

Eastside Coordinator Needed - See Page Four



NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
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MAIN MEETINGS

West Side.....Tue, Jan 18

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side.....Wed, Jan 19

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

Fountain Hills.....Thu, Jan 20

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

**Presentation this month:
Smart Computing's
Presentation in a Box**

For date and time changes, check our
website: phoenixpcug.org

Phoenix PC Users Group

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President: David Yamamoto
Vice President: Allen Hunt
Secretary: Chuck Lewis
Treasurer: Lo Hardman

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Fountain Hills Coordinator: Nancy Ogden
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Steering Committee:

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

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THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! We look forward to hopefully many new members and interesting things to review. This month to start the year off is a demo of Smart Computing Magazine's Presentation-in-a-box. You won't want to miss it, including many give aways and valuable tips.

Allen has many great ideas, please read his column. In February, our Eastside meeting at UAT (across from Fry's Electronics on Baseline) will feature Gene Barlow with his always entertaining presentation of backing up your hard drive and the many other features of the Acronis applications. We hope members who do not normally go to the Eastside Meeting will plan to attend next month for this special event.

David

FROM YOUR VICE PRESIDENT

Hello fellow PPCUG members. I want to take this opportunity to let you know that it is now time to renew your PPCUG membership. Annual dues are still only \$36 dollars per year. And what do you get for your money? Well, for one thing, you get the Monthly Newsletter, full of information that absolutely is useful in your daily computer activities. You also get the benefit of our monthly Special Presentation, given at all three of our meetings – West Side, East Side and Fountain Hills. And, finally, we have our awesome phoenixpcug.org web site. Have you taken a look at it lately? I am sure that there are things on the web site that you have never seen before. The Webmaster is doing a wonderful job in keeping relevant computer information right at our finger tip with easy access.

Remember to hurry and renew your annual PPCUG membership and come to all our meetings that you possibly can attend. This month's special topic is "Smart Computing's – Presentation-in-a-box."

See you at the meeting.

Allen Hunt

FROM YOUR EDITOR

In noting the current frenzy of activity in the area of handheld electronic devices, one wonders if it is due to natural product enhancement, to planned obsolescence, or is it a "bubble"? Since the time of Edison, Bell, and Marconi, new devices promising revolutionary advances in communication, entertainment, and recreation have entered the commercial world and the family room. Some have survived, many have not.

Example: Everyone past a certain age may remember main frame computers that required their own room-sized, air-conditioned and humidity-controlled facilities. Data storage was on magnetic tape or hard drives that were the size of a 5-layer cake.

The advancements, for the most part, have been welcomed by those users who chose the winner of the manufacturing competition. But it has not always been the best product that has been adopted as the standard. For instance, with Video Tape Recorders, the Sony beta system was originally preferred over the JVC-VHS system but lost out due to higher unit cost and shorter recording time capacity.

So, the question arises, will there be a similar competition with the current proliferation of handheld notebooks, "telephones" with an unimaginable, (and probably unmanageable), number of "apps"? Will the winner be chosen by cost, capability, physical size, battery life, or fashion smartness?

Or will it be something even more essential, e.g., compatibility? The availability of cell phones have allowed China and India, the two most populous countries in the world, to avoid the costs of wired infrastructure construction. Yet some users in those countries require as many as four devices to receive full local coverage. And to note this shortcoming does not even mention the lack of compatibility within the United States, or with Europe, or with Japan. As Rodney King once said, "Can't we all get along?"

Michael Bishop

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR SECRETARY

Welcome to 2011, fellow members.

As you know December is the month we have annual elections, per the bylaws.

This year, there were no alternative candidates for any of the standing offices: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The then current officers agreed to continue to serve in their offices if re-affirmed, as also required of the by-laws.

All 4 were re-affirmed by the members present at the December 11th meeting. Your Board for 2011 continues as:

President: David Yamamoto
 VP: Allen Hunt
 Treasurer: Lo Hardman
 Secretary: Chuck Lewis

We also enjoyed light refreshments and Pizza, and discussed ways to improve membership and member participation in 2011.

A couple of things came up:

Outreach to old, former members, and new members: Call them. Say hello. Find out what they would like in their club.

What can we do to get more members to attend meetings?

Ways to raise funds to help support the club:

Electronics Surplus re-cycling. We collect it, and receive funds for selling off the scrap.

Donation requests to folks we help with their computer problems.

DO YOU have any ideas we can improve our membership and finances?

This is YOUR Club. We need YOUR help & Input! We

serve, because we have a desire to help others, and we often learn as much or more on any given subject as you do, by making the effort to find answers to your questions.

Each member in this club has knowledge on a considerable variety of subjects, not necessarily computer/geek related. We all will benefit if you share it with us, whether by contributing an article for the newsletter, or putting together a presentation. You can work with an experienced presenter and let them do the actual presentation, or receive their help in assisting you doing it yourself! It can be VERY rewarding!

Please devote some time to helping us make this a better, more effective club for all of us, and for those who you invite to join you at a meeting, because you support your club and our efforts.

Happy New Year!

Chuck Lewis, Secretary

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MEETINGS

CALENDAR

For date and time changes, check our
website: phoenixpcug.org

PRESENTATION Smart Computing's Presentation in a Box

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 16)

- Tuesday, January 18, 2011
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee and Election of Officers
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map page 16)

- Wednesday, January 19, 2011
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 16)

- Thursday, January 20, 2011
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

EASTSIDE COORDINATOR NEEDED

The eastside meeting will continue but we need a new coordinator.
Our coordinator Marion Smith's work schedule has changed.
If you are willing to volunteer, please contact Lo Hardman.

[\(treasurer@phoenixpcug.org\)](mailto:treasurer@phoenixpcug.org)

Thank you

WEB TOUR

CES 2011: THE BEST OF THE BEST

Assembled by Bill Aulepp
 Publisher@phoenixpcug.org
 From articles on electricpig.co.uk/

This month the Web Tour Trip takes you on a tour of some of the highlights of CES as the Brits saw it.

All Aboard. To speed your trip go to our Website for an express ticket. (See last paragraph)

BEST CAMCORDERS

<http://electricpig.co.uk/2011/01/13/best-camcorder-of-ces-2011-top-5/>

A Sony pocket camcorder that records 3D video, Canon's future-proof Legria HF G10 1080p shooter, JVC's 2D to 3D pocket converter and Samsung's camcorder for lefties is what you'll find here.

BEST TVS

<http://electricpig.co.uk/2011/01/13/best-tv-of-ces-2011-%20top-5//>

Thankfully at CES 2011, 3D wasn't the only reason to get excited about the televisions due to appear in [homes](#) this year. Some of them, such as the Samsung D7900, with its barely there bezel, look gorgeous, as does Samsung's asymmetric TV. You'll find a portable glasses-free 3D TV from LG here too.

BEST LAPTOPS

<http://electricpig.co.uk/2011/01/12/best-laptop-of-ces-2011-top-5/>

Apple might have kept away but, Apple aren't the only tech brand to make beautiful [laptops](#). Samsung, like with its TVs, did it again, with the Samsung ZX310 laptop. Its skinny metal frame looks as good as any laptop rival out there. Dell's new XPS 17 3D laptop, with Blu-ray and Nvidia 3D vision also makes an appearance.

BEST TABLETS

<http://electricpig.co.uk/2011/01/11/ces-2011-best-tablets/>

There was lots and lots of tablets at [CES](#) 2011. Among the best were the Motorola Xoom, with the Android 3.0 Honeycomb OS running on it, the BlackBerry PlayBook, which looked a lot smaller than we imagined, and the 4G ready Dell Streak 7 with Nvidia's Tegra 2 chip and Adobe Flash 10.1 fitted in.

BEST CAMERAS

<http://electricpig.co.uk/2011/01/11/ces-2011-best-cameras/>

Lady Gaga pretty much stole the show here, unveiling the Polaroid GL20 sunglasses that take photos. They really look something else. See [this video](#) for the unveiling. For something less limelight grabbing, but rather more diminutive, check out the Kodak Easyshare Mini. It measures about the length of a [business](#) card, and lets you share your photos to Facebook quickly and easier than ever before.

BEST GAMING GEAR

<http://electricpig.co.uk/2011/01/14/best-gaming-gear-of-ces-2011-top-5/>

The games didn't have to be virtual to get us excited. One of our most popular CES 2011 stories concerns the Angry Birds board game that Mattel has been knocking up. It's the closest thing you'll play to the virtual version in real-life without getting the likes of Rolf Harris all concerned. Not forgetting the Asus PrimeSense camera. It's [Kinect](#) with the Xbox, letting you play PC games using just your body. Hit the link to see what other gaming trinkets were on show at CES 2011.

BEST GADGETS

<http://electricpig.co.uk/2011/01/14/best-gadget-of-ces-2011-top-5/>

What about everything else? That's where we've rounded up some of our favourite gadgets. Among our favourite was the Nike+ Sportwatch. It's a GPS running watch to log your runs, indoors and out while offering verbal encouragement along the way. Also spotted was the clever Withings video baby [monitor](#) and iPhone blood pressure monitor that connects to the Apple blower, and what looks like the Dyson of shredders, from Black and Decker. To add to the confusion abounding in that analogy, it's called the iShred. Still with us?

REMEMBER

All of the Web Tour sites in the newsletter are archived and available on our website. Don't waste time-consuming typing of the site addresses. Go to the website where you can Just click on a site and you are there.

<http://www.phoenixpcug.org/webtour/>

NEWS FROM THE HELP DESK

Smart Computing's Most Common Tech Calls

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

Each month, we receive numerous technical support calls and email messages. Some computer problems are fairly common, and we find that many callers struggle to resolve the same issues. In this article, we cover some of the most common or timely tech support questions and provide our solution for each of them.

Q

I recently upgraded to a laptop with Windows 7. Occasionally, when typing in a document, the cursor jumps around, and I end up inadvertently typing elsewhere in the document. What can I do to stop this?

A

Most likely, your fingers are grazing your notebook's touchpad. When this happens, the cursor jumps to the location of your pointer. Many touchpad drivers have a setting that temporarily deactivates the touchpad when you type. Enabling this feature should help solve the problem.

On most systems, you can access your touchpad's settings by right-clicking the touchpad icon in the Windows System Tray and click Properties. Depending on your system, you may also find your touchpad's settings available in the Start menu. You'll have to look through the settings to find the appropriate option, as the exact location and wording will vary depending on the driver. If you don't see an appropriate option, you can check with your system manufacturer to see if an updated driver is available.

If you can't find an option to temporarily disable the touchpad when you type, you might be able to find a "Touch To Click" option. Disabling this option should fix the problem, but you'll no longer be able to tap your touchpad to left-click. You'll have to use the mouse buttons above or below your touchpad instead.

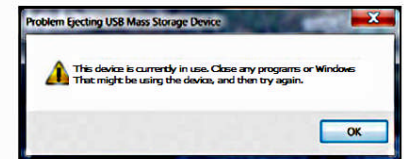
Q

When I try to eject my thumb drive by clicking the Safely Remove Hardware icon in the Windows System Tray, I get a message that says the device is currently in use. How can I safely remove my thumb drive?

A

It's always a good idea to "eject" any removable media before physically removing it. By "ejecting" the media before physically removing it, you're telling Windows not to access the drive and avoiding the risk of accidentally corrupting data. You generally eject media by right-clicking the Safely Remove Hardware And Eject Media icon in the Windows System Tray and clicking Eject. Usually, you receive a message saying it's safe to remove your media, but occasionally, you get a message stating that the device is in use and cannot be stopped. This usually happens when another program is accessing your thumb drive. In order to safely remove it, you need to shut down the application or process that is accessing the thumb drive.

If you see this message after clicking the Safely Remove Hardware icon, it's likely that another program is accessing your thumb drive (or other device). In order to safely remove it, you need to shut down the application or process that is accessing the device.



Start by making sure that no files or folders on the thumb drive are being displayed on the PC and close any that you find. For instance, you won't be able to eject the thumb drive if you have a Word document or picture file open on your system. If the drive is still busy, close all open applications. Some applications may create temporary or backup files and store them on your thumb drive. Just closing the file may not be enough to remove the backup file; you may have to close the application itself.

If you're still having problems, make sure that you don't have any software that is scanning the drive. Antivirus or anti-malware applications, for instance, may scan removable drives, and any removable drive will not be able to be removed while the scan is being conducted. Finally, you can always shut down the computer. The danger of data corruption comes when you suddenly remove the media while it's being accessed. By shutting down the computer, you're closing down all your applications, including any application that's accessing your thumb drive. This graceful shutdown should prevent any data damage. Once the computer has shut down, you can remove the media from the system.

(Continued on page 7)

NEWS FROM THE HELP DESK

(Continued from page 6)

Q
When I start my computer, I hear a series of beeps, and Windows refuses to load. How can I fix my computer?

A
When you first start your computer, it performs a quick hardware check. If a component isn't functioning correctly, your computer will make a series of beeps.

Unfortunately, beep codes aren't standardized, so you'll need to check your system manual to determine what these codes mean. If you don't have a hard copy of the manual, you'll need to use a working computer to access your manufacturer's Web site where you should be able to find an online version of the user guide. The test can catch a broad range of problems. In some instances, you may need to simply remove or replace RAM. In other cases, you may need a new motherboard or processor.

Q
I have a computer with two SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) drives. One drive contains Windows XP, and I want to add Win7 to the second drive. Will I still be able to boot into Win XP with this setup? Is there anything else I should be concerned with?

A
In order to dual boot between operating systems, you generally need two physical hard drives or one physical hard drive partitioned into multiple virtual drives. In this setup, there's already two separate drives (whether they are physical drives or virtual drives), so you're halfway there.

If dual booting between different versions of Windows, always install the newest OS (operating system) first. The newer version of Windows will scan the system for older versions and setup a boot loader that will let you choose which version you want to boot at startup.

One note of caution: It's generally a good idea to reformat the hard drive on which you'll install Windows. This will erase any existing data, so make sure you backup any data on the drive.

Q
When I try to save a file from Gmail to My Documents, I get an error message saying I need to activate cookies. What does this mean, and how I do activate cookies?

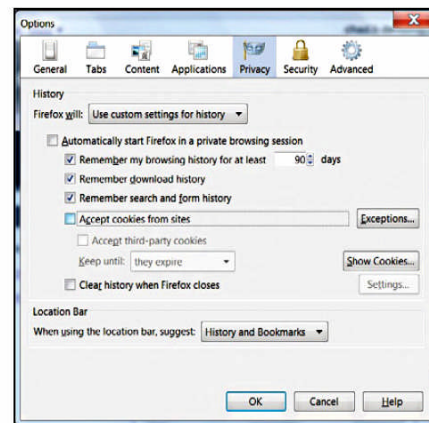
A
Cookies are very small files that can be used to store a variety of information. For instance, Gmail cookies

may contain session information that Gmail can use to automatically log you in the next time you visit from the same PC. Although cookies generally make life online easier, they can also be used, mainly by online marketers, to track your Internet habits.

If you decide you want to enable cookies, you'll need to do so in whatever browser you're using. In Internet Explorer, cookies are controlled by Internet Explorer's Privacy Settings. Click Tools, open Internet Options, and click the Privacy tab. If you don't want to adjust all your Privacy settings, click Advanced and place a check next to Override Automatic Cookie Handling. Select Accept under First Party Cookies. You may wish to select Block under Third Party Cookies (this is a good way to prevent online marketers from monitoring you too closely).

Finally, you can place a check next to Always Allow Session Cookies if you want to allow cookies that automatically log you into sites.

In Firefox, Click Options in the Tools menu and click Privacy. In the drop-down menu under History, select Use Custom Settings For History. Make sure



To enable cookies in Firefox, click Privacy in the Options menu. In the drop-down menu at the top of the screen, select Use Custom Settings For History and make sure there's a check next to Accept Cookies From Sites.

there's a check next to Accept Cookies From Sites. If you want, you can remove the check next to Accept Third-Party Cookies.

Finally, in Google Chrome, click the wrench icon and select Options. Click the Under The Hood Tab and then click the Content Settings button. Make sure to select Allow Local Data To Be Set. Again, you can select Block All Third-Party Cookies Without Exception to block third-party cookies.

Compiled by Chad Denyon



SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE -SUPPORT



There is a way you can support your user group. Smart Computing Magazine will give a 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.

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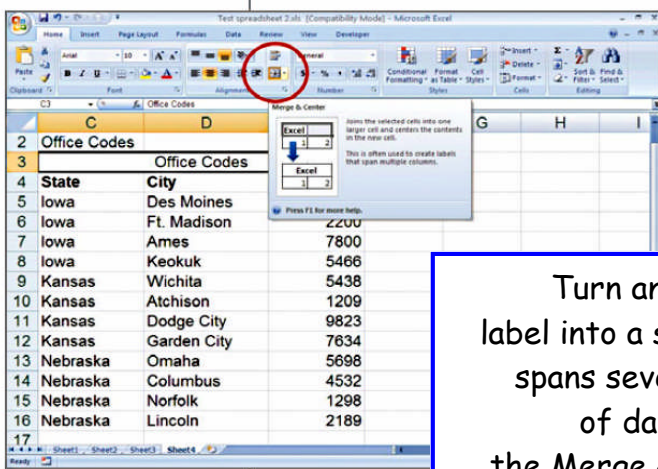
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EXCEL 2007 TEXT ALIGNMENT TRICKS

Excel 2007 Text Alignment Tricks

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Because Excel is built to handle numbers rather than words, formatting text in your worksheets can get a little frustrating. When your text is wider than the column it's in, you run into strange truncations of the words. When your texts its on the left side of columns while numbers sit on the right, it just doesn't



Turn an awkward label into a single cell that spans several columns of data using the Merge & Center tool.

look right. If you're running into these and other text problems, use this month's tricks to get the look you need.

Wrap Text

The text issue that probably gives Excel users the most headaches arises when you try to fit lengthy piece of text into a cell. One solution is simply going to the top of the window and dragging the right column border to make it wider. That can lead to its own untidy look, though. What if some of the labels in a column listing corporate divisions are as short as "Tax" and others have names such as "Regional Sales-Pacific Rim/China Division"? If you drag the

column wide enough to handle the longest labels, you get lots of empty real estate on the shorter labels. A better solution is leaving the column width at a more average size and setting text to wrap into multiple lines. Click the column title at the top of the window (such as "C") and click the Wrap Text button on the Ribbon's Home tab. Now every cell in the column will automatically wrap the text to a new line if one line of text exceeds the column width.

Sometimes this still doesn't make all your text visible. That means you probably have a row height issue. Excel may be preventing the cell from growing taller

to handle wrapped text. To ensure you don't run into this, click the cell (or column of cells) you want to adjust, click the Ribbon's Home tab, and click the Format button in the Cells section. Select AutoFit Row Height to make Excel expand the cell to handle however many rows of text are necessary.

Align Text

Excel automatically places numbers on the right side of cells and text on the left. Sometimes that's a handy setup, making it easy to scan a list and spot different kinds of information. But when you'd rather see everything neatly lined up, use the Home tab's alignment buttons. You can align text to the right, left, or center. (The latter being especially useful for making column headings more attractive.) And, of course, remember that you can use the alignment tools on numbers, too.

If you've adjusted cells' heights, you may want to adjust the text's vertical alignment for a better look, too. You'll find those options on the Home tab right above the horizontal alignment buttons.

In rare cases, you actually may want text to run at an angle. Short column labels, for example, sometimes work well at a 45-degree angle. To add an angle to a cell's text, including setting it to read vertically, use the Orientation button on the Home tab in the Alignment section.

Merge Cells

Here's a common dilemma: At the top of the worksheet, you create a label that applies to several columns. How do you make this clear by stretching the label across all the columns? Dragging the label's cell any wider won't help, because you'll widen all the cells below the label, too. The secret is to merge the label cell with those adjacent to it. Use the Merge & Center button in the Home tab's Alignment section.

Highlight the cells you want to merge (they can be adjacent either horizontally, as in our example described above, or vertically) and click the Merge & Center button. Now you'll have one large cell with the text located in its center. If you'd rather place the text on a side of the cell, click the cell and use the Alignment buttons as described previously.

Even though this large cell now straddles, say, three other columns, you can still adjust the widths of those columns individually. Your merged cell will grow and shrink so that it always fills the same space as the columns it covers.



SOCIAL GAMING ON LINE

SOCIAL GAMING ONLINE

Charlotte Semple, LACS

"Tina" Ialongo Hoover, Vice President at Endemol USA, Inc., presented a very interesting and informative program on Social Gaming, a new category in the gaming business that allows online gaming, which is usually based on Facebook. Most of the games are very casual and simplistic.

"Farmville", for instance, may be one of the best known and involves around 63 Million USA players monthly. The games are free to play, but they generate a lot of money. Endemol produces mostly reality and game shows such as Deal or No Deal, Home Edition, Extreme Makeover, to name a few.

One of the problems that the television industry is experiencing is that more and more people are skipping commercials when watching TV. Sometimes while working on computers while watching TV, or recording a program to watch later, then skipping through the ads while watching their recordings. Endemol has felt this effect as a production company because the networks they sell their shows to are paying less and less for the shows as they are getting less money from the advertisers. Endemol, as well as other TV production companies, seeing the money they get from shows decline have had to look into other business areas. Endemol looked into the digital area and Social Media and decided to make a big effort into Social Games.

The reason we have social games is largely because of Facebook. 500 million people are on Facebook right now. This number will grow extraordinarily every day this is a worldwide number. 53% (250 million) of people who are on Facebook play games. 19% of these will say they are addicted to playing games. 69% of Facebook gamers are women. Though more of the games are geared toward women there are male focused games as well. 20 % who play these games pay cash for ingame benefits. 56 Million play every day. 290 million play monthly. The average time spent per person per month on Facebook is 421 minutes, (a little over 7 hours). 50% of the log-ins onto Facebook are specifically for playing games. Originally people used Facebook to keep in touch with family and friends. Now, more and more, Facebook is used for playing games. There are as many people playing games with one, two or several people

as there are people playing alone. Doing the math: with 250 million people using Facebook spending an average of 7 hours per month, 927 million hours per month are spent playing games on Facebook. That translates to 105 thousand man-years of virtual farming (Farmville). Uh huh!

The first game to launch on Facebook in 2008 was a poker game, which is still going very well. A Social game is a simple casual game that uses a single player action, but can be enhanced by playing with others. One of the intrinsic motivators for why these games grow is that every good social game is a reason for inviting friends to play. The whole point of the games is growth. A company doesn't have to spend a lot of money promoting a game. They make a friend-compelling game, and if people like playing it, they tell their friends about it, who tell their friends, who tell their friends, and so on. The exponential growth of one single game is phenomenal. The games are free, but there is a premium - along the way one pays (using virtual money) for the items that will help raise a person to a higher level faster, or give one a few more seconds of game play, or get an extra power boost. There are other various components to a game, including paying real money and that is where companies make their money.



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FREE UTILITIES FROM CPUID

Free Utilities from CPUID

Describe System Details

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.cpubid.com>

<http://www.cpubid.com/software.html>

As regular readers of this column know, I am a fan of utilities, especially if they are free! Frequently, situations arise where it is necessary to know the details of a computer, including specifics about its software, hardware, drivers, and other components in order to diagnose a problem and make recommendations. There are several fine utilities that can perform these functions, but several that I have been using recently come from the historical city of Dunkerque, France, courtesy of their publisher CPUID Software.

CPUID software is best known for its namesake product, CPUID, which is as it says, a utility to identify the details of the CPU chip installed in a computer. This is often necessary to know if the computer is being benchmarked (performance measured), upgraded, or undergoing major repairs. The latest CPUID software is named CPU-Z, version 1.55. This small utility displays the processor brand and model number, the type of socket it uses (necessary to know for replacement or upgrades), speeds, and other details about the CPU chip, which is the central "brains" of the computer. Sometimes it is desirable or necessary to replace a motherboard, or determine the BIOS on the motherboard. The motherboard is the central platform on which most of the other internal components are either directly attached to, or otherwise connected to, and provides much of the internal communication between the components. While generally very reliable and long lived, sometimes it is necessary to replace a motherboard. The BIOS, an acronym for "Basic Input - Output System" is typically attached to the motherboard, and contains the first code run by a PC when it is initially powered on. The BIOS identifies and initializes the video card, keyboard, mouse, hard drive, CD/DVD drive, and other key components. The BIOS contains software in a non-volatile ROM chip, and is typically firmly attached to the motherboard. Most

BIOS chips can be updated and upgraded with software provided either by the BIOS manufacturer, motherboard maker, or computer manufacturer. CPU-Z identifies the brand of BIOS, the version of its software, and the date of the software stored in it; with this information, it is somewhat easy to determine if the BIOS contains the latest software. Keeping the BIOS updated is not a critical task if everything appears to be working OK, but for those of us always trying to tweak our computers and capitalize in the latest offerings, this is good information to have. One warning is appropriate here; if the user is considering updating the BIOS, be absolutely sure to explicitly follow the manufacturer's directions to the letter! In a worst case scenario, failure to do so will result in an expensive paperweight, but in many cases, there is a procedure to "roll back" or restore the BIOS to its earlier status.

When I ask people how much memory they have in their computer, they are often clueless, or erroneously confuse the memory with the storage capacity of their hard drives. Clicking on the "Memory" tab of CPU-Z displays the type of memory, the amount of memory, speed, and other characteristics. The "SPD" tap allows the user to cycle through the memory stick installed in his computer, displaying the capacity of each stick, the type, manufacturer, part number, and other information. This information may be necessary if the user wants to add or replace memory in the computer.



**WE WANT TO INCREASE
OUR MEMBERSHIP
IF EACH MEMBER
BROUGHT JUST ONE
INTERESTED GUEST
TO A MEETING
WE WOULD ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL**

SAFEMODE

SAFEMODE**Bill Pryor**

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Windows Safe Mode available in Win 95, 98, ME, 2000, XP, Vista, Win 7 allows you oftentimes to boot up Windows when you can not normally run Windows at all.

For example, if you can't run Windows at all, upon boot up, press F8 to get Windows to boot in the Safe Mode. In Safe Mode just the essential programs and files are loaded; this allows you to remove some spyware, adware, and viruses that cannot be removed in Normal Mode.

For example one of our office networked computers last week picked up a virus type program that would not allow XP to run at all! Every time an .EXE file needed to run, nothing would happen. Click on any icon to run, nothing would happen. The system was completely dysfunctional in the Normal Mode.

Nothing would run at all!

Not wasting time in Google, or the listed miracle ways of solving this sneak attack by all the virus experts and their companies which are often really tiresome to read in all their verbosity. I just booted up by pressing F8, went into the XP Safe Mode. In the Safe Mode the anticipated programs ran fine, and at that point, I ran my Malware Bytes program which did not respond or run in the Normal Mode, but in this Safe Mode, Malware Bytes ran fine and picked up the Hijack.exe virus and quarantined it! I then rebooted the computer normally and everything ran fine again! (Not sure of the System Restore points in this instance, I elected not to use System Restore to save current essential data, and only ran the current Malware Bytes).

No special programs to download, no special techniques to use, no mystifying and complicated definitions to comprehend. Just use your computer and programs in Safe Mode. Pragmatically it is that simple!

In another instance I had an old Sony VIAO laptop that would boot up, and you would see the Desktop, and the whole screen would be frozen making the laptop really unusable. In this instance, I booted up in Safe Mode as I explained above, and removed a corrupt startup program that was in the Start Up folder. And now the whole laptop runs like new!

Problems, let's not over complicate, or get excited, or look at the long faluten' explanations that most

people love to hear from the mouths of virus experts. Just PRESS F8 and get into the Safe Mode! Use this simple procedure in a simple way, and your computing life will be much easier!!



SMART COMPUTING TIPS & FUN FACTS

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• **Emails To Look Out For:** If you get an email urging you to update your eBay, PayPal, or bank account information, chances are it's false. An easy way to tell in Outlook is to hover your mouse pointer over the hyperlink in the message. If the URL reads something like "www.paypal.com" in the message, but some other address such as "www.validationcgi.org" shows up in the floating box next to the pointer as you hover, you can be pretty certain you should delete the email. Phishing emails attempt to get you to provide personal information by mimicking emails from legitimate companies. Most companies will never ask you to verify account information with an email, so beware any such correspondence.

• **Google It:** When you are looking for something in an unfamiliar area, it can be a real pain to figure out where things are. But if you send a text message to GOOGL (46645) with a search query, such as "Pizzerias, Omaha," you'll get a free text message right back from the search company, with the answer to your query. You can also use this service to define words (for example "define zenith") and more.

• **Flash Drive Benefits:** If you're like many laptop users, you take your computer everywhere. Portable computing means that your storage devices will undoubtedly absorb more abuse from bumps and scrapes than those left behind on a desktop PC. Some storage technologies aren't well-suited for the road hard drives can break if they suffer a hard blow, and CDs and DVDs are easy to scratch to the point that you can't read them. That's where USB flash memory drives often shine. These drives are small enough to fit on a keychain, and they come in tough plastic cases that make them very difficult to damage.



WHAT A NASTY VIRUS CAN DO

What a nasty virus can do to your computer

By Merle Nicholson, TPCUG

merle@merlenicholson.com

I recently was asked to remove a virus from a friend/client's notebook. For all intents and purposes, it rendered the computer completely inoperative. The virus was in a virus category of "Rogue antivirus software". There are many of them out there for the unwary to catch, and this one, called "Think-Point," even has the Windows flag on it to further fool you into thinking it is legitimate. The only option you can see is "Safe Startup," and that takes you to a virus scanner and a way to purchase the product. If you close it out, it shows you a blank desktop, no icons, no menus. You can turn the machine off, that's about it. Turn it back on, same situation. I did figure out a way to kill it through the Task Manager's Run command, and then run the desktop. I also found some things written up on the Internet to do something similar, but no help in removing it. I did remove it using some very clever, obscure skills, several virus scanners, then finding and removing twenty or so copies of it. But the computer really didn't work well enough to use. What I found surprised me, and this is what the article is about and what you can do.

Here's a list of what I found. Some things are by deduction and may not be 100% accurate. But I am 100% certain that these problems existed. All of the things fit into a strategy that prevents you from fixing the computer.

1. The worst thing: The computer will not boot into safe mode. It blue screens every time. I'm speculating that ThinkPoint either corrupted an existing driver or put a new one in that loads and then fails. The way to fix this is to do a system repair or a complete reformat and installation. I did not want to impose that cost on my customer, and she agreed (it's not a primary computer, and it's rather old). So I left it that way.

2. All the system restore points were unusable. Refused to restore to any point.

3. To run most anything, an official-looking popup would ask to confirm the logon user and give a box for an alternative user account that did not work. This is to make sure that everything you try is run under the current user account which has been

modified to prevent circumventing the virus. What you want to run is Explorer.exe giving you your desktop, and every effort is made to prevent you from doing this.

4. Most – perhaps all – items in Control panel will not run. It gave a warning that the administrator account has restricted its use. I did manage to get into the power configuration, but it would not accept any change. The computer would go into sleep mode after about 20 minutes, keeping me from running a full system scan from any antivirus software unless I sat there and wiggled the mouse occasionally for four hours.

5. The Internet articles say that even if you purchase the software to fix a bogus virus, Think Point stays on the computer. The uninstall just errors out.

6. The Internet articles say that it installs other viruses, and I did find a half dozen other viruses, mostly downloader's.

7. It leaves about 20 copies of itself under various random names, and places items in the registry to run each of them. So removing the active virus is just the beginning. I also found a couple of viruses in the System Restore files.

8. It apparently makes changes to the current user account profile that look like group policy changes, even though this was Windows XP Home, which doesn't have group policy capability.

9. Only after all the bad software is cleared from the machine can you then get rid of the modified account by creating a new administrative account, copying all of the user files from the old to the new – except for the profile files, then deleting the old account after locating the email files.

Isn't this scary? It is to me, and I (95%) fixed this one with a lot of work. The idea of having to fix my own machine after something like this gives me nightmares.

What you can do to prevent this: A sizable number of virus infections now are rogue anti-virus. There's an understandable reason for this. It creates revenue. Old-fashioned viruses are malicious, but have

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WHAT A NASTY VIRUS CAN DO

(Continued from page 13)

no revenue-producing strategy. In other words, it's now about money. Most all viruses are sent to you via web pages, and most of those are porn sites, either designed that way or hacked from outside. Porn sites are visited so often, they are a very good candidate for this kind of thing. Also, presumably the porn site owners don't have the skill to remove sophisticated hacks. But most any web site is vulnerable. In any case, you must select something on the site – click on it – to give the browser a chance to violate security rules.

The next common ways to get a virus is with downloads. And that means just about any download or file transfer. So you have to get any and all files from reputable sites like iTunes or Downloads.com, Amazon etc., which have the resources to check their own content.

But that leaves any and all file-sharing sites absolutely and definitely off the list. So if you're downloading songs for free, you're in trouble. Any file-sharing site's software must be uninstalled from your computer. And that also goes for any peer-to-peer gaming sites, LimeWire, Kazaa, and any and all IM programs that allow peer-to-peer file exchanges.

And while we're at it remove – uninstall – anything that says "Toolbar." Right now. Want to know why toolbars are free? Because they're a conduit for pushing advertising to you; and they're easily exploited. Besides you don't need them. They want you to believe you do, of course! But the browser itself and a couple of favorites will do anything a toolbar will do.

An alternative is giving up gaming and IM and to start purchasing songs. So if you have kids who will just die without peer-to-peer gaming or IM and stealing songs, the answer is to live with it with some intelligent prevention.

First, if at all possible, put the kids (and maybe grandpa) on a Windows 7 machine. If you have some internal networking and file sharing, Windows 7 Pro is better because it will back up to a network drive. But so will Acronis Home, or 2010 or 2011, running under Win 7 Home Premium.

Make sure you have a full system backup, and replace it monthly. Use Windows 7 Backup or Acronis. Believe me, restoring the entire system hard drive is way, way better than any alternative that I can think of. Look at what I had to do with ThinkPoint. Want to try it?

I guess it's obvious, but a strong anti-virus program running on your machine is essential. BUT – this is important – make sure you look at the scheduling part of it and make sure it will automatically download new definitions and also run a full system scan at a time of day that the machine will most likely be turned on. Same for Windows Updates. Make certain that all important updates are installed as soon as they are available.

Password protect your main administrative account (this is the one that comes first with the computer) and bury the password paper in the back yard and leave the location with your attorney. Better yet, Win 7 allows you to create a flash drive that will unlock the computer. Hide it under some rubber fake dog poop someplace.

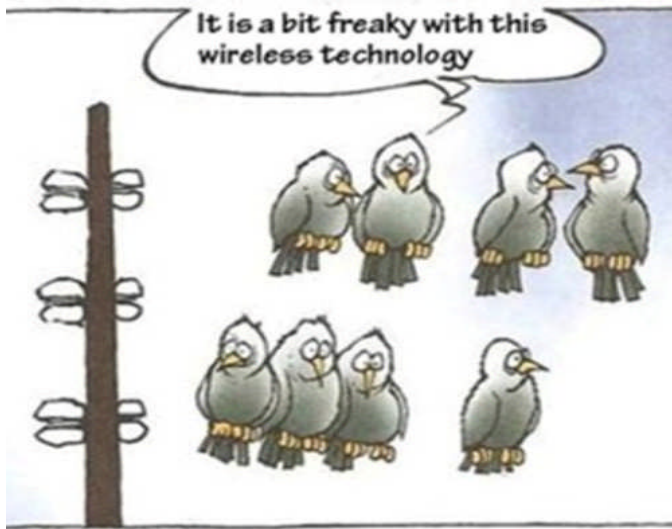
THEN: Create a non-administrative account for yourself – a regular non-privileged account, and a separate one – or one for each kid. A regular account cannot install software. But most importantly, SOFTWARE that is run under this account can't install software. Ah HA!

Then one more step. Set the screen savers to require a sign-in on wake-up, and ALWAYS log off when you leave the computer. That's especially essential when leaving the administrative account.

Skills: There are a few things that would be very helpful to learn. The big one is navigating the computer file system using Windows Explorer. Find out how your files are organized, and more importantly, how to change what files you can view. That's in Windows Explorer, Tools, Folder Options, View tab. Second Important Skill – learn to use the Add, Remove Programs. That's "Programs and Features" in Vista and Win 7. When you find an installed program that you are not using (say, anything with the word Apple or toolbar), just uninstall it, see how it goes.



Short Circuits....zzzt!



Coffee? Recharge? Service with a smile also comes with an electronic voice at the Dalu Robot restaurant, where the hotpot meals are not as famous yet as the staff who never lose their patience and never take tips. The restaurant, which opened this month in Jinan in northern Shandong province, is touted as China's first robot hotpot eatery where robots resembling Star Wars droids circle the room carrying trays of food in a conveyor belt-like system. More than a dozen robots operate in the restaurant as entertainers, servers, greeters and receptionists. Each robot has a motion sensor that tells it to stop when someone is in its path so customers can reach for dishes they want. "They have a better service attitude than humans," said a customer. "Humans can be temperamental or impatient, but the Robots don't feel tired." *Associated Press, 12/22/2010*

No fire, no smoke. An appeals court is saying the Food and Drug Administration cannot stop imports of electronic cigarettes. The FDA wants to regulate e-cigarettes as a drug-device and last year ordered that a shipment could not enter the United States. The petitioner, which does business as e-cigarette distributor, says in a lawsuit that its product cannot be regulated as a drug-device. Instead, the company says it is a tobacco product since it's derived from tobacco plants. The court agreed in its ruling. E-cigarettes operate with a heating element and a battery. Users inhale a vaporized liquid nicotine mixture much the way traditional smokers inhale smoke, but without fire, smoke, ash or carbon monoxide. Nedra Pickler, *Associated Press, 12/07/2010*

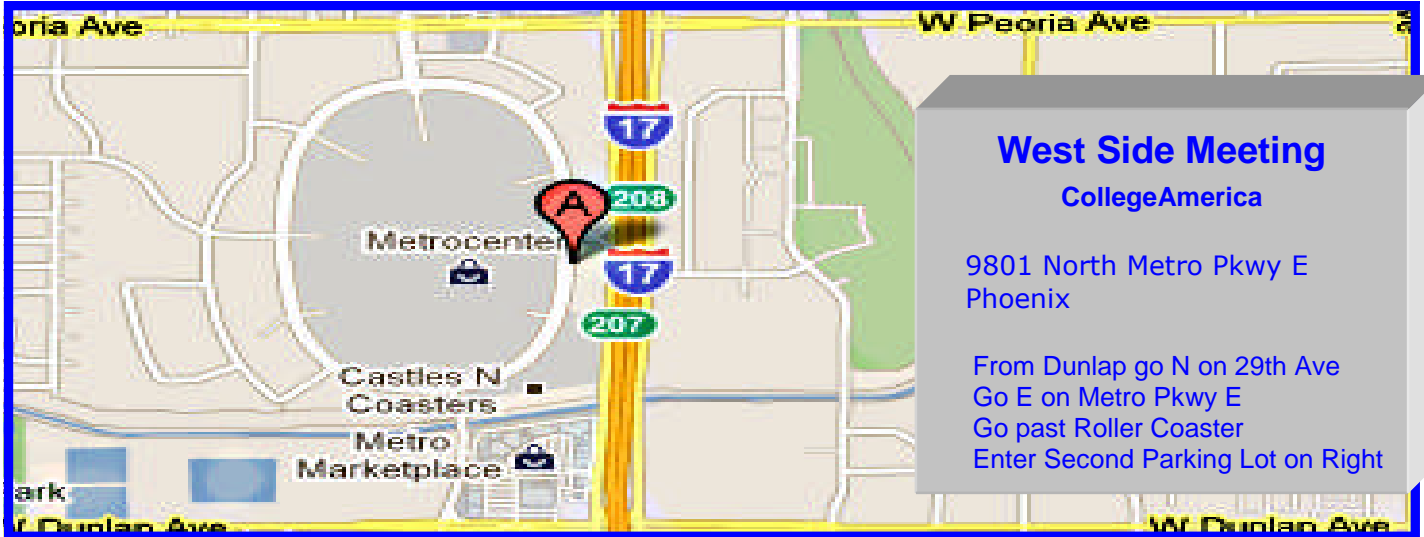
Timeless Type. Fans of a bygone age have been taking time in Philadelphia to celebrate the non-digital, admittedly noisy era of the manual typewriter. About a dozen people showed up Saturday with machines in tow to "Type-In" at a pub in the city's historic 30th Street Station. Machines of varying sizes and colors shared tables with coffee and beer as participants compared models and talked about bringing the devices into a century not their own. Technicians were also on hand to offer advice for ailing machines. The event organizer values the durability of typewriters, which unlike quickly obsolete computers, can go on for decades as long as ribbons can be had. But he says the disadvantages are the slowness and weight of the machines - and "people going 'What's with you?'" *Associated Press, 12/18/2010*

No see 'ums. Prosecutors in Washington state say a man was arrested when he was caught wheeling a 50-inch television in a shopping cart right past a police station. A bystander called 911 to report that she saw a man grab the TV out of the back of a delivery truck, load it in the cart and start pushing it away. An Auburn police officer heard dispatchers relay the call as he was pulling into the police station parking lot -- and then he saw the man, dressed entirely in camouflage, walking by with the cart. Charging documents say that when the officer asked the man what he was doing, he said he bought the TV from a friend and then he ran. The officer caught up with the culprit and arrested him. *Associated Press, 12/28/2010.*



Where a plugger gets printer ink for his Smith Corona computer.

HOW TO GET THERE

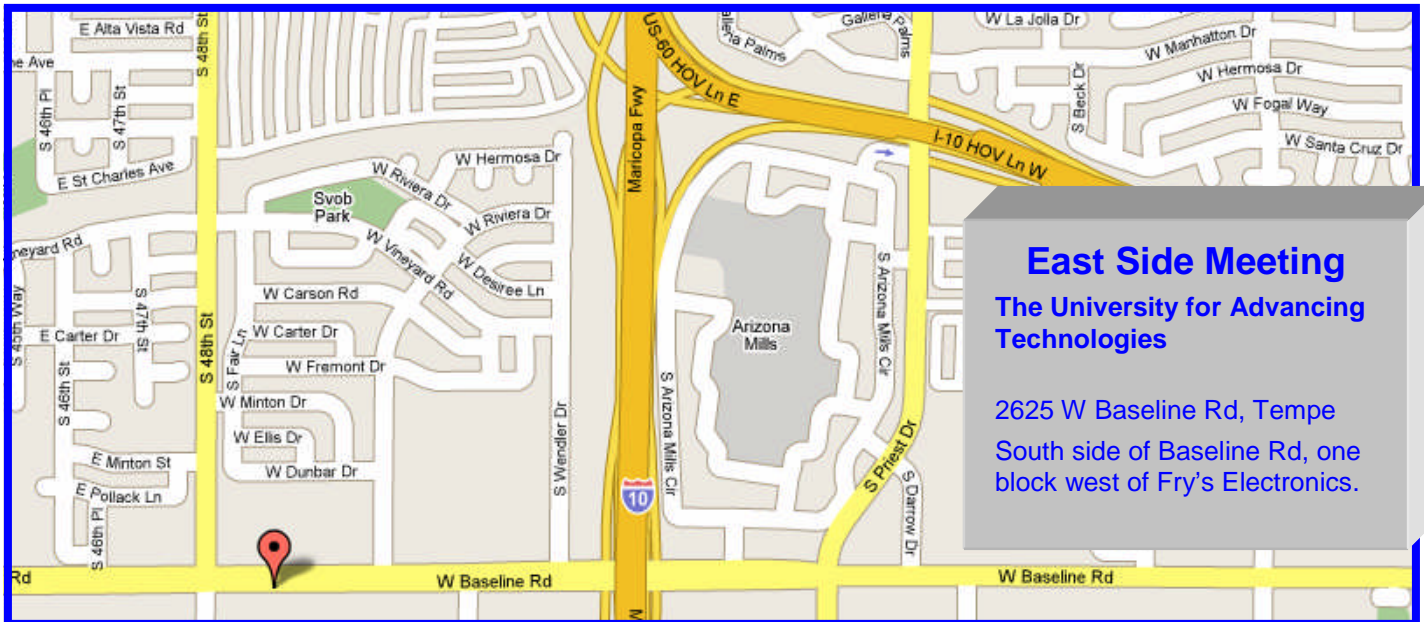


West Side Meeting

CollegeAmerica

9801 North Metro Pkwy E
Phoenix

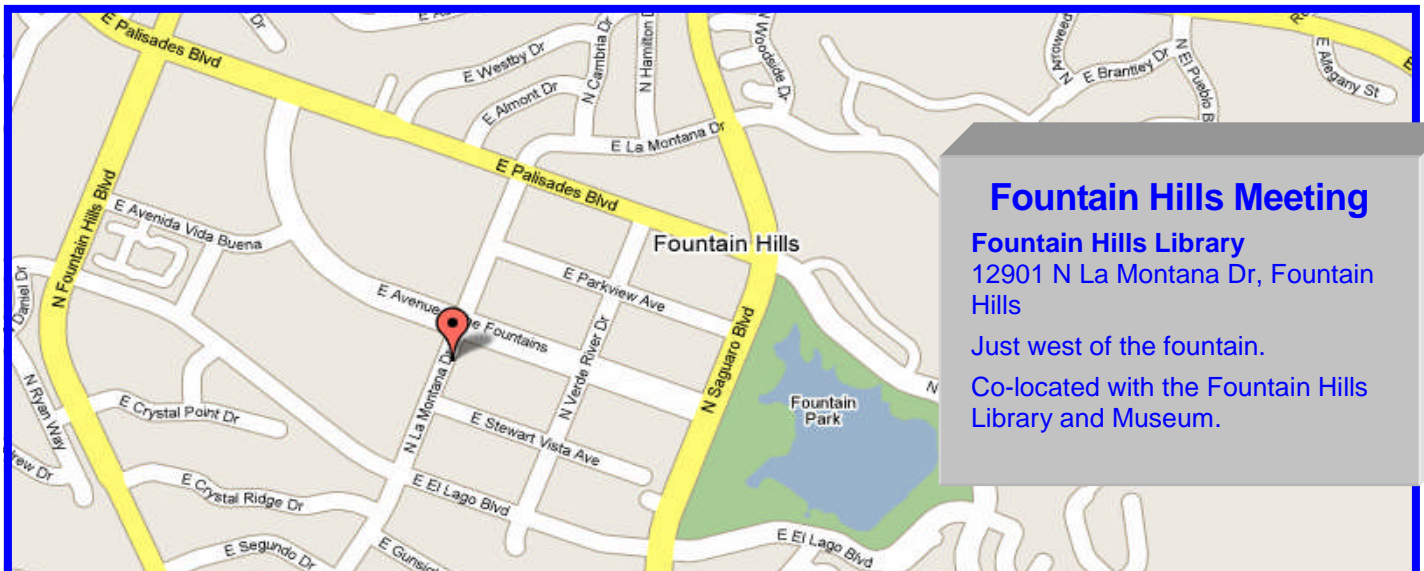
From Dunlap go N on 29th Ave
Go E on Metro Pkwy E
Go past Roller Coaster
Enter Second Parking Lot on Right



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
THROUGH
DEC 31, 2011*

Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

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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

Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one: Yes No

E-mail address: _____ (Print Legibly)

Signature _____ Date ___/___/___

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

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

Mail this completed form with payment to:

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