



SAN FRANCISCO PERSONAL COMPUTER *eBLUE*
USERS GROUP *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 (worst to best)
- * **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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**From The DealsGuy
for September, 2002**

**by Bob Click,
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**

How much do you concern yourself about buying American to help American jobs? I saw an interesting excerpt from a write-up by a Washington Post writer concerning a typical routine on an average day by a couple he rode with to observe. His theme was US brands owned by European Companies. The couple drove a foreign car with an American name and gassed up at Amoco, owned by British Petroleum. They enjoyed lunch at Burger King, owned by a British Company, Diageo. The husband bought a book published by a French company, Vivendi, and a cassette to play in his car, also produced by Vivendi. In defense, the wife later purchased more gas at a Shell station only to learn it was Dutch owned. She also picked up a bottle of Snapple, made by a British company, Cadbury Schweppes. At home they had coffee, Tasters Choice, made by Nestle SA of Switzerland.

There is more, but I found it interesting. With all the mergers and acquisitions, most of us hardly know who we are buying from. Perhaps foreign entities need not engage us in war to take us over, but will simply buy us up while many American companies are moving operations to foreign sites, but I still try to help American jobs. A friend cringes at my “buy-American” attitude telling me he never buys American. He says foreign products are superior to American products because American workers are lazy, conceited, overpaid people always looking for a free handout. Maybe I shouldn’t say I was ever an American worker, but I live in America and I am what I am. My American friend also worked for an American company and, I think, enjoys an American pension.

***Don’t Have Acrobat? Then Get Your PDF Files FREE**

When I reformatted my HD, I had misplaced my copy of Acrobat and needed to convert a file to PDF. Sometimes when I get stuck, I call one of my best local resources, which is Hewie Poplock. He told me to go to <http://www.gobcl.com> and get it done there for free. By golly, he was right. goBCL is a free online document publishing service by BCL Technologies, the maker of plug-ins for Adobe Acrobat. They can publish your documents into either PDF or HTML.

Not everything is free, but for occasional use, they offer a free service. They also have paid services, but the free one was just what I wanted. I have since found my Acrobat copy, but that service would have been handy.

Hewie also has a Web site where he posts all kinds of information and publishes a newsletter called "Hewie's Favorites," consisting of good URLs he finds. You can get on the list to receive "Hewie's Favorites" each time he sends them out, and it always includes other good information. [<http://www.hewie.net>]

***Hey, Clean Up That E-mail**

I printed a similar item a few months ago (Stripmail), but some readers have since sent me this information. Since it's their favorite, I'm passing it on. Some people always feel compelled to forward all kinds of stuff. Most, especially newbies, include the >>>, hard returns and whatever junk there is. These readers recommend using "The Cleaner" on those messages. It gets rid of all those >>> and the unwanted hard returns creating a dreadful looking message. It also offers other features to help.

If you are a "forwarder," get "eCleaner" V.2.01 at [http://pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0_fid_6492_00.asp] at no cost and help your fellow humans. There is a later

version at [<http://ecleaner.tripod.com>] but this page may have moved by the time you read this. It's only for a PC, but the article's author, Steve Chin, mentions "SpellTools" that is meant for a Mac. He did not say where to find it.

***Everything Under One Roof, and Cheap Too (for Linux)**

How much did you pay for your Office Suite? Or are you still using an older version because you didn't want to pay that much? If you are using Linux, you could be saving a lot of money with Hancm Office 2.0.2 just released. I don't know if it will do everything you are doing now, but how much of your present office suite are you REALLY using?

I didn't take the time to check out this new offering from Hancm because I don't have a Linux machine yet, but it offers word processing, spreadsheet, graphics and presentation applications. It has many improvements including foreign language support and is compatible with Microsoft Word format (their words).

It now has Unicode support which has to do with foreign language special characters. They fixed problems affecting Mandrake and SuSE users who had upgraded to KDE 3.0. Fixed bugs when exporting text documents in HTML format.

This suite appears to be only Linux based, but if you own a previous version, your upgrade is free for the download. New users may purchase the software for \$49.95 (CD Case or download edition) or the boxed version with documentation for \$59.95 (regular prices). If you just want to check it out, a free 30-day trial version is available for downloading at [<http://en.hancom.com>]. Some features aren't included in the trial version. I'm not sure I understood the above information on their Web site so take a look. For a dial-up connection, this large download may not be very practical, but the trial version is much smaller. See their solution.

***Hey, Give Me Back That File, Ya Hear!!**

In Windows 9x, deleted files are normally sent to the recycle bin so that it's easy to get them back if you change your mind. However, not everybody sticks to that method of deleting files. For instance, if you delete a file while holding the shift key down, you can forget about getting it back from the recycle bin. The same is true if you delete it from a Zip Drive.

A short write-up by Ken Marple of Space Coast PC Users Group recommends software called "Drive Rescue," A Hard Disk Recovery Tool. The Web site says it will find any lost and deleted data on your drive (e.g. hard disk) even if the partition

table is lost or the drive has been quick-formatted. Also recovers lost data that is the result of a system crash. But if the disk has been physically damaged, it cannot recover that data.

Supported file systems are FAT 12/16/32 (used by hard disks, disks, Smartmedia, Compact Flash, Memory Stick and other) and NTFS (incomplete). Supported operating systems are Windows 95, 98, ME, NT, 2000 or XP, and a second hard disk (or network drive) is recommended for recovery. Other amazing capabilities can be seen on their Web site.

The best part is that it's freeware. However, if it helps you, the programmer would like a donation. That's not too much to ask for a good product. The URL is

[http://home.arcor.de/christian_grau/rescue/index.html].

Remember though, if you write to the disk after deleting the data, there is a good chance you would overwrite the deleted data, thus making recovery difficult to impossible.

***Will The REAL File Manager Please Stand Out!**

Also written up in the same Space Coast PC UG's Journal is a report by Jack Davidson about a great replacement for Windows Explorer. Many people would rather Microsoft had kept the old file manager instead of its Windows Explorer because of the way it works. How would you like to check out a REAL file

manager that was originally said to be “a file manager on steroids” when it was created? Power Desk is just such a program. Originally, it was a product of Mijenix, but now belongs to OnTrack.

I can’t adequately describe the many features of PowerDesk so go to [<http://www.ontrack.com/freesoftware>] and look for it. There are two free programs and two evaluation programs for downloading, including the standard version of Power Desk. If you click on download for the free version of PowerDesk, you will have to sign in and create a password. You may wish to upgrade to the Pro version for \$29.95. I had a problem finding the list of features in the free version. I don’t know how many of PowerDesk Pro’s features are contained in the free version.

**From The DealsGuy
for October, 2002**

**by Bob Click,
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group**

Since one of my items is lengthy, I’ll forget my personal comments. It was an interesting experience too, but should be in next month’s column.

***Aladdin Update**

Aladdin has released some updates and a special offer. They offer user groups a discount as usual. You can check it out on my Web site from my Announcements page [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] or register at [<http://www.aladdinsys.com/support/usergroups/index.html>]

***Help for the Investor (Its About Time!)**

My thanks to Norm Black who leads an investment SIG in the Alamo PC User Group for connecting me with “High Growth Stock” (HGS). If you are an investor (many UGs have an investment SIG), this could be just the ticket for analyzing your investments. Norm says a member made them aware of HGS and now both Alamo Investment SIGs, as well as some of the members, are using it. Since I’ve not yet tried their product, HGS folks wrote the description that follows:

“High Growth Stock investing solutions (HGS) introduces you to an exciting set of investment products and services that keep you abreast of the pulse of the market, meeting the needs of the individual and institutional investor alike. We are dedicated to

offering systems, products and services that, together, will provide an end-to-end seamless process for successful investing in a volatile and often tricky market. The heart and engine of our offering is the HGS investor software developed and launched years ago. It is continually enhanced and upgraded several times each year with greater capability, functionality and features that allow our clients to be smarter and more profitable investors, as well as the capability to do whatever style of investing you aspire.

“Those that master HGS investing solutions usually produce well above market average returns. Typically, HGS clients enjoy high profits quickly, 25% in 8 weeks and potentially to 100% in 16 to 24 weeks (remember this is an HGS writeup). Quickly identify the ‘cream of the crop’ when selecting stocks. Identify where the money is flowing, narrow down the search from a warehouse of over 8,700 stocks in 200 industry groups, in 12 sectors and 3 markets, to select the best candidates to buy and sell today.

“High Growth Stock investing solutions can accommodate any investing style, from value investing, which places emphasis on the fundamental characteristics of a company, to momentum investing which strictly concentrates on technical analysis, to growth investing. However, with HGS investing solutions we

are proponents of growth investing, which uses the best of both fundamental and technical analysis from value and momentum investing, respectively.

“In summary, the HGS investing solutions provides whatever style of investing you aspire to and enables you to get the job done efficiently and quickly. In addition, there are several training CD’s that take you through the basics from intermediate levels to advanced concepts of how to use the tools. The training CD’s are a series of movies and PowerPoint slides that make it easy to follow in several case studies. In addition, there are free weekly market reports at our website providing up to date reviews of the market. We also feature a free Learning Center of case studies that assist you in the principles of HGS investing.

“There is a free HGS Forum at our website, hosted by Yahoo, that you can participate in or just read the wonderful exchange of ideas and investment suggestions from our clients. In addition, we provide a monthly newsletter (invariably 20 pages in length) that you can subscribe to and download at your convenience. The HGS seminar is 3 days in length and gives you an in-depth understanding of the HGS strategy, process and software tools. For more details on High Growth stock investing solutions go to [<http://www.highgrowthstock.com>].

“Two special offers and Promotions are offered to members of the PC User Group readership of Bob Click’s DealsGuy monthly column.

1. A FREE, no strings attached, risk free, sixty (60) days ‘introductory subscription’ to High Growth Stock (HGS) investing solutions (A \$125.88 value). This offer is designed for the ‘professional’ investor, not the beginning investor or user. What you receive for this no cost offer is:

- A. A CD containing all the information and data that our regular clients would pay \$755 for.
- B. The free no risk 60-day ‘introductory subscription’ to HGS investing solutions ‘begins the day you install the CD’ with the HGS investor software and stock market data, and ends 60 calendar days later.
- C. A fully functional copy of the HGS investor software, designed, developed and marketed by Industry Monitors.
- D. The HGS historical database of stock/market price and fundamentals from our partner, Quotes Plus, Inc.
- E. The HGS monthly newsletter written by Ian Woodward and Ron Brown, who are professional investors, for the most

recent month and via our website for the months published during your 60-day introductory subscription.

- F. Free weekly HGS market reports written by Ron Brown made available via our website.
- G. Instructional tutorial movies (9 in all) for using HGS investor software that provide an excellent overview of all the software and numerous techniques.
- H. Guide to High Growth Stock investor software is the software user guide.
- I. The High Growth Stock investing strategy guide is a 60+ page presentation by Ian Woodward to assist HGS investors in developing solutions for selecting high growth stock portfolios, industry groups and stocks.
- J. In search of profitable high growth stocks are the first three chapters of a book written by Ian Woodward.
- K. Other free services include the HGS Learning Center and HGS Forum available at our website.
- L. HGS client services are available to you via email to support you from a technical and customer service standpoint. HGS monitors our e-mail during the weekday, evening hours and weekends/holidays.

Last, but not least, the best investment strategy, techniques, software, data, seminars, weekly market reports, monthly newsletters, forum, training CD's and learning center in the world to both individual and institutional investors.”

To order your FREE, no strings attached, risk free, sixty-day introductory subscription to High Growth Stock investing solutions, go to:

[\[http://www.highgrowthstock.com/Order/Trial.asp?from=Click\]](http://www.highgrowthstock.com/Order/Trial.asp?from=Click)

If, after the FREE 60-day trial period, you are convinced that this investing solution really works, the High Growth Stock folks make this special temporary offer. The annual subscription cost for these services is \$755.26. The HGS folks have agreed to a first year subscription period of 14 months instead of the usual 12 months, an additional value to you of another \$125.88. To convert to annual after your trial offer, order at [\[http://www.highgrowthstock.com\]](http://www.highgrowthstock.com).

When you look at the entire deal I have arranged, You are getting 16 months total of service for \$755.26. The first two months are totally free with no out of pocket money. They say that without this deal, it would cost you \$755.26 + \$251.76 for the extra 4 months. It's a \$1,007.02 package for \$755.26, a 25% saving with no financial commitment for the

first 60 days. If after 60 days you're not convinced it's for you, just walk away and it didn't cost you anything but some time to evaluate this fine product. Just using the FREE trial is a great deal for the serious investor.

***How About Secure E-mail For A change (PCs only)**

I received this offer from Eric Leve at Centuriansoft. I realize that some folks don't care if somebody might read their e-mail, but here is software to encrypt it at a good price, bundled with another great product. I'll post the information received from Centuriansoft on my Web site's announcement page [\[http://www.dealsguy.com\]](http://www.dealsguy.com) where you can see their argument for encryption, full descriptions of the products in this deal, and their offer. Please read it all carefully. Briefly, SoftClan "e-cryptor" allows the user to create and send self-decrypting e-mails that do not require the recipient to have any additional software to decode the message. Once received, the recipient needs only to expand or execute the attachment, click on the resulting envelope icon, and finally, input the password to access the enclosed and formerly encoded information.

Also, for a limited time Centuriansoft will include a free copy of "Steganos 3 Security Suite" with your order. Steganos 3

Security Suite is a complete security solution for your PC. Its features include seven great products and I liked the looks of them all. MSRP for SoftClan "e-cryptor is \$59.95, but DealsGuy readers can get the entire package for just \$39.96, shipping included. \$7.00 shipping for Canadian customers. Call 1-202-293-1634, or e-mail [eleve@centuriansoft.com] and mention promotion code 777 to order. Visit their Web site for information on their entire line of products.

[<http://www.centuriansoft.com>] More next month.

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [Bobclick@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns. Also, I keep adding interesting articles (taken from user group newsletters) to my "Articles of Interest" page for viewing or downloading.

Comdex in Vegas a City of Two Tales

RL Coppedge
Fall Conference Chair

Ok, some of you have been to COMDEX and the Fall APCUG Conference. Some of you have been there year in, year out. Many of you have never been. This article is supposed to entice both groups into attending the event. Unfortunately, the reasoning is significantly depending on whether you've already attended or not. So I'm splitting this article into two groups. If you've already attended a Fall APCUG Conference before, skip the next section. If you haven't, read only the next section. If you read the section you shouldn't be reading, I cannot guarantee that this report will not explode into millions of tiny bits, each one with the head and face looking somewhat like Dom DeLuise, saying "Look Out! I'm a Dori too!!" (this probably won't happen in either case)

COMDEX and APCUG (newbies)“Each year in Las Vegas...” so goes most descriptions of Fall COMDEX. The bottom line is it’s like nothing you’ve been to. Think about 150,000 or so folks, vendors up the wazoo showing all the latest technology. Some of the displays or demo shows boggle the mind (sometimes in a good way, others wondering “why?”) Tchotchke’s galore. Keynotes of the biggies, including Bill Gates, Larry Ellison, and so on.

This, folks, is an event. No if, ands or buts. In fact, it’s overwhelming, if it wasn’t for the fact that you’ll be with friends. APCUG friends, that is.

The Saturday and Sunday prior to the COMDEX soiree features the meat of the APCUG conference. During that time, roundtable discussions dealing with specific User Group issues are held by experts, and attended by people who all want the same thing...to improve their User Group, develop new volunteers, increase membership, solve the Ginger versus Mary Ann debate once and for all...y’know, important stuff. In all seriousness, you’ll come away with renewed interest, plus probably some new creative ideas to try with your organization (and you can claim it was all your inspiration!)

In addition, you’ll be wined and dined by some of the top companies, like Microsoft, McAfee and others. And they’ll give you special demonstrations of their products. And did I mention tchotchke’s? (What’s a tchotchke? I hear you cry. A giveaway, a trinket. A Tshirt. Or, like last year, a copy of Microsoft’s Windows XP to all APCUG Conference attendees was one of the better ones)

And sometimes you’ll be seeing product before anybody else does.

It’s especially valuable for User Groups who have never had a leader or representative attend the APCUG Fall Conference. This gives your organization a wonderful opportunity. To learn from other User Group leaders. To hear about what works, and what doesn’t.

There are three events you need to cross off your “to-do” list before you get voted off this planet. 1.Comdex. 2. APCUG Conference. 3. Las Vegas. This is your chance to get three birds with one stone. Ok, now let’s move on to the next section.

Comdex and APCUG (veterans)

You've been to Fall Conference. You've been to Comdex. Been there, done that, got the t-shirt. And the hat. And the coffee mug. And the tote bag. And the zircon-encrusted tweezers. And you're thinking, "Why go back? It ain't what it used to be."

A couple things come to mind. First is the fact that I think you'll find the APCUG Roundtables of particular interest this year. Dan Hanson is wearing the Roundtable Chairperson hat this year. Both Dan and I share a peculiar interest (no, not the one involving squirrels...the other one). User Groups that are run the same way as 10 years ago are fading, in some cases with alarming speed. Why? What can you do to reverse the trend? Well, come out to the Fall Conference, and you'll see and hear some specific ideas, as well as have a chance to contribute your own thoughts. If you've got some ideas to help the Roundtables before they start, contact Dan at Danh@apcug.org.

Also, on a personal note, I have to admit that I thought last years Comdex was one of the most productive ones I'd seen. The economy forced a lot of companies to drop the schmaltzing, and get back to basic business.

Not to mention the various contacts, even friendships you've already established. Face it. It's time to say hi.

Hold on to Your Domain...Before it Slips Away
Domain names are precious commodities
and they can be lost in a matter of days

by [Matt Lake](#)

Tulsa Computer Society

From the October 2002 issue of the I/O Port Newsletter

How would you like to see the Web site you've been working on all year slip through your fingers? You may think it's unlikely, but despite the enormous bureaucracy surrounding the Internet domain name system, dotcom names are falling out of the hands of registrants all the time.

The consequences can be embarrassing, costly, and time consuming. When you lose your domain to someone else, you must reprint your stationery with new Web addresses, send out releases to your customers confessing your mistake, and lose untold email messages when your email vanishes into the ether (or worse, goes to the domain's new owner).

But in most cases, it's easy to avoid problems like these. So learn a few lessons from four organizations that recently lost their domains. Take heart that two of them have got their domains back again-but don't assume that you will have the same good fortune as they did. Prepare for the worst-and be happy when it doesn't happen to you.

Fumbling the ball

In May 2002, two popular nonprofit sites lost control of their domains when they expired and speculators snapped them up. Their stories have some similarities, but have two different endings-one happy for the original owner, the other, not.

CASE 1: MacSlash the Knifed

Damien Barrett had built a very popular Macintosh help site called MacSlash at the obvious domain MacSlash.com. Suddenly in May, he found that instead of the forums, articles, and tips that belonged there, only an under construction page remained. The Future Home of macslash.com apparently now belonged to Vicente Peiro Crespo of Valencia, Spain, and any e-mail sent to Barrett's former addresses or that of the MacSlash administrator Ben Stanfield vaporized in cyberspace.

The domain had expired, "dropped" back into the public domain, and been snapped up by a speculator. The previous owners of the domain "fixed" the problem by registering the .net version of the domain and hosting their site there. The MacSlash community rallied round the cause and registered the .org and .info versions of the domain too. And word spread quickly about the new location of the site.

The MacSlash story has happy ending: The issue became a cause celebre in the Mac community and pretty soon, things got too hot for the new registrant, who returned macslash.com to its original owner.

But not everyone is so lucky.

CASE #2: User Group Gets Mugged

The Pasadena IBM User Group is a long-standing nonprofit organization, so it seemed natural for them to take the .org version of their domain name. There, they built a well trafficked site for their members.

But in May of 2002, the domain expired without notice from the registrar, and was subsequently re-registered by a portal company based in Hong Kong. Ultimate Search redirected the user group's former domain to a generic portal with links flashing online casino ads and links that generate revenues for the company on a pay-per-click basis. As of this writing, the user group has not regained control of its domain. However, it continues to operate its site at pibmug.com.

Why Did the Notice go Unnoticed?

Registering domains is like leasing a car: You have the thing under contract for a specified length of time. Once the term of the lease is about to expire, you can extend it indefinitely. And unlike lease cars, a domain only gets more valuable the longer you have it. But the responsibility for renewing the lease is all up to you.

Naturally, domain registrars are all too keen to keep their customers-the competition among domain registrars is fierce. The governing body of the .com domain system, ICANN, has accredited more than 50 registrars, and hundreds more companies resell domain services. So most registrars send out not one but several reminders to their customers to re-register their domains early and often.

Both MacSlash and PIBMUG used the registrar Dotster, which sends out automatic reminders at T-minus 45 days, 30 days, and 15 days before the domain expires. In fact, Dotster is so vigilant, the company even sends out reminders to former clients who have transferred their domains to other registrars.

But MacSlash and PIBMUG did not get their reminders. The jury is still out as to what happened with PIBMUG, but MacSlash traced the problem to over-vigilant spam filtering. When the group registered <http://macslash.com/>, they used Apple's iTools email service, which provides free email at the <http://mac.com/>, domain. Unfortunately, the service's spam filtering treated repeated requests to renew domains as unsolicited commercial messages, and threw them into the bit bucket.

The Domain Graveyard

Once a domain expires, it enters a no-man's land for an unspecified length of time. During this time, the domain is on hold-it does not resolve to the previous registrant's site, but it can't be re-registered. Sometimes, the on-hold period lasts for only hours, sometimes for weeks.

The .com registry, run by Verisign's Network Solutions division, holds on to all the expired domains until it's ready to "drop" them en masse back onto the market.

And once an expired domain drops, it's up for grabs by anyone with \$10 to \$35 to spare. And an entire aftermarket has sprung up around expired domains. Companies like DomainsBot, The Unclaimed, and Daily Expired Domains compile lists of on-hold domains for subscribers, and domain registrars including Network Solutions and Dotster maintain services for their subscribers to snap up domains as soon as they drop.

The aftermarket for expired domains creates a feeding frenzy among speculators, which is bad news for domain holders who let their domains expire. Once a domain is re-registered, the only recourse the original domain owner has is to go through ICANN's dispute resolution process (which is outlined at <http://www.icann.org/udrp>). During disputes, ICANN tends to

favor copyright holders and people with legitimate claims on a domain-which would act in favor of PIBMUG's claim against Ultimate Search. But the process is a time consuming hassle, and ICANN doesn't give preferential treatment to previous owners of domains who let them expire.

Losing the Ball Completely

Not every organization has control over its own domain. Sometimes, a company without strong technical resources will give the reins to an outsider who seems to have a better handle on the situation. This can have disastrous results-as a theater company and a housing authority found out earlier this year.

CASE #3: Taking a Domain by Barnstorm

The oldest continuously operating community theater in Pennsylvania, The Barnstormers Theater outside Philadelphia, bought a Web site package from a small hosting company two years ago. The company took control of everything-domain registration, Web site hosting, and updates. This was great for the small volunteer-run theater...until the hosting company went bust. The Web site disappeared, and any visitors to the group's domain name got an error message. The Barnstormers' contact at the now nonexistent host went AWOL, and left them high and dry.

The theater found free hosting for its Web site at GeoCities, and rigged up an ad-laden version of their site there. But nobody involved know how to handle the domain issue, so they had to change their Web address at the various arts and theater portals, search engines, and periodicals that listed them.

When the domain finally expired, a fan of the group snapped it up and arranged for new hosting for barnstormertheater.com at a local community site.

But unlike Barnstorm's good fortune, there are disasters.

CASE #4: Housing authority...without authority

A city housing authority in Delaware (which asked not to be named in this article) outsourced most of its technical services to a pretty reliable company throughout the 1990s. The support company developed and maintained the Authority's general infrastructure, including an intranet.

At the time, there were no plans for a public Web site, but last year, an office manager submitted plans and a project management timeline for a public site that she could develop and manage herself. When she came to register the Authority's domain name, she found that the .com, .net, and .org versions had all been registered years earlier. The registrant was their IT

company, which used the names as a bargaining chip for taking control of the Web development project-a potentially lucrative contract.

Who Owns Your Name?

Possession is nine tenths of the law. If you register a generic sounding domain name or one that matches a business you own and run, you have a good case for keeping it. And if someone else does so on your behalf, you won't easily be able to wrest control of the domain back. If another Barnstormers theater had registered barnstormertheater.com when it dropped, the original owner would have no recourse through ICANN or the law courts. The only other recourse would be to buy back the domain at whatever price the new owner wanted-and prices can run into the hundreds or even thousands.

Five Cardinal Rules for Domain Owners

If these horror stories have given you the fear, take heart. A few simple guidelines can keep you from suffering the same fate.

Rule #1: Control your own domain

Make sure your name and contact information appear in your domain's owner and administrative contact fields. Hop over to

your registrar or to betterwhois.com and enter your domain name in the form. The site will return the domain's whois information (who is the owner, who is the technical contact, and so on). Your name, address, and current email address should be in the owner (or Registrant) and Admin Contact fields. If it's not, follow your registrar's instructions for updating them.

Rule #2: Keep contact information up to date

The most important information in any domain record is the admin contact. It's to this email address that domain registrars send their reminders. If you ever decide to switch to a different registrar, all the confirmation email messages go to this email address. If you've changed ISPs, or you've hired a new office manager, you'll need to update this email address immediately. Different registrars handle the update procedure in different ways-some registrars let you do this by logging in to administration Web pages, some require notarized written proof. Check with your registrar for details.

Rule #3: Keep your own records

Don't rely on your registrar for domain renewal reminders-we've already read how two organizations come to grief over that. Check the whois information for all the domains you have

registered. At the bottom of the whois record, you'll see details like these:

Record last updated on 1-May-2002.

Record expires on 12-Oct-2004.

Record created on 12-Oct-1999.

Plug that "record expires" date in big bold letters into your PIM, your diary, and your wall calendar. Tattoo it on your wrist if you need to, but make sure that a month before that date, you pay the registrar for another year or two of registration.

Keep a Lock on Your Domain

Some domain registrars provide a service called domain locking. If you're paranoid that someone may try to hijack your domain, check with your registrar about how to turn on the lock. This prevents anyone from transferring ownership of your domain (not an easy or likely thing for most domain holders, but possible for hackers targeting high-profile sites).

Of course, it also prevents "slamming" by unscrupulous registrars who send bogus domain renewal notices that actually transfer your domain to a new registrar. You don't lose control of your domain this way, but you often end up paying more or losing services like free hosting or e-mail forwarding. And even

high-profile companies like Network Solutions seem to regard this as a legitimate marketing tool.

Keep a Backup

What's the first thing you do when you hit a Web site that's not what you were expecting? You check the Web address for typos, right? If it looks right...you figure you copied it down wrong and replace the .com with .net, or .org, or even .info until you see what you're expecting.

Anticipate this behavior, just in case someone manages to get control of your main Web domain. If you have the .com, .net, and .org versions of your domain name in reserve, all redirected to your main site, you'll have an instant quick fix for any domain napping problems. Sure, this will set you back a few bucks-but it gives you more flexibility in the long run.

And it's pretty good for bragging rights too.

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Use Your CD Drive More Productively

by [Ira Wilsker](#)

Golden Triangle PC Club

From the October 2002 issue of the I/O Port Newsletter

Almost all newer computers come with a CD-RW drive, a CD drive that can write and rewrite compatible CD discs. For older computers, with a standard CD reader (play only, not write), the addition of a CD “burner” is a very popular and fairly inexpensive upgrade. A simple review of the Sunday sale books for the major electronics and office supply stores shows an abundance of CD-RW drives for between \$30 and \$100, often after rebate. These drives are typically easy to install, and may possibly be installed in addition to the existing CD reader (good for copying CDs), or as a simple replacement. If internal installation is not desired, there are several external CD-RW drives, advertised weekly, that connect to an available USB or firewire port. The external drives, typically the USB models, are also often a good choice for older notebook computers where

internal installation is difficult or impossible. The Sunday ads often show the external USB drives for under \$100, after rebates.

Almost all CD-RW drives, whether factory installed, or after-market add-on, come with some CD burning software. The most widely distributed CD software provided with the drives is from Adaptec, or Adaptec’s successor (Adaptec sold their CD writing software division), Roxio. Another common software package included with some drives is from Nero, while other drives come with a variety of lesser-known software titles. As the price of blank CD discs plunges, often “free after rebate”, burning (writing to) CDs has become very popular. Still, many PC (and Mac) users are not using their equipment to its potential; large number of users still only use their CD-RW drives in read mode to install other software, and not to burn discs.

As had been stated many times here in previous columns, the three most important words in computing are “Backup, Backup, and Backup”. Remember that “Murphy’s First law of Computing” states that “A properly backed-up hard drive will never fail; a hard drive that has not been recently backed up will always fail at the most inopportune time.” All too many users who have ready access to CD-RW drives have lost all of their important files to viruses or hard drive failures, despite the ease and low expense of copying important files to CD discs. The

common blank discs hold from 660 to 700 megabytes of data, and are very inexpensive. Other than some time, there is no great investment to back up critical files at a minimum, or even better, entire hard drives.

There are a variety of excellent utilities available to backup hard drives. Some CD-RW drives come with a “lite” or “limited” version of popular backup programs. While minimally functional, these “lite” versions often lack useful functions such as compression (getting more data on a CD disc than its native capacity), or incremental backup (only backing up new files or files modified since the previous backup). I have been using “BackUp MyPC” from Stomp Software (www.stompinc.com), which was formerly known as Backup Exec, by Veritas (Seagate). This program is probably one of the most full featured backup programs, and easy to use. BackUp MyPC can backup to almost any type of device from CD-RW drives, tape drives, Jazz and Zip drives, and other devices. Some competing products are Roxio’s Go Back, Norton’s Ghost, and NTI’s BackUp Now (which I have also used). Since almost all computers can utilize some form of CD writer, and blank discs are cheap, there is absolutely no reason NOT to have at least critical data files backed up. The cliché “ounce of prevention...” is most apropos here. With over one in five PCs currently infected with at least one variety of the Klez worm, several versions of which are capable of destroying critical files on a

hard drive, backups are imperative. The appearance and rapid spread of other destructive worms and viruses, such as the new “Hunch” worm which explicitly destroys the files in the Windows, My Programs, and My Documents directories, emphasizes the need for backing up hard drives. Still, probably the most damage is done by the old-fashioned hard drive crash. Remember Murphy’s law, and always have a reasonably current backup of critical files. For long-term archival purposes, better quality CD discs are advertised as having a 100-year archival life.

There are other popular uses of CD burners. One of the most popular and most controversial uses is burning music to blank CD discs. Often in the popular MP3 format, or in native commercial music CD format, studies show that this is the most popular use of CD burners. Provided that copyright laws are rigidly obeyed, and we all know that they always are (snicker), homemade music CDs are very widely created and used. Online music or swap services, ranging from the now defunct Napster, to the very much alive and controversial KazAa and Morpheus, as well as the legitimate commercial music sites such as Sony, are popular sources of such music.

Another popular use is copying entire CD discs. Generally, it is considered “ok” to make a single archival backup of commercial CDs, provided that the copy is only used as a backup, and

properly disposed of (destroyed) when the original software is no longer needed. With some software CDs, and an increasing number of commercial music CDs, this archival backup is becoming more difficult to create as sophisticated copy protection is being utilized more commonly.

Many use their CD drive, often with rewriteable CD-RW discs, as an additional, but removable adjunct to their hard drive. This allows archival and portable storage of massive amounts of data, at minimal expense. CDs are often ideal for moving large files between computers.

There are several other uses for the CD-RW drives now so common in our machines. Many other CD drive utilities are readily available for download, such as from:

tu cows.exp.net/system/cdrutil95.html

or tu cows.exp.net/mmedia.html

Use the drives as they can be used, but make absolutely sure that critical data is frequently backed up.

Are You Having “Buffer Underrun” Errors With Your CD Burner?

By Ira Wilsker

During one of my recent radio shows (KLVI 560AM, Tuesdays 6-7pm, Saturdays, 1-4pm), I received many calls asking how to overcome the infamous “Buffer Underrun” error when writing to CD-R discs. While many of the newer CD-RW drives have built-in protection to prevent this error, the vast majority of CD-RW drives in use are subject to this most frustrating disc-ruining error.

According to several of the CD-RW drive manufacturers' websites, as well as the websites of several of the major CD burning software publishers, this error is the single most common problem encountered by users when creating CD-R discs. A buffer underrun occurs when the buffer or memory cache (temporary storage) either built in the CD-RW drive, or supplied by the CD burning software, can not keep up with the data being written to the CD disc. Normally the buffer receives

data from the computer, and parcels it out to the disc, the buffer supposedly holding enough data to feed and write smoothly to the CD-R disc as it is also receiving data from the computer. Ideally, the data stream should be smooth and continuous. If, for any of many reasons, the buffer does not have the requisite amount of data available, it is possible that a buffer underrun error may be created. Common causes of this error are inadequate system performance (not enough memory, slow processor, hard drive problems, too many programs loaded and running), and low quality or defective CD-R discs.

There are several simple tasks that can be done to reduce the chance of buffer underrun errors due to poor system performance. Most CD burning software indicates the maximum speed that the CD can write, typically in the format of “8x” or “10x” on a pull down menu. By selecting a writing speed one or two levels lower than the maximum, the error often disappears. Running both the Windows integral Scandisk and Defrag programs, or similar third party utilities, can possibly ensure that the hard drive is not the culprit causing the errors. Most of the CD burning software uses that hard drive as intermediate storage while the CD is being created, and the rule-of-thumb is that hard drive space of at least 150% of the amount of data being written must be readily available on the hard drive. If cluttered with obsolete data, simply cleaning the c:\Windows\temp directory by deleting obsolete files can often help prevent the problem. In

many older Windows computers, mostly running Windows 98 and 95, the CD drive settings may be incorrectly configured. Go to My Computer – Control Panel – System – Device Manager – click on the “+” to the left of “CDROM” to show the drive model – click on the CD drive to highlight it – click on properties – Settings – and check both “Disconnect” and “Auto Insert Notification”, and uncheck “Sync Data Transfer”. On many computers, properly setting this configuration alone may be adequate to eliminate the error.

If inadequate system resources cause the problem, it may also be easily resolved without the necessity of spending money to add memory or install a faster processor. Sometimes programs that have been already exited leave kernels of code or data in memory that unnecessarily consumes resources; typically the easiest method to restore those resources is to simply reboot the computer. By simply stopping any unnecessary programs from running in the background, and not performing any other tasks while burning CDs (multitasking), system resources consisting of CPU power, memory, and other resources may be easily and quickly made available. That traditional method to stop unwanted programs that may be running is to either right click on their icon in the taskbar and click on “close”, or do a CTRL-ALT-DELETE, followed by task manager on newer operating systems, and “end task” all programs running except “systray” and “explorer”, before burning the CD. After the CD has been

successfully created, reboot the computer in order to load antivirus software, and other desired utilities. Another option, which may also improve general system performance, not just CD writing, is to stop unnecessary programs from loading at all during the boot “start up” sequence. Detailed instructions on how to do this for all Windows operating systems can be found by clicking on the first link on my radio show web page at www.mycomputershow.com. An alphabetical list of programs that may be in the startup, along with an indication of if they are necessary or unnecessary, is the second link on my website. Being connected to an “always on” broadband Internet connection, such as DSL or cable can also consume resources. If the error occurs, disconnect from the net.

Another possible cause of the error may be the CD burning software itself. Most software included free with CD-RW drives is the “lite” or “limited” version lacking some of the features of the full commercial versions. Check your software publisher's website for updates to the version of software being used, as these may resolve the buffer underrun problem. Newer versions of the software, sometimes downloadable either as free upgrades, or available to registered users at a discount, may also resolve the problem. Some CD burning software better manage resources and buffers than others, and a software change may show improvement. Many of the CD software publishers offer

a free trial version of their product for download; this may be a useful exercise.

The CD-R media itself can be the culprit. Newer disc technologies, often using a blue or green dye on the writable side of the disc, can usually be written to faster and more reliably than the older, and cheaper, silver dye technology. The difference in price between the better quality blank CDs, and the no-name cheap generics is often small, considering the savings in both ruined discs, and the time to create them.

By properly configuring your computer and software, the CD burning experience can be less frustrating, and more productive.

Ira Wilsker is a member of the APCUG Board of Advisors, hosts a radio show, writes a column for his local paper and is on the faculty at the Lamar institute. Email him at: ira@apcug.org.

Windows XP: As Good as it Gets

By Steve Bass,
Pasadena IBM Users Group

Bass discovers few crashes, great performance, and a minimum of headaches with XP Pro

Kvetching about an operating system is therapeutic. Believe me, I've done lots, saving regular visits to my shrink. But my complaining has almost bottomed out since I made the full-time switch to Windows XP Pro.

You caught that, right? I said almost. The reason is that even though I'm wildly pleased with XP, there are still a few features--and loose ends--I don't like. I'll describe a few of them in this and subsequent columns, and show you how XP has built-in ways to make the changes. (Of course, that's one of my primary kvetches -- finding the spots to modify XP isn't obvious and requires digging.)

To play fair, I have to warn you that I'll also do some proselytizing. I'm going to do my best to win you over, so to speak, for your own good. That's because once you get over the hassle of Product Activation, and Microsoft's annoying single

license policy, I really think your computing experience will increase substantially.

I need another soapbox minute or two. Many of the PC World letters I receive complain, sometime bitterly, of a Microsoft conspiracy to force you into upgrading your system. Readers go on to say that in order to use XP, they'll need to replace some of their devices (printers seem to be the first one not to work), or stop using old, 16-bit programs written for Win 95.

I'll concede and agree with many of the readers that Microsoft should have done a better job with previous Windows versions, then we wouldn't be stuck in the corner having to upgrade.

But the reality is that if you want a slick operating system, one that's likely to make your computing day smoother and your workday more productive, you'll have to upgrade. [Set Soapbox to Off].

No More Stinkin' Crashes

You probably know that XP is a pretty interface hung on Windows 2000's architecture, so it resists crashes extraordinarily well. That's true for XP but not necessarily for programs that still plow headfirst into the bit bucket. For instance, Eudora, my e-mail program, locks up when I try embedding what it considers a too large image into a message.

And Internet Explorer also has a way of choking and freezing on some sites, doing its best to imitate a deer in headlights.

With Win 9x, the Eudora and IE crash could bring the system down; even if it didn't, I'd reboot to clear out any leftover holes in memory. Win XP contains the crash and stops it from contaminating the rest of the system. Using Control - Alt - Delete, the three-finger, soft-boot salute, calls up Task manager, one of XP's shining lights. Click on the toasted app and it's history.

Crash Reports? No, Thanks

Of course, with Microsoft at the helm, nothing as cool as Task Manager's handling of a crash can be left alone. Microsoft insists on meddling by sending itself the details of the crash. No doubt, the crash report does provide clues, often vital ones that you can review, to explain why a program crashes.

But once I've looked at a report -- say, Eudora's paige32.dll bug that Qualcomm won't fix -- I'm no longer interested in seeing it pop up. So I've turned parts of the feature off. (From Start, Control Panel, Advanced tab, Error Reporting.) This dialog gives me choices, and they're good ones. I can get the report but not send it, opt to hear only about programs or XP's errors, or even add specific programs to watch.

Zap, You're Restored

GoBack was the first successful utility to save snapshots of a PC's hard drive and let you restore the drive to a time when things were running well. It shouldn't surprise you to see a similar feature in Windows XP. (Roxio's GoBack, \$40, download at www.roxio.com.)

Quick aside: Many of Microsoft's niftier features are from the brain trusts of third-party companies. Woody, creator of dozens of Office, and specifically Word add-ons, said that to me in a private e-mail recently. More in another column.

XP's System Restore does just about everything does, just not as well. Nonetheless, it's an improvement over the way it worked in Windows ME, and a handy tool. I create a Restore point just before installing a new application. If the installation goes kablooey, I use System Restore to jump five minutes into the past and get my system going again.

I use it so often, I pinned it onto my Start Menu for easy access. Try it: Find System Restore in All Programs, Accessories, System Tools and right mouse click on the icon and choose Pin on Start menu. Easy, no?

System Restore's Problems

The problem? System Restore isn't perfect. While I haven't had a problem in the 25 times I've used it, some reports on the

Internet talk about DLLs that should be gone after a System Restore, are still on the system.

One thing Microsoft doesn't tell you is that each Restore Point (and system checkpoints, those restore points XP does automatically) takes up disk space.

You can dump all but the last system point by using XP's Disk Cleanup tool. Open Disk Cleanup, by clicking Start, choose All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, select Disk Cleanup, and choose the More Options tab. (Shortcut: From Start, Run, type cleanmgr.)

In the next series of columns, I'll show you other features built into XP that can keep you focused on productivity rather than rebooting two or three times a day or recovering from crashes.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG.

Check PCW's current edition at:

www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp

and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at

www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.

Are You XPerienced?

by Todd Rosen
HAL-PC User Group

Questions and Answers For Windows XP

I am always on the Internet. From time to time I get a pop-up window near the clock on the Windows XP "Start Bar" that tells me there is an update ready to install. Is this a Windows XP update and who is sending me this message?

A new feature of Windows XP if on the Internet is automatic updating. There is no charge for this service and updates will not be installed unless you start the installation.

If on the Internet, Windows XP intermittently checks with the Microsoft Website for any needed updates. If an update is found, the icon of the World and the MS Flag will appear in your Start Bar system tray along with a pop-up window stating "New updates are ready to install". When you click on this icon, a "Ready to Install" window will appear telling you about the update.

Read the information listed and click on the Settings button as well. You need to be comfortable with the update that you are installing.

Microsoft updates have been known to make PCs lock up or incorrectly run. It is possible that after installing the update you might have to uninstall it. If you don't know what update was just installed, you will have problems uninstalling it.

You do not need to install the update if you think that it could cause problems. Use "Add or Remove Programs" from the Control Panel if you need to uninstall the update. If you want to check for additional updates through the Internet go to windowsupdate.microsoft.com. If you are not on the Internet, you can order an update CD from Microsoft for a nominal charge. Finally, you can turn off/on the automatic update by right mouse clicking on the "My Computer" icon from the desktop and choosing "properties". Click on the "Automatic Updates" tab and adjust accordingly.

I still like using command lines from a DOS screen. Are there any new command line tools in Windows XP?

Yes there are new command line tools (but why would anyone want to use them?). To get to a DOS screen in Windows XP, click on the "Start" button from the Start bar and click "Run".

At the Run Line type "cmd" and a DOS screen will appear. Some new command line tools are:

- Bootcfg.exe - Sets up the boot.ini file's properties.
- Driverquery.exe - Displays the current loaded device drivers.
- Eventcreate.exe - Writes events to event logs.
- Eventquery.vbs - Extracts events from the log and writes them to a file.
- Eventtriggers.exe - Launches an event based program.
- Gpresult.exe - Displays the Resultant Set Of Policies.
- Logman.exe - Starts and stops performance data collection.
- Netsh.exe - Replaced the netdiag.exe
- Openfiles.exe - Displays the list of open files and connected users.
- Pagefileconfig.vbs - Displays the current pagefile size and location.
- Reg.exe - Displays and sets registry entries.
- Relog.exe - Resamples performance counters at specified intervals.
- Sc.exe - Starts and stops Win32 services.
- Schtasks.exe - Displays or sets scheduled tasks.
- Shutdown.exe - Shuts down and optionally restarts the computer.
- Systeminfo.exe - Displays system information.
- Taskkill.exe - Terminates a running process.
- Tasklist.exe - Displays all currently running processes.
- Tracerpt.exe - Prints a trace analysis report.
- Typeperf.exe - Displays performance data on the command line.

Part of Windows XP new features is IE6 and Outlook Express. Can I create folders in Outlook Express to save my mail in?

Yes. With Outlook Express opened, click on File -> Folder -> New.

In the bottom box, highlight “Local Folders”. In the top box type the name of the folder that you want to create. Once created, Drag & Drop files from another folder (like Inbox) into your new folder.

My Contacts have disappeared from Outlook Express in my new Windows XP. Can I get it back?

Yes. With Outlook Express opened, click on “View” and “Layout”. Click the appropriate boxes on the “Windows Layout Properties Box”.

I can purchase a copy of Windows XP cheap but it says on the disk, Not For Retail Sales. What does this mean? Should I buy it?

This is an OEM version of Windows XP software sold by Microsoft to specific PC manufacturers for the purpose of pre-installation on computer systems. I would not buy it. PC manufacturers buy these OEM versions at a cheaper rate because they buy large quantities of the licenses (1000's++) from Microsoft. The PC manufacturers have an agreement that they will only sell these copies of Windows XP with PC sales. If a PC

manufacturer is found selling these OEM copies, they can be sued and Microsoft can stop selling product to them.

The OEM Windows XP copy is the actual full version of Windows XP. Microsoft however does not support OEM versions. The individual PC manufacturer that sells these copies supports these versions of Windows XP. If purchased and problems arise, you probably would not have support. Windows XP Helpful Websites:

Visit go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=7128 to view a video comparison between Windows XP and Windows 95.

Find the latest security updates for Windows XP at:

go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=6441.

For free Microsoft training, go to:

www.microsoft.com/insider/learning/lessons.asp.

Intel Takes Aim With Itanium 2

James Niccolai
IDG News Service

Monday, July 08, 2002

Chip giant will try to win users in the high-end server market (again), but will customers be convinced?

Intel launched the second version of its [Itanium processor](#) Monday, trying once more to carve out a business for itself in the lucrative market for high-end workstations and servers.

Intel officials say at least 20 vendors will offer [Itanium 2](#) systems in the coming weeks and months--including Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Unisys, and Unisys Fujitsu Siemens Computers--along with operating systems including Microsoft's Windows, HP's HP-UX, and Red Hat Linux.

Nut cracking the high-end server market, where RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing) chips from Sun Microsystems, IBM, and others hold sway, won't be an easy task. Business customers in particular are wary of new technologies, and need to be convinced that the systems and software being offered are stable and reliable enough to run their critical applications, analysts say.

Because of that, and because many of the systems and software products will be rolled out gradually in the coming months, analysts predict a gradual uptake for the new chip.

"The primary issue is having something that's stable and trusted," says Dean McCarron, president of Mercury Research in Scottsdale, Arizona.

First Impressions

Intel's first 64-bit chip, launched in May last year, for the most part failed to impress. It was released behind schedule, its performance was lacking, and systems and software being offered were too new to inspire confidence among end users, analysts say. Moreover, server vendors were wary of designing servers around an architecture that was expected to change a year later with the release of the current chip.

This time around the story looks more compelling. Thanks to several design improvements, Itanium 2 should perform from as much as 50 to 100 percent better than its predecessor, according to [Intel test results](#), although those have yet to be verified independently. Intel applied the lessons it learned with the first chip and, "as a result, Itanium 2 is a significant improvement," McCarron says.

The software also has had time to mature a little, notes Nathan Brookwood, an analyst with Insight 64 in Saratoga, California. Vendors including Microsoft, IBM, Oracle, and SAP offered versions of their software that ran on the first Itanium and have

had a year to improve the performance and stability of those products, other analysts say.

Nevertheless, "this is not like shooting fish in a barrel," Brookwood says. Because the chip is new, Intel needs to demonstrate that systems based on Itanium 2 can offer the performance, reliability, and scalability that customers demand from servers that are priced from \$20,000 to \$1 million or more. "In theory they do, but they need to get some customers out there using these products and then circulate the success stories," he says.

Lending Support

Some Intel partners were enthusiastic. Microsoft sees Itanium 2 as key to its own efforts to reach into higher-end markets with its products, says Velle Kolde, lead product manager for Windows Enterprise Servers. Later this month the software maker will release Windows Advanced Server Limited Edition 2.1, which is tuned for the new chip, he says. And later this year it will release two versions of Windows .Net for Itanium 2, one of which will run on up to 64 processors and support up to 128 gigabytes of addressable memory.

Other vendors expressed confidence in Itanium 2, but don't expect a fast payback from their investment.

The [64-bit version](#) of Windows .Net "is what everybody is waiting on," says Frank Reichart, director of Intel server marketing at Fujitsu Siemens Computers, which will offer a 16-way Itanium 2 server. Since the Microsoft software won't be

available until the end of the year, "the majority of software vendors will not be out with applications until mid-2003, and I don't see the Itanium 2 market take-up until then. We are releasing systems earlier so larger organizations can evaluate them."

The market for Itanium 2 systems "will be a small market in 2003, with some potential in 2004," he says.

On Hold

Indeed, Kevin Krewell, general manager at [In-Stat MDR](#) in San Jose, California, says some customers may wait for the next version of Itanium, code-named Madison, which is due in mid-2003. That chip will offer further performance enhancements, including a 6MB memory cache, or double that of Itanium 2, Intel has said.

For Intel the stakes are high. Almost 9 out of 10 servers sold today use Intel processors, according to research company [IDC](#), in Framingham, Massachusetts. But those systems account for only about 40 percent of server revenue, since RISC-based servers such as those made by IBM, Sun, and HP tend to command higher prices. Intel hopes to snatch a piece of that higher-end business away from its rivals.

Intel officials expressed confidence that Itanium 2 will succeed. Among key improvements, the chip features a large memory cache of up to 3MB that is tightly integrated with the main processor, along with a faster system bus that increases data throughput from the 2.1 gigabits per second of the first chip to

6.4 gigabits per second. Those enhancements should boost the performance of large databases, business intelligence software, ERP (enterprise resource planning) applications, engineering design programs, and other software, says Mike Graf, Intel's product line manager for Itanium 2.

The chip was launched in three versions: a 1-GHz chip with 3MB of Level 3 cache carries a list price of \$4,226; a 1-GHz chip with 1.5MB of Level 3 cache priced at \$2,247, and a 900-MHz chip with 1.5MB of Level 3 cache priced at \$1,338. Those prices are similar to those of the first Itanium, and are "the going price for this kind of chip," according to Brookwood.

Product Plans

HP, which is one of Itanium 2's biggest backers, has already tuned a version of its HP-UX operating system for the chip and will offer a server with two Itanium 2 processors and up to 12GB of memory priced from \$6,730. A system with four processors and 48GB of memory will be launched in August starting at \$21,000, HP officials say.

The price-performance combination offered by Itanium 2 servers, particularly in four- and eight-processor systems, will put pressure on RISC server vendors, and particularly on Sun, which has no plans to offer Itanium 2 systems of its own.

"It will in the long run be Sun's worst nightmare, but that's not something that plays out over the next 6 months," Brookwood says. "It begins to play out over the next 18 months--and in 5

years, unless Sun makes some substantial changes in its strategy, it's going to be a big problem for them."

Sun maintains that it will take years for Intel-based servers to become as scalable and reliable as its own Unix servers, which come packaged with an array of management and administration software. And like IBM, Sun has cut prices on some of its own Unix servers to compete more effectively.

Waiting and Watching

Support for Itanium 2 wasn't unanimous: A spokesperson for Dell Computer says the company has no immediate plans to offer an Itanium 2 server, and [will wait to see how demand](#) for the systems shapes up from customers.

Dell's specialty is to sell relatively low-cost systems in large numbers, whereas Itanium 2 is aimed at more-expensive servers that will sell in lower numbers, notes McCarron. So while Dell may be the world's largest server vendor, its absence from the ranks of Itanium supporters is just a symbolic setback for Intel, he says.

"In this computing space the volumes are relatively small and development times are quite long, so I wouldn't expect the absence or presence of any one vendor to dictate how Itanium 2 is going to fare," McCarron says.

Martyn Williams, Peter Sayer, John Blau, Ashlee Vance, Laura Rohde, and Matt Berger all of the IDG News Service contributed to this report.

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of August 6, 2002 was held at Round Table Pizza, Geary Blvd. at 16th.

Present were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, David Ross, Pierre Hahn and Don Oclassen

The meeting was called to order at 19:04, chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the July 2002 meeting were distributed. A motion was made, seconded and passed that the minutes be approved as presented.

The Treasurer's report – The treasurer is recovering from heart surgery. Butler distributed his report, which was received via email. Our healthy balance continues. The report was approved as written.

The Vice-President had nothing new to report but did comment on his new broadband connection.

The President's report – We had a decent attendance at the July meeting. He is starting to make plans for the auction in December.

The Webmaster's report – The webmaster was not present.

The Membership Committee – We had two renewal memberships noted this month. Butler said there are more that the treasurer has not had a chance to process yet, due to not receiving the material from Butler yet.

The Blue Notes Editors' report – The next issue is not out yet but will be soon.

The Product Review report was that Butler is working on a list of available products.

The Program Chair report is that for the August meeting, Lenny Bailes playing guitar and recording; September meeting is not yet set. A company will let him know this week if they are available. We are still waiting to see if Microsoft will send someone this fall.

Old Business – Butler stated that having the new user's SIG before the meeting is currently too difficult to organize within our current time constraints and lack of an official M-team.

New Business – None

A motion was made that the meeting be adjourned. After seconding, the motion passed with no abstentions. Butler adjourned the meeting at 19:36 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Gaer, Secretary

The San Francisco PC Users Group Steering Committee meeting of September 3, 2002 was held at Round Table Pizza.

Present were Butler Crittenden, Judy Gaer, David Ross, Pierre Hahn and Don Oclassen, David Caldwell, Ron Feiertag, Harold Charns, and Joseph Puig III

The meeting was called to order at 19:01 chaired by club president Butler Crittenden. The minutes of the August 2002 meeting were distributed. One correction was made on who attended. The motion was made, seconded and passed that the minutes be approved as corrected.

The Treasurer's report – The treasurer was welcomed back from his health absence. Like our treasurer our balance is healthy.

The Vice-President's report discussed setting up his print server on his LAN.

The President's report – Our APCUG membership was paid early this year. Butler has been nominated to be regional rep for the APCUG. Since he was nominated he will run. If elected he will serve. It is unsure what that will mean for our club. It is unlikely he could do both especially since he is also doing product review, membership and program chair. As usual Butler needs help, guys. Butler asked David Caldwell to check that we have the room reserved for the

club meeting for the rest of the year and also to sign up for next year. Butler will send an email to the membership letting them know about the library book sale since there are a number of well-priced computer books.

The Webmaster's report – We have 10-15 members who appear to have abandoned their email accounts. Butler asked for a list to check for active members. We discussed hosting the websites and keeping email on the current server. Butler stated that if we don't get more people interested in learning about and getting involved in the web server then we should leave it as is. Joseph will look into whether we could use FrontPage on our server so that we could use the new website designed for us on it. Joseph will stop by Butler's house to check on the new server to see if we can add it to our setup.

The Membership Committee – We had 3 renewal memberships and 2 new members noted this month.

The Blue Notes Editors' report – The next issue is now out. It was discussed whether the contact information for the club officers should be put back in. It was decided not to do so, since the contact info is on the web site already.

The Product Review report was that Butler is working on a list of available products. There are some new items including an anti-spam program

that Butler would like someone to evaluate. Butler already has the one he evaluated on his main computer.

The Program Chair report is that we have Alpha 5's Ray Difazio talking about simple applications for a database program he has demonstrated to other user groups. October is Learn iT. Their topic needs to be decided. Butler asked that people go to their website and come up with suggestions on which course they should do (in brief) at the meeting. November is not covered yet and December is the auction.

Old Business – Ron Feiertag entered the latest Blue Notes in the APCUG contest.

New Business – None

A motion was made that the meeting be adjourned. After seconding, the motion passed with no abstentions. Butler adjourned the meeting at 19:55 hours.

**Respectfully submitted,
Judy Gaer, Secretary**

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24 hour recording for meeting information 415-346-2644

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:

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

please send your check to:

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.)