NEWSLETTER

The Best Accessory for your PC !

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side .....Tue, Sept 15

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side .....Wed, Sept 16

University of Advancing Technologies
2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe
(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

Fountain Hills ..Thurs, Sept 17

Fountain Hills Library, 12901 N La Montana Drive,
Fountain Hills

This month's presentation is TBA

Check our Website at www.PhoenixPCUG.org to verify subject matter and time changes . ALL meetings!

Inside this Issue...

JOHN CURTH REMEMBERS----------2

INSTALL THOSE UPDATES----------4

MEMBERS ASK----------5

GOOGLEPEDIA THE BOOK----------6

HELLO AMERICA----------8

SPEED DEMONS----------10

ONLINE CALENDARS----------12

FIREFOX UPDATE SCANNER----------13

THE FIRST KING DOS----------15

Phoenix PC Users Group

Officers

President:	Dean Botchuck
Vice President:	David Yamamoto
Secretary:	Chuck Lewis
Treasurer	Lo Hardman

Staff Members

Membership Coordinator:	Chuck Lewis
Webmaster:	Hank Pearson
Fountain Hills Coordinator:	Tj
East Side Coordinator:	Marion Smith
West Side Coordinator:	Bill Aulepp
Public Relations:	Tj
Newsletter Publisher:	Steve Semon
Newsletter Editor:	Bill Aulepp
Advertising Manager:	David Yamamoto

Contact Information

Dean Botchuck: President@PhoenixPCUG.org
David Yamamoto: Vicepres@PhoenixPCUG.org
Chuck Lewis: Secretary@PhoenixPCUG.org
Lo Hardman: Treasurer@PhoenixPCUG.org
Steve Semon: Publisher@PhoenixPCUG.org
Bill Aulepp: Editor@PhoenixPCUG.org
Hank Pearson: Webmaster@PhoenixPCUG.org

Steering Committee:
Officers and Members who are present at the 6:00 P.M. West Side meeting.

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR EDITOR

This has been a disruptive month for the people who put the Newsletter out. Our president Dean and our publisher Steve have both been in hospital but they are now home and ok. We all wish you well guys and look forward to your return to these pages soon,

Our printer gave out so we now have a new one. I discovered repairing a printer can cost as much or more than the original cost. I have noted for some time buying a printer is cheap compared to the cost of maintaining it, in our case, with toner, replacing the drum every couple of years, and of course the paper.

My ink jet printer is even worse. After only two or three ink replacements the cost of the printer has been exceeded. A caveat in buying printers is always check out the cost of the supplies as that is where the real expense is.

This month we are going down memory lane with an article on Dos. Most of us remember the cryptic drill we had to learn using a Dos computer and the programs that went with it.

John Curth takes us on a trip with his experiences as a computer aficionado. We also explore disintegration of technical support because of outsourcing to India. See Hello America on page eight.

I recently spent over half an hour with the people in the former British Colony trying to get a Tracfone registered. I had bought it online and it would not register. Our Indian friends put me through the same process I had already used. It still would not register. They offered to send me a replacement phone. I said ok but I did not get a replacement Phone. I did get an e-mail from someone in the USA explaining that I had to register the Phone in the Scottsdale area since I had asked for a 480 number. Evidently they use a different carrier in Scottsdale as apposed to Phoenix.

Until next month Cheers.

Bill Aulepp

JOHN CURTH REMEMBERS

This is a first person account of computer usage starting in the early 1990s. At that time, I was employed by the Federal Government as a refrigeration tech to maintain the equipment at a medical facility. What they did at that time was have "dumb terminals" placed in the offices/shops where we could access them by logging on with our user name and password. For security reasons, a requirement was made that every 90 days we had to change our password to something else.

I soon found that my password change would work simply by adding a number at the end and changing it. Starting with the number one and then two then three, and then starting all over again, this worked very well for all the years that I was there.

Finally, in the middle of 1994 I purchased a home computer that would give me access to the web and allowed me to upgrade from a word processor that I had been using since the middle 1980s. The real savior for me was that I already knew how to type from high school and carried forward through my career.

It was really neat watching the progress of the computer moving forward and improving with some problem solving with each step of the way. Thanks to Microsoft ® and its operating systems that it upgraded and needless to say its repairs, plus the computer people doing their thing by making the computer faster and better.

Needless to say, this all came at a price paid by the consumers. Not only by the businesses but also by the home users as they wanted to stay knowledgeable with the tons of various programs that were constantly upgrading when they became available.

We saw a lot of the software and hardware companies being gobbled up by the "Biggies" and still others that just faded away. What really hurt was when the little guy would use some of those programs and then changes were made to them where they didn't move forward or got lost by the "Biggie" that bought them.

As a personal user, I call myself a "Player" since I don't specialize in any one program and my computer is being used strictly by me for my own enjoyment. Moreover, I use a variety of programs that

(Continued on page 7)

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

For room and time changes,
check your website: phoenixpcug.org .

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map - page 18)
- Tuesday, September 15, 2009
- 6:00 PM Steering Committee
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation .

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map - page 18)
- Wednesday, September 16, 2009
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation .

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map - page 18)
- Thursday, September 17, 2009
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation .

SIG MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map - page 18)
- Digital Photography Sig
- Followed by: Digital Video Sig

On hiatus for summer

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Library (see map—page 18)
- *General Sig Meeting is also on hiatus*

INSTALL THOSE UPDATES

INSTALL THOSE UPDATES

By Marjie Tucker, Newsletter Editor, Mountain Computer User Group, Georgia
www.mcug.org
mcug (at) dnet.net

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Are you taking every precaution to safeguard the data on your computer? If you answer "yes" because you have turned on the Windows Firewall and use anti-virus and anti-spyware software, that's great. However, you may be forgetting something very important - installing software updates.

Software usually contains bugs that are not found until the general public uses it. Because of this, all companies including Microsoft and Apple periodically make updates available to fix the bugs that have appeared. Many viruses and worms are written specifically to take advantage of holes that appear in operating systems and other programs. If you don't install the latest updates to your computer, those holes will remain and your data will be vulnerable to the malware.

Both Windows XP and Windows Vista have the ability to automatically download the most important updates as they are posted. To ensure that this is happening on your computer use the Control Panel to go to the Windows Security Center and make certain that the Automatic Updates are turned on. If Automatic Updating shows a green On color, then the updates will be downloaded. If the function for Automatic Updates is disabled, use the setting available to turn it on.

When the updates have been downloaded to your computer you are notified of their presence. This usually occurs with a small golden icon in the lower right-hand corner of your task bar that reads "Updates are ready for your computer." If you click on the icon and give permission, the update will install immediately, usually in the background so you can continue working. After it is installed you may be asked to give permission for your computer to reboot.

However, if you tell the computer not to install this update, the message that it is available may stay on your computer permanently, as it waits for you to click that it can now be installed. If you see the gold icon on your taskbar, check to see if you have updates waiting right now so you can protect your computer.

There May Be Additional Updates
Sometimes there are optional updates available that won't be downloaded automatically. For that reason it's a good idea to check the Microsoft Update website periodically. The easiest way to check is to use the link you can find on your Start Menu.

That link will take you directly to the Microsoft Update site where you can choose between the Express or Custom method of installing available updates. Custom is preferable so you can determine if there are any updates you don't want to install.

Click on the Custom button and then wait while the Microsoft site compares your computer's software against the Microsoft database. Eventually you will see a list of updates that aremissing from your computer. Any High-Priority (important for security) updates will already be

(Continued on page 9)

MEMBERS ASK

Question: Should I buy a computer now with Vista as the Operating System or wait for Win-7 **?**

Answer: This probably is a personal choice as to how quickly you require a new computer. Win - 7, however, will be the final operating system of choice for most of us. Waiting means you get a PC ready to go without the hassle of the up-grade from Vista.

On the opposite side you might be able to get a Vista PC at a discount during the changeover period. It may have more memory than a com-parable Win-7 machine. Be sure the Vista ma-chine comes with a free Win-7 upgrade coupon in case you do decide to upgrade.

ONLINE CALENDARS

(Continued from page 14)

your work and personal schedules in tune with each other, and it can help you avoid double-booking yourself.

Additionally, some family-friendly social networking sites, such as Multiply (www.multiply.com) and Fa-mundo (www.famundo.com), offer calendars that you and your family can use and share with each other. When organizations you are involved in, such as a church group or a special interest club, use a social networking group calendar or a group-oriented calendar, you can integrate schedules. This helps you remember to include the meeting times and dates on your calendar, and it can help jog your memory when you can't remember whose house you are supposed to meet at that night.

by Tessa Warner Breneman

PPCUG's Ride Sharing Program

Bill Aulepp, long time group member has volunteered to coordinate member communication for those who need rides and those who can provide them.

To join the program for either side, email Bill at bill@aulepp.com Provide your name, your address, a way to contact you, and whether you can give or need a ride. Please do not wait until the last minute to request a ride,

Bill will gather the information from everyone who responds and connect up drivers with riders. It will be the responsibility of the individual members to organize the actual rides, dates, and pick up information.

Able to Provide a Ride?

Are you willing to pick up, transport and drive another member to one meeting a month? As an added bonus, any driver participating will receive one extra raffle ticket each time they drive a member to a meeting.

GOOGLEPEDIA THE BOOK

GOOGLEPEDIA

A review by George Harding, President, Tucson Computer Society, AZ
www.aztcs.org
georgehardingsbd(at)earthlink.net

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

This book is the greatest! If you are interested in anything Google, this is the place to go to find out about it.

This is a Que book, the 3rd edition, by Michael Miller, who is a prolific author for Que. He's written some 80 non-fiction how-to books, mostly about computer-related
subjects.

The book has over 700 pages, including a comprehensive index, a very complete Table of Contents, 46 chapters and 3 appendices.

I suspect that a 4th edition is not far off, because Google is constantly developing new
tools that you will want to know about.

The best known Google tool is the Web Search engine. In the olden days, say five years ago, there were several search engines, all of which produced a list of results that contained many duplicates and may not even have produced something useful to you. Google took a new approach to produce search results that do not have duplicates, are up-to-date and are sequenced by probable usefulness to you. They do this by the following process:

Periodically, usually every few weeks, their Google-Bot crawler searches the web for each page, tracks every link in the page and saves a copy of each page it encounters on its servers.

Google creates an index to each of the saved pages, storing every important word on each page.

Once a search of the pages is complete, the results are ranked by methods known only by Google.

The rankings are displayed on the search results page in order by what is likely to be the most important to you, to the least likely. There are many techniques to making a successful search, and these are described fully in the book. Using quotes or operators can significantly improve the accuracy of your search.

What's most interesting, though, is all the other services provided by Google. I suspect you, like me, are not aware of many of these:

GOOG-411. Search for businesses by voice from your cell phone. Dial 1-800-GOOG-411 to try it out.

Google Desktop. Create a home page environment that has just what you want on it.
Google Docs. Word processing, spreadsheet and presentation documents on the web, sharable with others.

Google Earth, Sky and Mars. Tools to explore these areas.

Google Gmail. An email portal.

Google Groups. Create and join specific discussion groups.

Google Maps. View maps and driving directions.

Google Notebook. Store web information you come across.

Google Reader. Display articles and headlines from blogs and RSS
feeds.

Google Scholar. Read and search scholarly journals and articles.

Google Transit. Plan your trip using public transportation.

(Continued on page 7)

GOOGLEPEDIA THE BOOK

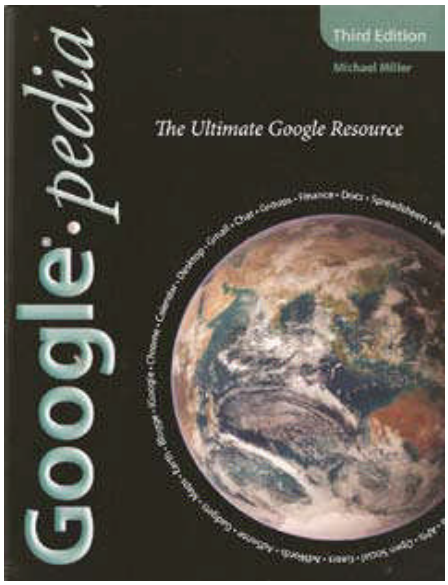
(Continued from page 6)

Google News and Web Alerts. Be advised of new material that meets your criteria.

And more…

Each chapter tells you about a Google service and how to use it. Each description is described simply to begin with, but continues with more details about how to make use of special features. You can easily be an expert user of any of their tools through this book.

All of these services came out of the Google Labs, which is essentially an R & D facility. It is constantly on the search for new, useful tools for users. One recently announced service is Google Voice that gives you free phone calls within the US, but also forwards calls to your cell phone and land line and transcribe s voice messages into email.



I found this book fascinating, because it opened my eyes to all the things that are available from Google. It will take me some time to learn about the ones in which I'm interested.

About: Googlepedia

Author: Michael Miller

Publisher: Que Publications

JOHN CURTH REMEMBERS

(Continued from page 2)

"fit" my immediate needs without fear of having to worry about an invasion from an outside people source.

For the most part Microsoft ® does very well even though I must download their updates which come sometimes two, three times a week. Then too, my computer manufacture is also updating the various programs or drivers that come forth from the different manufactures.

I'm not a Beta tester, but I did attend a Windows 7 ® promo last May and received a copy of a timed Beta release that really looked promising when installed on a laptop that had nothing on it but format. The total time to install was about 20/25 minutes on a 32 bit laptop. The actual number of people that participated all had about the same experience doing the install on both 32 and 64 bit laptops. Once home, I put the Windows 7 ® on my desktop computer that had Vista Ultimate ® on it. It took me 1 hour 45 minutes to do the upgrade. I was really surprised especially since not one of the other participants that attended the promo hadn't had that experience.

The Windows 7 ® program also contained Internet Explorer 8 ® in the bundle. What I found was a time problem - each time I accessed my email account. Upon opening my Hotmail ® account, it would take 20 minutes to download whatever mail that it had. With that being the case, I decided to remove the program and go back to Vista Ultimate ® on my computer.

What do we have to look forward to? What does the future have in store for us? I loved Star Trek ® and all of those TV shows talking to the computer. It also contained several things that are available today plus innovations that were really far out. With that being the case, what I see is that the sky is the limit for a long time to come.

John Curth is a long time member and a past Vice President of the Phoenix PC Users Group

HELLO AMERICA

THE DISINTEGRATION OF SERVICE

Written by Jerry Goldstein, Vice President and Newsletter Editor, The PC Users Group of Connecticut
www.tpcug.org
jerryg (at) attygoldstein.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Want to make a free over sea calls to India? Just call for technical support on your computer, Internet service, or cable service. You are likely to be routed overseas to India. You then get the pleasure of talking to the "well trained" script readers. About the only thing they are trained for is to tell you: "Yes, very much I can help you". You hear this phrase whenever you call for tech support. The techs use that phrase to hide the fact that they are spending that time to check their index sheets for key words in what you told them was your problem. They then turn to that page in their script book and start reading off a page that is supposed to match your problem. The key word is "supposed". Reality is far from tech support fantasy.

Tech support used to mean reaching a person knowledgeable in the problem you were calling about. Now it is a means the manufacturers and utility suppliers use to avoid dealing with customers. There was a time when the support staff knew and understood computers. But then the corporations came up with the idea of making support calls difficult. They figured we would be less likely to complain if doing so was difficult. It is not bad enough instructions are written by non-English speaking people. Now we have to get the instructions interpreted by someone who failed a course in English as a second language. Which is pretty tough to do in India, a country where English, along with Hindi, is the official language. (I won't even go into how all those people in India suddenly have American names like Jack and John when they join tech support.)

I know my patience has a limit. I test it regularly when I call for Tech Support. Thanks to the service quality of my utility, cable, and Internet providers I get to test my patience all too often.

Tech support did get smarter, though not for the better or to the benefit of the consumer. Used to be you could ask for a supervisor and be moved up to someone in the states. Now tech support in India has their own supervisors who are as good as the base level worker at helping. Pretty much no help at all.

If you are lucky enough to be moved up the ladder to what is often called the "corporate escalation department" you will find your anger escalate as well. Corporate only works business hours and Monday through Friday, sometimes. Holidays or any other excuse, means you won't reach corporate help. What will corporate escalation do when you get there? Route you to the technical support staff in the states you needed from the beginning. But first you need to wait 24 hours for a return contact. Oy* (see below)

How do I know so well how tech support fails to work? I am my family and business's IT person. That means I am often on the phone with tech support. I recently spent five days without Internet service thanks to Earthlink's outsourcing it's tech support to India. After days of trying to get Earthlink to fix the problem I called the line provider that Earthlink uses and had them fix the problem myself. Total outsourcing.

Is there a way to avoid all this? There are less chances everyday as corporate America outsources its human interface with its customers. Can we do anything about it? Sure. When looking at what to buy, or a service to use, take into consideration how the manufacturer or provider will support its product. Use products and services that support you as a human and not as a joke.

* = For those unfamiliar with "Oy" it's a Yiddish exclamation of dismay or exasperation.

INSTALL THOSE UPDATES

(Continued from page 4)

selected to be downloaded. However, you need to look at the Optional Updates to choose the ones you want to include. Click on Software, Optional and choose all that are shown. You should need all of these. If any Hardware, Optional updates are shown, you should be a little choosier. If your hardware is working properly, you may want to skip these driver updates. But if you are suffering any hardware problems, these updates may solve your problems.

After you have chosen the updates you want to download, click on Install Updates at the top of the screen and the download will begin. This may take quite a bit of time, depending on the number and size of the updates being downloaded. This would actually be a good time to take a coffee break or make that important telephone call.

You can view a list of the updates you have installed on your computer at the Add or Remove Programs location on your Control Panel. At the top of the screen you will see a small box labeled "Show Updates." Click in that box and all your Microsoft updates will be displayed.

This screen is very useful if you encounter difficulty after installing an update or service pack. You can always find the update and uninstall it through this screen.

You can also easily see if your computer contains the latest Windows Service Packs by looking at the Properties of My Computer. Right-click over the My Computer icon and choose Properties. The most recently installed Service Pack will be listed on this screen.

Don't Forget Your Anti-MalWare Programs

Of course, it's also critical to constantly update your anti-malware programs. Viruses, worms, and spyware are constantly being developed and these protection programs work hard to provide fixes. When possible, also set these pro grams for automatic updates and regularly perform a manual update just to make certain that you don't miss any patches or new program features.

And, Remember Your Other Software

We've spent most of our time talking about Microsoft software. Your other programs, such as Adobe Reader and Java also receive regular updates. Look at the settings for those to be sure they are updating automatically. This is especially important if you have any difficulty while working with a program. The solution may be a simple as installing the latest patch.

Apple Software Updates

Apple also frequently releases updates that you can download and install. To check your Mac for patches, use the Apple menu and choose Software Updates.

You can also set your Mac to get Automatic Updates by choosing System Preferences from the Apple menu. Choose View and Software Update. One of the choices is Automatic and you can also choose a time for the computer to check the Apple website.

Stay Secure

Remember to set your operating system and programs for Automatic Updates, install those updates, and periodically check the websites manually to ensure that you have all the latest patches. This is an easy and inexpensive way to help protect your data.

SPEED DEMONS

SPEED DEMONS

Written by Bill Roman, Advisor to the Board of Directors, The PC Users Group of Connecticut
www.tpcug.org
br (at) numbercrunch.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

There is an issue that I feel must be addressed, since the issue continues to come up on a regular basis. As a PC technician I constantly get asked why the clients' computer has become so slow, and if there is anything wrong with it.

The first thing I tell the client is that there are two main culprits that contribute to a PC becoming very sluggish. The first being lack of RAM memory. This answer usually elicits a quick response from the user that they "only do e-mail, Internet and word processing" or some similar response. I then go into a discussion with the user that there are two kinds of memory in a computer: hard drive storage, which holds all their music, pictures, documents, etc. and RAM, or working memory. A user could have plenty of hard drive space to store all of their documents and stuff, but when they don't have enough RAM, the computer will, over time, become slower and slower.

Why you ask? When the computer was originally purchased (usually somewhere between 2 and 5 years ago) Windows XP, in this case, required about 512MB of RAM to run properly. As Windows critical security updates and service packs are installed, as well as upgrades and updates to all sorts of programs used on a daily basis (antivirus, Internet Explorer, AOL, Adobe Reader and Flash Player, printer updates, etc), the programs NEVER get smaller, always bigger.

Now, several years later and the programs being used are double or triple in size, but the computer is the same one with the same specs as when it was purchased. Adding more RAM memory is a quick, cheap way to improve performance to an aging computer, and extend life before a replacement is in order. Windows XP should have at least 1024 MB (1GB) of RAM to run properly, and Windows Vista (32bit) needs 3GB of RAM. More is not better in the case of Vista for technical reasons I will not go into in this article.

This is only half the battle. The other half is to beat down what I will call the "moochers". Years ago when I would inspect a computer for sluggish performance, it was usually because of a rogue game that was installed. Back then quite a few games adopted the theory that the only reason you owned your $3000 or $4000 computer (yes, it was that much back then, even more depending on how far back you go) was to play some ridiculous $49 game. The game would change many settings that allowed the game to work properly, but made it miserable to perform simple tasks like type a letter.

Now, in 2009 every program under the sun assumes that they are the main focus, and must be given priority at all times. What does this mean to you, the end user? Each time when an upgraded revision of Adobe Reader comes out it always wants to include the new "MSN Toolbar" or "Yahoo Toolbar" etc. This adds unnecessary junk to your browser, which slows down getting online. In addition, many of these programs load an additional program when Windows starts to

(Continued on page 17)

SMARTCOMPUTING MAGAZINE - SUPPORT

Smart Computing smartcomputing.com In Plain English®

There is a way you can support your user group. Smart Computing Magazine will give a gift subscription to the Phoenix PC Users Group to be used as a door prize, raffle, etc., for each five subscriptions received from our group. Subscriptions can be applied for with the subscription coupon below or by phone as long as you use our group's unique source code number (**8305**) when beginning the subscription.

For each paid subscription using the source code 8305, our user group will be credited one credit. Results are calculated each quarter, and credits will accumulate until the group reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time they will contact the PPCUG.

In the event our group does not reach the five paid subscription mark by the end of the quarter, credits will be carried over into the following quarter until the amount reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time a free subscription will be issued.

USER GROUP PROGRAM 8305

Smart Computing.com/groups Order on line

❑1 Year……$29 ❑2Years……$48 ❑3Years……$64

Name (Please Print) _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Payment Options (Check One)

❑Payment Enclosed ❑Bill Me

❑Discover ❑American Express ❑Visa ❑Master Card

Card Account Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Mail To: Smart Computing PO Box 86380 Lincoln, NE 68501-9807 OR

Call To Order 800 733-3809 402 479-2136 Or Fax 402 479-2183

PLEASE ASK THEY CREDIT PHOENIX USER GROUP SC8305C PU513

ONLINE CALENDARS

ONLINE CALENDARS

Reprinted with permission from *Smart Computing*. Visit www.SmartComputing.com/groups to learn what *Smart Computing* can do for you and your user group!

Eliminate Clutter & Keep Everyone Current

With dance practice, book club, piano lessons, dentist appointments, and all of the other activities your family is involved in, keeping track of your personal schedule is just as hard as remembering whose turn it is to drive the soccer practice carpool. Your family may have a traditional paper calendar that's kept in the kitchen, but keeping it current is hard work because times and dates seem to change as quickly as you can say the word "recital." Not only is it difficult to remember to add events, but not everything can fit in the small square boxes the paper calendar has to offer, either.

If you're looking for a flexible and convenient way to keep your family on the same page, virtual calendars may be the answer. This type of calendar is accessible from any Internet connection so you can change it from work and your kids can access it from school, which helps keep everyone up-to-date and reduces the chances that someone will miss an event. Additionally, signing up for an online calendar account is almost always free, so your family budget won't be affected.

Ditch The Kitchen Calendar

Windows Live Calendar can be integrated with other Windows Live services, such as your contacts list and your email.

Online calendars offer many more features than your typical paper calendar. Rather than crossing out, erasing, and scribbling on your paper calendar as your schedule changes, you can add events by simply double-clicking the appropriate date or selecting the Add Event link. Removing an event is as easy as double-clicking the event and selecting the corresponding Delete Event link. Additionally, you can add the time and the duration of the event. Once you give the event a title, you can describe it with as many details as needed. Because many paper calendars have limited space to add details to events, this can be especially helpful when coordinating group events and explaining any special details your family needs to know about.

Generally, you will also have separate inputs for information, such as the location, attendees, and whether this is a recurring event. Recurring events, such as choir practice at 7 p.m. every Wednesday, can usually be set up by simply selecting a checkbox. If you need to edit one event or the whole series, you will have the option to do both.

Many online calendars also let you set up reminders for your events. So if you're afraid you or others might forget an event, you can send a reminder, which will come in the form of an email, text message, or a different delivery method. Some online calendars also offer features such as tasks and to-do lists. These lists are sometimes associated with events, or they are available to use in a more general sense. If your whole family has access to these lists, it's easier to communicate simple things, such as the weekly chores lists, than if you try and squeeze them into the margins of your paper calendar.

To help accommodate the separate schedules of each family member, some online calendar applications let each member of the family keep his or her own calendar and then simply have a list of shared events everyone can access. Each of your children can separately keep track of when homework is due and share it with you or a classmate, while keeping it apart from siblings in order to avoid clutter and confusion.

Online Calendar Quest

The Web has several online calendars to offer. Google, Yahoo!, and Windows Live, for instance, have similar online calendars with all the aforementioned features. Each online calendar, however, has

(Continued on page 14)

FIREFOX UPDATE SCANNER

TRACK WEBPAGES WITH FIREFOX UPDATE

Reprinted with permission from *Smart Computing*. Visit www.SmartComputing.com/groups to learn what *Smart Computing* can do for you and your user group!

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds are great for keeping up with Web pages that provide regular blog-like updates. Some pages, however, do not provide an RSS feed. Other pages might not have the neat, discrete posts directly compatible with feed readers.

A variety of utilities pick up the slack by scanning Web pages for any text changes and notifying you when a difference is found. If you use Firefox, one worthy representative comes in the form of an add-on extension called Update Scanner.

Update Scanner checks your favorite Web sites for changes and then points out any updates by highlighting the text.

Keeping Track

Download the free Update Scanner from the online stable of Firefox extensions at https://addons.mozilla.org. Search for Update Scanner using the green search bar. Once you find and select it, click the Add To Firefox button to load it in your browser. You'll probably need to restart Firefox for the add-on to take effect.

Update Scanner checks your favorite Web sites for changes and then points out any updates by highlighting the text.

Once Firefox is up and running, you'll need to configure entries for the Web pages you want to monitor. Click Firefox's Tools menu and then choose Update Scanner. A sidebar appears on the left edge of the screen.

The sidebar lists one example entry to get you started: the Update Scanner Website. You'll probably want to delete that site and set up your own using the buttons across the top of the sidebar. Click the Update Scanner Website icon and then click the Delete button, which looks like a shredder.

The first button on the far-left end of the Update Scanner toolbar creates a new entry. By default, the window that pops up includes the name and URL for

the page currently being displayed in the browser window, but you can change this to any URL you want to track.

Zero In

The Autoscan slider lets you set how often the program should check the selected Web site for updates. You can choose anywhere from every five minutes to every week or only manual scans. This is a particularly important choice if you have Update Scanner tracking more than a few sites. Checking too many pages too frequently can noticeably slow down your browser, so go easy on the update schedule with sites you do not think will really change that often.

The next slider under Change Threshold fine-tunes what Update Scanner should notify you about and what it can safely ignore. For example, a simple change in a date might not be worth noting. The Change Threshold section includes two options to weed out minor alterations. The checkbox tells Update Scanner to ignore changes to numbers only. The slider will ignore changes that affect the specified number of words on the page.

The Change Threshold setting can be tricky, however. Maybe you want to know when a new photo is posted on a particular site. Depending on whether the picture is accompanied by a long caption, that sort of change might not involve enough characters to meet the threshold you have set. You might have to experiment with this option so it works most efficiently with different pages.

When you're finished setting up a new site, click OK. You can click the Scan button in the Update Scanner sidebar to start a manual scan of your chosen Web sites or simply let Update Scanner do its work on the schedule that you set. If you want to edit an existing selection, you need to right-click the site's name and choose Properties from the context menu.

(Continued on page 14)

FOX UPDATE SCANNER

(Continued from page 13)

Watch & Wait

When you're finished setting up your pages, click the small "x" to close the Update Scanner sidebar (it does not need to be open for Update Scanner to monitor pages). When the program detects a change to one of your Web sites, you'll get a small pop-up notice, and if the sidebar is open, you'll see a blue arrow next to the site name. Click the site name in the sidebar to see a version of the tracked page with all changes highlighted yellow. The sidebar button that looks like a tab (second from the left) will simultaneously open all changed pages in their own tabs.

While Update Scanner is something of a specialized tool given the popularity of RSS feeds, it does its job well.

Did you know that you can get your newsletter electronically each month ?

If you desire an electronic copy instead of a paper copy just send an email to

Secretary@PhoenixPCUG.org

Requesting your choice you will get an email each month when the newsletter is available. Make sure you include your email address. At least one member who requested an electronic copy did not include the email address with the request.

ONLINE CALENDARS

(Continued from page 12)

a different user interface. If you have an email account through one of these services, it's likely you can integrate your email and your calendar, and the user interface will likely be more recognizable and comfortable for you to use.

There are subtle differences among Google Calendar (www.google.com/calendar), Yahoo! Calendar (calendar.yahoo.com), and Windows Live Calendar (calendar.live.com). You will find that each handles tasks, event details, and reminders slightly different than the other, and the sharing capabilities will vary.

Each online calendar has a different way of letting you add information to appointments or events.

30 Boxes (30boxes.com) is an online calendar that differs slightly from the Google, Yahoo!, and Windows Live calendars. After signing up for a free account, you can share your calendar with social networking friends or other contacts, which are referred to as "buddies." 30 Boxes lets you integrate your calendar with applications such as Twitter (twitter.com), Facebook (www.facebook.com), and more. You can send messages to your buddies via 30 Boxes, as well as add tasks to your to-do list. Avatars can also be added to your 30 Boxes calendar.

CalendarFly (www.calendarfly.com) is an online calendar that is designed especially for families, clubs, schools, and other groups. In addition to being able to keep a personal calendar, you can share events with your friends and family contacts. Events can be categorized by a task, homework assignment, practice, holiday, or an event. You can build your own to-do list to help you stay on top of tasks. CalendarFly lets you upload files, which is handy when you need to distribute a document for an upcoming meeting or group project.

Synchronized Scheduling

If you use another email client at home or at work, such as Microsoft Outlook, try to find an online calendar that can synchronize with other common calendar applications. This will help you keep both

(Continued on page 5)

THE FIRST KING: DOS

LET'S NEVER FORGET THE FIRST KING: DOS

Written by Rick Smith, a member of the Channel Islands PC Users Group, CA
www.cipcug.org / vccomputers.com
Rants (at) vcmail.net

Oh where, oh where has my little DOS gone.
Oh where, oh where can it be,
with its life cut short and windows cut long
Oh where, oh where can it be?

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's pearmission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Some might say that I'm losing it, but you cannot lose what you never had. Where has DOS gone? Some might say it's still around in the various forms of Linux. Others might say it's buried deep in Microsoft operating systems waiting to be called out by a powerful wizard to cast potent spells with a command prompt. But most of us just believe that it's just lost, never to found again. Like a lost pet that you once had affection for, once it's gone you seem to remember only the good times and seem to forget all the problems that it caused you.

DOS does that to people. There are still a few of you "old-timers," and you know who you are! Those who sit at the doughnut table at club meetings and reminisce about the "good ol' days" when all you needed was a Northgate keyboard and a monochrome screen to have absolute power over your world. You know what I'm talking about. Way back when people spoke about computers with fear and awe. They were things better left to experts and shady government entities. The quickest way to kill a conver sation in those days was to talk command line technobabble. It always made everyone in the room feel uncomfortable that they couldn't understand you, like you were speaking a different language.

On the flip side, though, it gave you an incredible feeling of power, that you, and you alone, could master the savage beast and control your own destiny. Neh Ahh Ahh Yahh. (Sometimes I think all those comic books I read have permanently warped my thinking.) But really, didn't you feel special? That you and you alone, could master something that would make others wince and shirk away. You didn't have to be popular at school. You didn't have to be good looking. You didn't have to be wealthy. You did not have to have any of those things that everyone else needed to be important. You had knowledge.

And knowing the secrets of the PC universe, did you use that knowledge to gain wisdom or for greed? I think most of you, unfortunately, like me, used it for personal greed. We gave ourselves over to the dark side of the force and used our skill to enrich ourselves financially. But eventually as we all grew older, and some of us wiser, we started using or skills to teach and help others, which led you to me, to read these words and words of others in this tome. You all became a band of brothers forming the fellowship of the DOS.

And just! And just as your powers were at their peak, everything came crashing down like the Jedi of old. A new power rose in the universe to supplant the old ways. Windows came rushing

(Continued on page 17)

BUSINESS CARDS

COLLEGEAMERICA

Marty Jiunta
Campus Director
6533 N. Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix, AZ 85015
(602) 246-3041 - Fax: (602) 242-1307
marty.jiunta@collegeamerica.edu www.collegeamerica.edu

Vice President
Phoenix PC
Users Group

Microsoft
Registered
Partner

David Yamamoto
Computer Consultant
1401 W. Rovey Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85013

(602) 995-0053
CELL (602) 418-1243

Vicepres@PhoenixPCUG.org
dydavid@yahoo.com

Technology Partners, Inc.

Frank Phung
Wholesale Manager

5800 North 19th Avenue, Suites 101-109, Phoenix, AZ 85015
Tel: (602) 278-6060 ext. 132 Fax: (602) 347-8714
fphung@tpi-us.com

Phoenix PCUG
John L Curth
2213 W Joan de Arc
Phoenix, Arizona 85029
(602) 942-8204
phoenixpcug.org

How to Submit Commercial Advertisements

Send commercial ad copy and payments to:
Ad Manager, Phoenix PCUG Newsletter,
5555 N 7th Street Suite 5 PMB 101
Phoenix, AZ 85014

Make checks payable to Phoenix PCUG
(Note: AD PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY AD unless credit arrangements have been made). Commercial advertising rates per issue are shown below. Submit camera-ready black and white copy.

Typesetting service and photographic services provided at additional cost and must be scheduled and paid for IN ADVANCE. Payment must accompany ad. Copy will not be returned unless return postage is prepaid. Single insertion ad rates are as follows:

Full Page (7.5" by 10.0") $50.00
Half Page (7.5" by 5.0") $25.00 Ask about multiple insertion discounts!!!
Quarter Page (3.75" by 5.0") $15.00 Note: Oversized ads are charged to the next higher size rate!!
Business Cards (2.0" by 3.5") $ 5.00 (minimum of 3 months prepaid)

For questions please contact David Yamamoto 602 418-1249 or write to above.

Submission deadlines are the 25th of each month prior to month of publication. Prices subject to change without notice.

THE FIRST KING: DOS

(Continued from page 15)

down like a wind from heaven with trumpets blazing and fire and smoke billowing up in great clouds. And when this behemoth came to rest. its great weight crushed the last vestiges of DOS underneath its feet. A new group came forth to rule the PC world. A group of men, and, yes, women, too. who knew nothing of the old ways but were formed from clay in the new ways. These new acolytes grew up in the ways of the PC, each having their own since they were young.

Gone was command prompt. In was the mouse. The wizards of old became legend. And after time they have become forgotten to be remembered by only a few at computer club meetings. There are still a few prophets preaching to us not to forget the old ways. I saw one at last month's meeting giving a history lesson at the club meeting. But they are old and feeble now with most of their words echoing on deaf ears.

So I say to all today! Remember the DOS! Don't let the old ways die, as you never know when you will be called upon as I have this week to use my skills again. Fortunately. I have not been found wanting as I was able to vanquish the beast with my skill at the command prompt. I have beaten down one enemy, but more are waiting to attack. So be on your guard, be ready, and be faithful to the cause. Put away your mice as they are no use against such foes. Operate you PC only with the keyboard and keep yourself ready for the fight. For it shall come. It shall come.

SPEED DEMONS

(Continued from page 10)

speed it up when starting it. This is just lousy practice that is a very poor substitute for tight efficient programming. If the program was small and lean there would be no need for "speed loaders," which make your computer take an exorbitant amount of time for Windows to start. Not to pick on, but a classic example of this is how much Apple's iTunes has grown through the years. iTunes 6 which was released in January 2006 was about 35MB in size. iTunes 7.5 was 52MB and iTunes 8.1 (the current release) is now up to 70MB. The program is twice as large only three years later, and loads a number of programs when Windows starts to aid loading this memory hog.

What to do about this? In short be mindful when installing updated programs to unselect add on toolbars and, if available, to kick them out of starting up when Windows loads. I have discussed at our local computer club meetings to do your best to keep running processes to a minimum. By clicking control, alt, delete once (with no programs active) will bring up the task manager and show how many processes are running. A good number for Windows XP is less than 35, and for Vista it's about 45.

Startup Cop and the free CCleaner utilities have the ability to disable or remove programs from starting, but I would check online in a Google search before disabling anything unless certain. I do hope this article sheds some light on the subject of pokey computers. Remember, it's not so much the hardware as it is software that kills a computer! Until next time!

HELP INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP
BRING A GUEST TO THE NEXT MEETING

HOW TO GET THERE

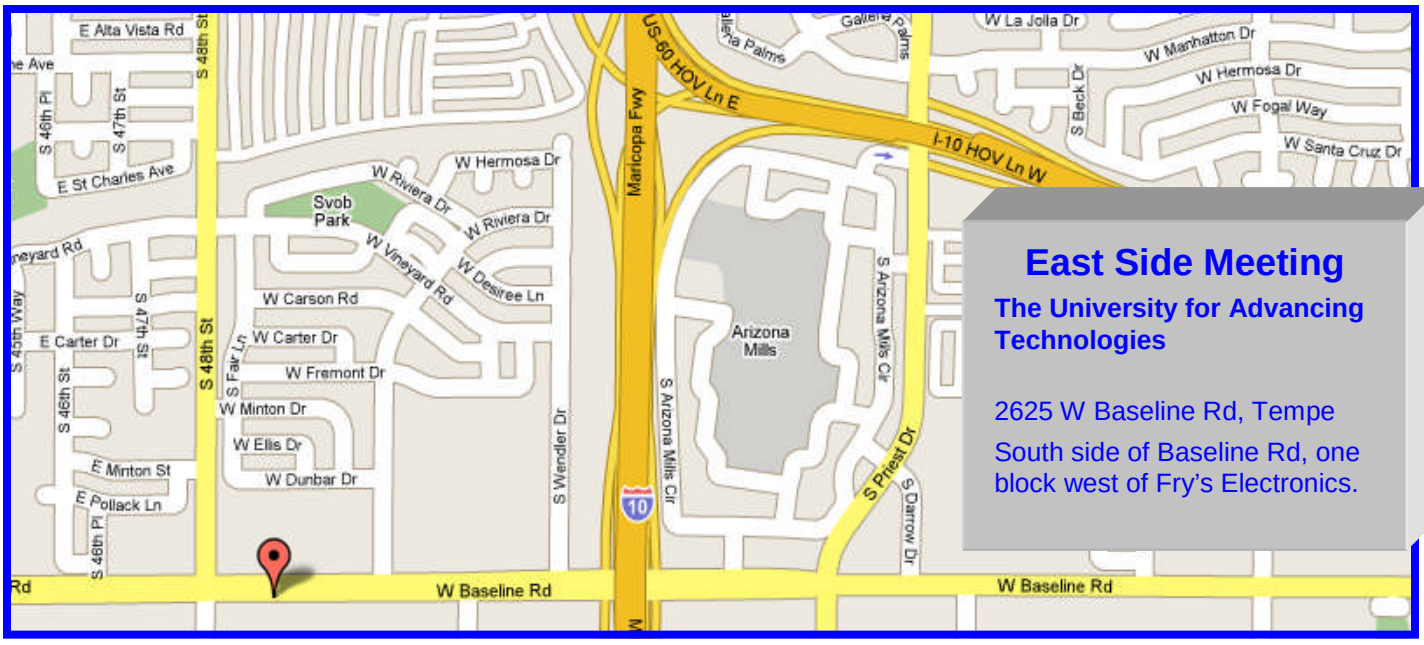
West Side Meeting

College America Room 2

6533 N Black Canyon Hwy Phoenix

Turn right (east) on McLellan Blvd.

Immediately turn right (south) into parking lot..

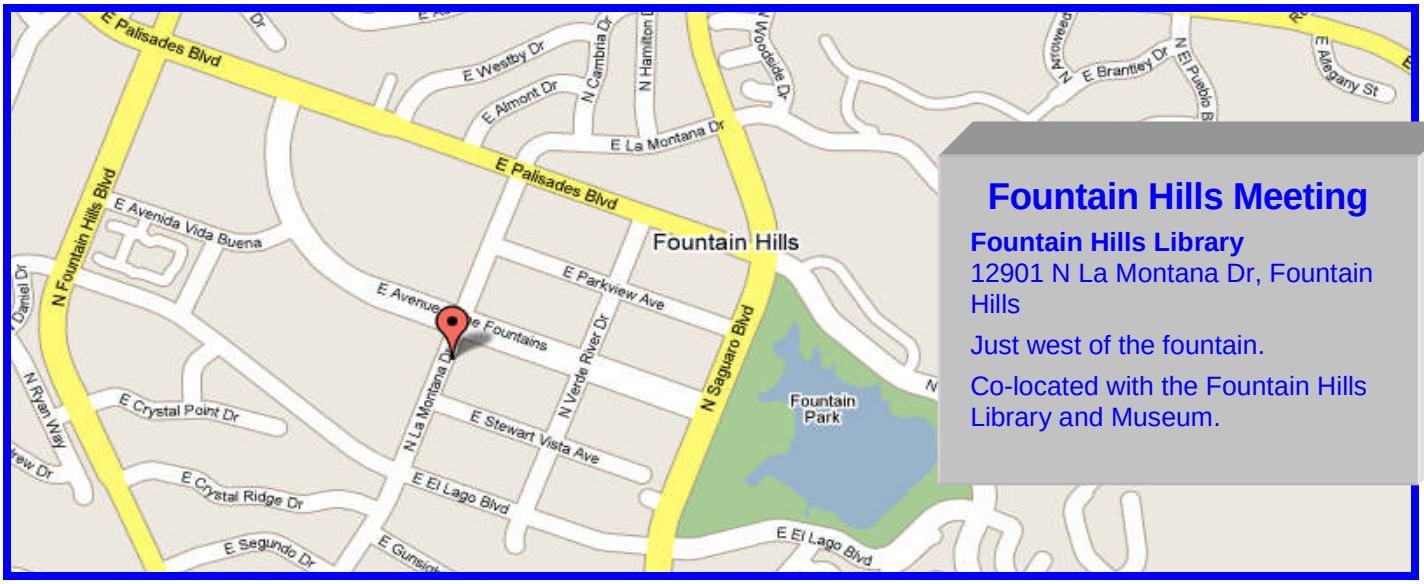


East Side Meeting

The University for Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe

South side of Baseline Rd, one block west of Fry's Electronics.



Fountain Hills Meeting

Fountain Hills Library

12901 N La Montana Dr, Fountain Hills

Just west of the fountain.

Co-located with the Fountain Hills Library and Museum.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The Official Policy of the Phoenix PC Users Group is that we do not condone software piracy in any form.

DUES $36 FOR YEAR.
JAN 1, THROUGH DEC 31, 2009
SEPT DUES TO DEC 31, 2009 $12

Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

First: (Please Print) _____ Initial: _____ Last: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Ext: _____

Please note: We DO-NOT share phone numbers outside the club, and will generally only use your phone information, if we cannot contact you in timely fashion, via e-mail, or the club web-site

Release my address to vendors ? ☐ Yes ☐ No Note: Phone numbers ***will not*** be listed.

E-mail address: _____Signature _____Date___/___/___

May the club share your e-mail address
with other members only? ☐ Yes ☐ No
With club approved vendors? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Please do not share
my e-mail address ☐
Receive Electronic newsletter
in place of printed one ☐ Yes ☐ No

Mail this completed form with payment to:

Phoenix PC Users Group
5555 N. 7th Street, Suite 5
PMB101
Phoenix, AZ 85014

Phoenix PC Users Group Inc.

apcug

The Best Accessory for your PC !

Web address:
phoenixpcug.org

September 2009

The Newsletter of the Phoenix Personal Computer Users Group
"Users helping users to understand computers"

PHOENIX PC USERS GROUP
5555 N 7TH ST STE 5 PMB 101
PHOENIX AZ 85014-2575

STAMP