pierre's return before it is completed, but should be out prior to the September meeting.

The Product Review report was that two prolific reviewers have joined the fold of the club again.

The Program Chair report was that Microsoft would be presenting in September on ME. Don mentioned he would call Bob O'Donnell to mention the program on his radio show to increase attendance and that Butler will send him an email re this. In October we will have Scot Hacker presenting a short presentation on BE operating System. We will also have a presentation by another group. There is currently no program scheduled for November.

Old Business – Butler will send out emails to vendors to ask for donations for the auction later this month. Butler and Susan Klum will be going to COMDEX.

New Business – Steve Shank suggested a group bulletin board titled, "Around the Water Cooler". He also said it might be good to replace some of the Random Access time at the meeting with this. He mentioned he evaluated a lot of computer address books and will write-up his results for Blue notes. Tom asked if the club would be willing to put together a computer from old parts from members -- to send to South America. After some discussion it was decided we could do this.

After a motion was made, seconded and passed that the meeting be adjourned; Butler adjourned the meeting at 20:23 hours.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Gaer, Secretary

OCTOBER 3, 2000 MINUTES

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of October 3, 2000, was held at Round Table Pizza, 16th and Geary.

Present were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, Harold Charns, Dorothy Walker, Pierre Hahn, Joseph Puig, Lee Most and Raven Most.

The meeting was called to order at 19:05, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the September 2000 meeting were distributed. A motion was made and seconded that they be approved. The minutes were approved with one abstention.

The Treasurer's report followed. The bottom line on the treasurer's report was that we have a healthy balance. This includes 10 memberships. Some were new and some were taking advantage of the 2-year promotion. The Treasurer's report was approved.

The Vice President's report was not given, as the Vice President was absent.

The President's report - Butler is still planning to have a phone-bank evening at his house. It is targeted for October 12. He stated that someone from the club would handle the Tech Bench at the Oakland and Cow Palace shows and that we could have our new banner there. He also stated he would talk to Sam Wasserman about arranging printing of a new banner. This banner would be 18 inches or less long, 4 feet wide with stanchions and base. It would have our logo and name and say "Since 1982". Butler will see if the words can be painted on instead of glued since the glued letters fell off from the last sign.

The Webmaster's report – The webmaster wants more data on upcoming events to list on the website. There was a discussion about giving people instructions on how to download Blue Notes. Butler stated he emailed copies to 3 members.

The Membership Committee stated that the survey of members at the program showed they liked the presentation by Microsoft. See Treasurer's report re memberships. Joseph said he would send out more membership

reminders and at Butler's request the ones sent out would overlap with the last ones sent out.

The Blue Notes Editors' report was that Blue Notes is out. The next issue will be a regular issue, with an auction catalog coming out before the Holiday Auction.

The Product Review report was that Carol Lee will continue to solicit requests. Butler will publish the list of items to be reviewed to Blue Notes. It was mentioned that maybe a few of us could review the products to make sure the list is accurate at Butler's at the second Tuesday meeting.

The Program Chair report was that we might have eGems and Scott Hacker talking about BeOS, but that we weren't sure how much interest there was in the club for BeOS. David said he would check to see if we could get someone from IDG Books. It was mentioned that we have scheduled our current meeting site until 3/01/00 and that we should make sure we can have it through next December.

Old Business – Butler will send out emails to vendors to ask for donations for the auction. Butler and Susan Klum will be going to COMDEX.

New Business – It was decided that for now the "Around the water cooler" info would go in a special section in Blue Notes. It may evolve into a tips list that Steve Shanks or another member moderates.

After a motion was made, seconded and passed that he do so; Butler adjourned the meeting at 20:09 hours.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Gaer, Secretary

DECEMBER 2000

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

JANUARY 2001

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY 2001

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

First Tuesday: Steering Committee meeting
Upstairs meeting room of Round Table Pizza, Geary Blvd and 16th Ave 7PM

Second Tuesday: General questions about Windows and hardware, and minor hardware installations.
2040 Ellis, 3 houses west of Divisadero, 7-9PM (confirm 415-346-9321 or 415-346-2644)

Third Tuesday: General Meeting, The auditorium of the Community College District Office,
33 Gough Street, (a half-block south of Market Street) San Francisco, CA

DECEMBER AUCTION

JANUARY Brian Livingston from IDG author of *Microsoft Windows Me Edition Secrets*

FEBRUARY TBA - Check our web site for latest schedule www.sfpcug.org

PRESIDENT	<i>president@mail.sfpcug.org</i>	24 hour recording for meeting information	415-346-2644
Butler Crittenden	415-346-9321		
		VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR	<i>Orchidanica@goplay.com</i>
VICE-PRESIDENT	<i>vice-president@mail.sfpcug.org</i>	Tina Saravia	415-242-0429
Donald Oclassen			
		<i>Blue Notes -</i>	<i>bluenotes@mail.sfpcug.org</i>
SECRETARY	<i>secretary@mail.sfpcug.org</i>	Editors	
Judy Gaer		Pierre M. Hahn	415-474-1587
		Tom McLoughlin	510-654-4027
TREASURER	<i>treasurer@mail.sfpcug.org</i>		
Harold Charns	415-861-6043	<i>Blue Notes FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED</i>	
		Tom Karnes	415-431-024
Assistant TREASURER	<i>treasurer@mail.sfpcug.org</i>	MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR	<i>jbpuig@mail.sfpcug.org</i>
David Caldwell	415-777-1935	Joseph Puig	415-564-7730
WEBMASTER	<i>WebMaster@mail.sfpcug.org</i>	PROGRAM DIRECTOR (Acting)	<i>programs@mail.sfpcug.org</i>
Joseph Puig	415-564-7730	Pierre M. Hahn	415-474-1587
PRODUCT REVIEW COORDINATOR	<i>productreview@mail.sfpcug.org</i>		
Carol Lee			

San Francisco PC Users Group Application/Renewal/Address Change

Name: _____
(Please type or print legibly.)

Date: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: (____) _____

Work phone: (____) _____

City, State, Zip: _____

FAX phone: (____) _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Please check: Renewal member # _____ New Member

Check type of membership:

please send your check to:

- G** Individual \$25
- G** Family \$30
- G** Business \$50
- G** Outside US \$25

SF PC Users Group
Attn: Membership Director
3145 Geary Blvd, Box 284
San Francisco, CA 94118-3300

Please be patient it may take up to 3 weeks to enable the account

Amount enclosed: \$ _____ (Please do not mail cash.)