



NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side.....Tue, June 14

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

East Side.....Wed, June 15

University of Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe

(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

Fountain Hills.....Thu, June 16

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

Brad's Memorial Service

A memorial service will be held for Brad this Sunday, June 12th, at 3:00 p.m. at Lincoln Heights Christian Church, 2121 E. Lincoln Dr., Phoenix.

Presentation this month:

Lo & Dave are planning more useful hints, tips and tricks

Here is a sample --

TOR - hidden browsing

More Short Cuts & Hot Keys

Video Recorder

Video Capture - DownloadHelper - Flash, MP4, etc.

For changes, check our website: phoenixpcug.org

Phoenix PC Users Group

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*Note: Using the BOD contact directs your email to all four members of the Board.

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

Hello Dad's & Grads,

While June is the usual month to congratulate our special folks we have the sad story to relate of a different kind of "graduation". Brad Montroy, a long time member probably 20 years or more has gone. He precedes us to that great computer land in the hereafter, passing through earthly trials with good humor and grace. He started in the early days with mainframes and ended helping ordinary folks with personal computers. Quite a range for anyone. New cell phones now have more computing power than his early computers - amazing what a few years will do.

So we say "Aloha Brad" which means both hello and goodbye in Hawaii, the land of my father's birth. You'll be missed here. Keep guiding those of us debugging errors in programs and keep passing on good ideas from your new station in life. Hopefully, we will meet again as in the song "Aloha Oi". Coincidentally this weekend in Phoenix is the Japanese celebration of Obon, when the ancestors are supposed to return to visit once a year. A bit multicultural, but that's a good thing.

There will be a memorial Sunday at the Lincoln Heights Christian Church, (See Page 1 or our Website). Please come to say goodbye and share some of the great memories we have of Brad with, Bruce, his brother and Brad's relatives.

David Yamamoto

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containing a copy of the newsletter and reprint information.

Example: (user group and the name and date of the publication).

FROM YOUR PUBLISHER

On May 31st we got a copy of an email from Bruce Montroy informing us that his brother Brad had passed away. It was shocking news and our website expressed our members feelings.

**In Memory of Brad Montroy
Brad was a longtime member
More importantly a wonderful friend
Our heartfelt sorrow to his brother Bruce
And all his relatives
Brad rest in peace
You will be missed by all**

He will be especially missed by all who remember him as a key figure in our Westside Meeting discussions Very direct, adding something of substance, and always a gentleman.

I do not remember a time that he did not arrive at a meeting without a member or two in his car sharing the ride.

Often after the Westside Meeting Brad would organize a trip to Dennys for food and great conversations.

When Gene Barlow made his presentation one year one of our members was short of cash but was dying to take advantage of the software discount. Brad quietly summed up the situation and I doubt anyone noticed, I certainly did not, he came up with a loan of the cash. I only know this because that member related the incident to me later. That was Brad in a nutshell.

At our Christmas time parties Brad was the perfect Santa Claus. He always showed up with extra pizza, other surprise foods and drinks. His *Pièce de résistance* was a huge giveaway box of electronic paraphernalia. I think he spent the year collecting those PC Goodies just so he could play Santa.

We were very lucky to have had Brad as a member and a friend. We will miss him. "Brad rest in peace".

TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE OR NOT ENOUGH ?

We are always looking for articles, pictures, even short antidotes. A good example is an article on the next page by John Curth . It illustrates the input from members we are hoping to receive in future editions.

Come on everyone. You must have something you would like to share with us. If you do not have time to do a complete article email us what you have we will work with you to fashion it into something we can all enjoy.

Bill Aulepp

TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE OR NOT ENOUGH ?

TOO MUCH KNOWLEDGE OR NOT ENOUGH

By John Curth Member Phoenix PC Users Group

Three years ago I purchased a new HP desktop computer with all of the amenities that at that time I was comfortable with. I would have built my own, but at the time I was convalescing from an injury that happened earlier. So at this time I figured why go through all the hassle and get what they had on sale. Here it is - BLACK FRIDAY - and this thing is on sale with a really nice sized monitor. Needless to say, I think I made a very good purchase and I'm still pleased with it.

Since that time various items have gone on sale and having the knowledge of how this computer is put together I purchased a new 1 TB hard drive for \$60.00. But at this time the computer is now Three years old and completely out of warranty/guarantee.

When I did the hard drive install, I also installed Windows 7 that I had received from Microsoft a few months before and with that I did a double whammy.

Surprisingly the install of Windows 7 onto the new hard drive was relatively easy and straightforward. I thought I would have to wait for the drive to be formatted but Microsoft did the "Quick Format" which took about 2 seconds and the installation of Windows 7 was now on its way. Total installation time - I would say, 20/25 minutes. Life is Good.

Time moved on and I was thinking about what to do with the old 400 GB hard drive. As I thought about it I got the idea to use it as a back-up of some of the files that I've collected or even perhaps as a complete back-up for the new drive. Decisions on what I could do had me purchase an external cable connection to access that drive. That was easy since the local store had one on sale for \$20.00.

Once home again I connected the cables and power supply to the SATA hard drive and plugged that into my USB port. Nothing happened but I thought I would be able to access it in the Microsoft program "Disk Manager". Once there it showed the drive is "Not Initialized". So I left clicked on the place where it showed the drive and in that menu it would allow me to initialize the drive. Now a new dialog box comes up and tells me it can't do that with any other explanation.

I went up to the Help menu and did a search on Initialize hard disk and it came up and said something to the effect that there was no "MBR" (Master Boot Record).

I remembered from DOS that when you format a hard drive you can run fdisk and add /mbr which would now rewrite the Master Boot Record and allow me to move forward. (Or so I thought)

Not so and after looking high and low, trying so many different items which included purchasing software that would wipe the hard drive down to nothing I came up with no success. My complaint at this time was now looking at HP and thought that HP had done something to the bios that made it unique and or very possibly prioritized. With that in mind I thought I could get a boot up disk and somehow manage to run the dos file fdisk/mbr.

Again not so, what I did do is, I took the hard drive and the external connections out to the Microsoft Store in Scottsdale. There I was allowed to go to the Answer Desk and present my problem to the Tech behind the counter. He took the hard drive and the cabling connections and power supply and connected them to his laptop computer right in front of me. Went into Disk Management and he too couldn't see the hard drive. Looked down at the connections and made sure that they were connected correctly and then looked at the power supply and said: Right there is your problem. That power supply isn't putting out.

Wait here I'll be right back. He went back to retrieve a different power supply and proceeded to connect that one to the hard drive.

Hello! Pay dirt had happened. The hard drive was now active and I could do whatever I wanted to do with it.

I now learned something that I've not known before.

First, don't assume that everything works right out of the box because it doesn't. I returned the faulty external connections and power supply back and purchased a different manufacture and this one is working fine.

Second, I found out that Microsoft changed the boot up procedure and no longer uses the mbr in DOS at all. (Both Vista and Windows 7 uses a file called bootmgr) If you have a Vista or Windows 7 DVD you can insert it into your computer while running and look at the files, it's there.

This was truly a learning experience for me. All through the heartburn and the try this and that I found out that the more you know, the more you need to know.

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

PRESENTATION THIS MONTH

**Lo & Dave are planning more useful hints, tips and tricks
Using Windows, and Google with search tips too.
Our website will have the latest info about meeting topics.
Future presentation will include topics for our 3 general levels -
Beginners, intermediate and advanced
With possibly 3 kinds of idea toolkits**

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

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 18)

- Tuesday, June 14, 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 18)

- Wednesday, June 15, 2011
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 18)

- Thursday, June 16, 2011
- 6:30 PM - Q and A

HOWTO BACKUP SEVERAL COMPUTERS

HOW TO BACKUP SEVERAL COMPUTERS

By *Bob Rankin*

<http://askbobrankin.com/>

If you have more than one computer, you may wonder what the best strategy is for making backup copies. There are several ways to back up multiple machines. Each has its pros and cons.

You could add a [backup storage](#) device (such as an external hard drive) and backup software to each machine. If the backup software is configured to run automatically at a specified time, this could be an ideal solution. But it's rather expensive in terms of hardware and software.

Instead, you could store backup data from all of your computers on one large external storage device. A 1 Terabyte external hard drive could hold backup data for multiple computers. Each computer's backups would be stored in a subfolder on the drive. But how should you connect the external drive to all of those computers?

You could carry the drive from one machine to another, plugging it into a USB port on each machine. But that is rather tedious. If your computers are connected on a home network, there's no reason your backup storage device has to be moved.

Connect the backup storage device to one computer which is left on most of the time, or at least during the time period in which you wish to make backups. From the computer to which the backup device is attached, make the backup device a shared network resource. Then every computer on your network will be able to use the backup device.

Configuring Your Backups

Next, you must configure your backup software to create backups of each machine on the network and place the backup copies on the backup storage device. Windows 7 has the ability to back up multiple machines on a network to a shared device, and so do third-party [backup programs](#) such as Acronis True Image, Norton Ghost, and SyncBack Pro.

You'll probably want the ability to backup and restore the data for each computer separately, so make sure that your backup software doesn't combine the data from all your computers into one backup image. Create a folder on your backup drive for each computer, and point your backup software to the appropriate folder for each computer.

However, If you do want to backup and sync files across multiple computers, check out [Dropbox](#). Just install the Dropbox "client" on all the computers that you want to sync. Any files you put in your Dropbox folder will automatically sync with all the computers where you've got Dropbox installed. You can even access your dropbox from the web. Dropbox is free, and gives you up to 2GB of storage.

Online [remote backup](#) services such as [Mozy](#), [Carbonite](#), and [LiveDrive](#) can be used just like a local networked drive to back up multiple computers. Carbonite does not charge a fee for each additional computer you wish to back up, but only for the total amount of data that you store on its servers. [Mozy](#) charges \$4 per month extra for the ability to use up to 3 computers on your account. [LiveDrive](#) has different price tiers for one, up to three, or an unlimited number of computers, but offers unlimited storage space. You should review the pricing plans of these and other online [backup services](#) carefully to see which one makes the most financial sense for you.

Oh, and if you're using an online backup service, you probably don't want to backup your entire hard drive. See my related article [Should I Backup ALL of My files?](http://askbobrankin.com/should_i_backup_all_of_my_files.html) (http://askbobrankin.com/should_i_backup_all_of_my_files.html) to learn about [backup strategies](#), and which files you definitely DO need to include in a backup.

Let's close by recapping some of the pros and cons. A separate, always-connected backup device for each computer you own is the fastest, most reliable, and most secure method. Making backups over a network is slower, and online backup is slowest. Network performance will be degraded while backups are in progress, so they should be scheduled to avoid conflicts with users. Online backups store your backup copies off-site, so they won't be lost in a local disaster

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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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TOP NOTCH SHOOT CAMERAS

TOP NOTCH SHOOT CAMERAS

By Jerry Schneir, LACS
<http://www.lacspc.org>

I will be discussing a group of 8 cameras, which in my opinion are the cream of the crop, well almost, but I will let you weigh the choices and make your own determination. We will be looking at the: Canon G12, S95, and SD4000; the Fujifilm X100; the Nikon P7000; the Panasonic GF1 and LX5; and the Samsung TL500. You may wonder why I included the GF1 and a camera that has yet to make it to market, the Fujifilm X100, but perhaps you will see my logic as you read on. All zoom values in 35mm equivalents.

It is amazing how well this group of cameras performs, how close to digital SLR the images are, and how much lighter and compact these cameras are compared to most dSLR cameras. Ok, there are differences, in dim light a dSLR is hard to beat but this collection of cameras does extremely well at ISO settings up to 800 and even higher if shooting RAW. Well, one of them can't shoot RAW, but the others all can. And the focusing ability of a dSLR is both faster and somewhat more accurate but if you aren't blowing pictures up to 11x14 or bigger, then the difference is minimal.

In this grouping of cameras I have included one (Fujifilm X100) that isn't even available as of this date (2-3-2011) and a mirrorless interchangeable lens (MIL) camera (Panasonic GF1) that is about the same size as some of those other cameras. The Fuji X100 has an APS sized sensor with a non-interchangeable lens. The GF1 has interchangeable lenses but I am comparing it using the 20mm F1.7.

I have owned and dearly love the earlier version of the Canon S95 (the S90) and the Panasonic LX5 (LX3). I would expect these updated versions to perform as well if not better. I currently own and love the Panasonic GF1 with the 20mm f1.7 lens. One might conclude that I bring to this discussion a wealth of info which is true but only true for the cameras that I own or have experienced using an earlier version. Comments on the other cameras are derived from what I have read or deduced.

All these cameras share some very desirable features such as full control of the image, ability to shoot the RAW format (except the Canon SD4000),

good optical image stabilization and not the highest megapixel counts. This latter feature means that these cameras will generally perform well at ISO settings up to 800 and even higher if shooting in the RAW format.

NOTE: These cameras are not intended for the occasional photographer. These are complex cameras and will require a great deal of time and energy to master. Yes, they do have an AUTO setting but it is far too easy to accidentally change a setting that will result in a great deal of frustration. I see this problem very often when students bring their more advanced cameras up to me before class to help find out why their camera stopped working or why the images have gotten so bad.

Canon G12 - This is the standard against which almost all the other cameras are compared. It is however, a brick, something that will weigh down a large pocket and cause a lopsided walk for most users. The articulating LCD is great to use and very handy. The optical viewfinder sounds good, but as with most optical viewfinders on non-SLR cameras, it does have problems. Most photographic web sites rate it as a top notch camera producing great images. If you are a Canon camera user you may find the camera easier to use than someone who has little or no experience with Canon cameras.

In general, the G12: has good image quality, accurate metering and focusing; good JPEG color; usable ISO up to ISO 800 in JPG and higher when using RAW; well built; controls well laid out; good manual control; sharp 28-140mm lens with good image stabilization; articulated LCD screen a real plus. The negative comments seem to revolve around the optical viewfinder as not very accurate; no video recording button; no zooming or auto focusing during video recording; and the size and weight of the camera.

Canon S95 - I liked the earlier version, the S90 very much and see no reason why this one would not be as good if not better. This is definitely a pocketable camera. It has a fast f2.0 lens at wide angle but that drops off all too quickly as you zoom out. As with all cameras that do not have a viewfinder, check the LCD for ease of use when used outdoors in bright sunlight. The battery on this camera has a

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TOP NOTCH SHOOT CAMERAS

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shorter life, i.e., it requires recharging more often thus you are in danger if you do not carry a spare battery with you.

Pro comments for the S95 are: Very good image quality at ISO up to 800 and higher if using RAW; good color response; a very sharp 28-105mm zoom lens; a good LCD screen that is bright and has high-contrast; manual controls that work well and also has a control ring around the lens which is customizable to some extent; and is compact, light, and very well constructed.

Negative comments for the S95 are: AWB not always accurate under some conditions; some color fringing around high-contrast edge; lack of control over noise reduction; optical zoom and Auto Focus unavailable in movie mode; underpowered flash which is typical for most cameras in this class; control ring around the 4-way buttons; hard to hold securely, i.e., lack of 'proper' hand grip; and relatively poor battery life compared to other cameras in this group.

Canon SD4000 - You could easily call this the "poor man's S95". In order to keep the price down Canon used a lower quality LCD and eliminated RAW image capture. A couple of other changes seem to increase its value in my mind, things such as a new back lite CMOS image sensor. Do not expect to get the same performance or image quality out of this as you can get out of the S95. There is another member of this family, the SD4500 which has a 10x optical zoom lens that starts at 36mm and goes to 350mm zoom. Of course, the sensor of the S95 and G12 are 50% larger than either the SD4000 or SD4500. This camera (SD4500) seems to cost about as much as the SD4000. It also has a CMOS sensor but does not seem to have the manual controls of the SD4000.

Pro comments for the SD4000 are: Good image quality with a slight tendency to a softer image; lack of noise at lower ISO settings; good image color; easy to use control system; good zoom range with a fairly fast lens when wide open; good battery life; fast continuous shooting but still not good for sports; wide range of extra modes and features.

Negative

comments for the SD 4000 are: Noise at ISO over 200; Images not as sharp as others in this price range; no flash exposure compensation; and while the LCD says 3", it is a 16:9 wide screen so that when regular images are displayed (not movies) you don't use the entire screen.

Fujifilm X100 - You might inquire about why I included a camera that is not yet available, nor may it ever be sold. Good question but I think I have several good answers. I believe it may be the harbinger of what is in store for us within this year. It uses a large APS sized sensor, the same size as used in most digital SLR cameras. Thus I would anticipate very good low light performance, especially with an f2 lens. It uses some new viewfinder technology. In size it is about the same as the Panasonic GF1 and I would guess it weighs about the same. Is it something you should wait for? No, but unless you are in a rush to buy something now, it might be something to keep your eyes on.

Nikon P7000 - this is Nikon's response to Canon's G12, albeit a bit late, and unfortunately for Nikon, not as well implemented. It is a slightly lighter brick than the G12 and has a higher resolution LCD but the LCD is fixed not like the articulating LCD in the G12. However it does have a 7x optical zoom starting at 28mm which is a nice feature. This camera is NOT a speed demon to use, it sometimes seems like it is only running on 3 cylinders rather than 4. And the menu system leaves much to be desired. The P7000 does have an optical viewfinder but it is of limited value since it only shows about 80% of the image. The closer you are to the subject the less useful the optical viewfinder.

Pro comments for the Nikon P7000 are: Very good image quality at lower ISO settings; excellent video mode; external mic socket; can optical zoom and auto-focus while shooting a movie; ISO excellent up to 800 and higher if shooting RAW; good flash exposures; sharp 28-200mm lens; very high-resolution LCD, external mic socket and built-in stereo mic; useful electronic virtual horizon; useful hand grip; and good battery life.

Negative comments for the Nikon P7000 are: Poor optical viewfinder; white balance under tungsten lighting poor; uneven metering under some lighting

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TOP NOTCH SHOOT CAMERAS

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conditions; slow response to button pushing; too big and heavy; and some buttons such as "Fn" make no sense.

Panasonic GF1 - I am a current owner of this camera and am amazed by the sharpness of the 20mm f1.7 lens and how well the camera performs. This is a mirrorless, interchangeable lens (MIL) camera. I also have a 45-200mm and 14-140mm lenses which I use with the other 4/3 sized sensor cameras (G1 & G2). I also have the optional electronic viewfinder (EVF) which is handy to have under some shooting conditions. The items just listed are what makes a camera like this so interesting to use and expensive as well. With the 20mm lens attached the camera can be carried on the belt, but not with the 45-200 or the 14-140 lens. Of course, all this flexibility comes with a stiff price, prepare to pay almost 150% or more than for other cameras in this group.

Pro comments for the Panasonic GF1 are: Excellent overall image quality even up to ISO 1600; great raw output; reliable exposure and focus; reliable white balance; very good build quality & great screen; good handling; easy to use; compact design; fast Auto Focus (on par with entry level DSLRs); optional electronic viewfinder as well as optical one; HD video; lens stabilization system very effective but not available on the 20mm lens.

Negative comments for the Panasonic GF1 are: Dynamic range and high ISO output not quite as well as best in class; JPEG output not as good as it could be (shoot raw for best results); very weak flash; a limited range of dedicated lenses; optional electronic viewfinder not detailed enough; and shutter lag is long compared to an SLR but average when compared to most compact P&S.

Panasonic LX5 - I am a current owner of the LX3 and like many of its features. I would expect the LX5 to perform as good if not better. The LX5 is slightly smaller which has some advantages. The LX5 along with the S95 are the best of the best. The differences between them revolve mainly around personal preferences as to style, size, and previous experiences with similar cameras. Of course the ability to attach an EVF on the LX5 is a definite plus.

Pro comments for the Panasonic LX5 are: Very good image quality up to ISO 800; good video mode and good video quality: accurate focus and white balance with some coolness in daylight; fast f2-3.3 lens throughout the zoom range; good zoom range of 24mm to 90mm; most controls are easy to find and use; the optional EVF; unique ability to switch aspect ratio; the handgrip improved over the LX3; and finally, nice and compact. You can buy a used LX3 for \$200 plus on eBay. Negative comments for the Panasonic LX5 are: Continuous shooting performance not great; colors tend to be on the cool side; LCD screen not always representative of actual exposure/color; icons on the buttons virtually unreadable; the menu design can be confusing; lens cap not built-in; and the optional EVF is low resolution and thus not usable for fine work.

Samsung TL500 - Think of this camera as a slightly larger version of the LX3/LX5 from Panasonic. It mimics most of the features from those cameras with a most welcome 3" adjustable 614,000 dot AMOLED (Activematrix organic light-emitting diode) LCD. It also sports a very bright f1.8-f2.4 lens with a zoom range of 24-72mm. It is about 50% heavier than the LX5 most of which is due to the articulating LCD. I would have thought the battery would have a longer life than that of the LX5 due to the lower power drain of the AMOLED LCD but wrong! The TL500's battery is only good for about 250 shots between charges not the 400 of the LX5. The cost is about the same as the LX5, around \$450.

Pro comments for the Samsung TL500 are: Good image quality at ISO up to 800; very bright f1.8-f2.4 lens; very useful zoom range 24mm 72mm; easy-to-use manual controls; very bright, with good contrast, articulated AMOLED screen; and reliable focus, accurate white balance.

Negative comments for the Samsung TL500 are: Some highlight and channel clipping especially in very bright, high-contrast conditions; metering is not always reliable and thus exposure compensation is often needed; poor video options; noise reduction is excessive at high ISO settings; flash is not very useful; manual focus difficult to use due to too low resolution; some feature combinations seem to

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A DOZEN FREE PC APPLICATIONS

A DOZEN FREE PC APPLICATIONS

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group.
merle@merlenicholson.com

All of these are excellent quality free software. Most do not even have a paid version and are maintained by professional organizations. All are available from <http://download.cnet.com/windows/>, but I've included the source websites. I recommend downloads from cnet. The files are tested spyware free, and it's easy to use.

<http://download.cnet.com/windows/>

VLC Media Player At the top of this list is the VLC media player from Video LAN Organization. It's an all-purpose audio player, which also plays all video formats. There's no need to go looking for codecs, as in Windows Media Player.

<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/>

Irfanview Everyone's favorite picture viewer. It will also play most movie formats, as well as audio files. The program has a lot of features and is a great photo manager, but it only does minor photo editing.

<http://irfanview.com/>

ImgBurn For those of you who like to work with ISO images and need reliable ways to create and burn ISO images on and off discs effortlessly, ImgBurn is the CD/DVD burner utility you want. I'm using ISO CD/DVD images more and more as hard drives become cheaper.

<http://www.imgburn.com>

Open Office/LibreOffice If you can't afford Microsoft Office, then Open Office or LibreOffice will do the job for 95% of what you need. The newest open source version of this is called LibreOffice at <http://www.libreoffice.org/>

This version comes about because Oracle, the current owner of OpenOffice (acquired from their acquisition of Sun), is making some content and distribution decisions outside of the Open Source community (according to the Open Source maintainers). So they've broken away and have reversed some of those decisions.

There

are Linux and Mac OSX versions, too.

Audacity is a sound editor. For someone who likes to work with sound files but doesn't want to buy professional systems, this program is a gem. I use it to clean up recordings from vinyl records. Available for Linux and Mac, too.

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

Paint.NET It isn't PhotoShop, but it's at least Paint-Shop Pro quality, and it's free. You'd be surprised at how much photo work this will do. It's available in 64-bit version.

<http://www.getpaint.net/download.html>

Daemon Tools Lite gives you a virtual Blu-Ray/DVD/CD player so you can quickly mount and play .IMG and .ISO files. It's a nice complement to Img-Burn. There's a paid version, too, but my needs are pretty simple, and the free version is excellent and non-obtrusive.

<http://www.daemon-tools.cc>

KeePassX is a login/password encrypted database that works across most all platforms, including MacOS X, Linux, Windows, iPhone, PocketPC, BlackBerry and Android.

<http://www.KEEPASSX.org/>

FileZilla is a first class FTP client. There's a FTP server version, too.

<http://filezilla-project.org/>

By the way, Windows does FTP from Windows Explorer, but it's difficult to set up, in my opinion. But if you have an FTP site that you send and pull from regularly, set it up and save it as a shortcut in Windows Explorer. Once set up, it's fine.

Oracle VM VirtualBox – An excellent virtual machine, far superior to Windows Virtual PC. It's much faster, the screen fonts are as good as your screen can get, and it has a snapshot system for experimenting with software scenarios. With a Windows XP machine loaded, it runs 16-bit programs. Think Mi-

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Microsoft Arcade. Pac-Man and Dig-Dug! You can use a VM to test software, to see how it works before you commit it to your main machine, or to maintain old systems if you have a favorite program that won't run on your current system. I run virtual machines for Windows 7 64 and 32 bit, XP SP3, and Ubuntu 11.04. They run flawlessly.

<http://www.virtualbox.org/>.

There are versions for Linux and others, even "DOS/Windows 3.x".

7-Zip I guess you could argue (and I have many times) that Windows doesn't need a zip file manager. If you do need something for 7z, cab, gzip, gz, rar and many others, you can't go wrong with this. I prefer this over WinZip. It has a newer interface, and it's free, open source besides.

<http://7-zip.org/>

CutePDF Writer All computer users need to save lots of printed stuff, especially invoices and receipts. There's no better way to do this than with a PDF printer. There are several free ones out there. I've settled on

CutePDF Writer. <http://www.cutepdf.com/Products/CutePDF/writer.asp>



(Continued from page 9)

block each other which can make it hard to access the feature you want.

SUMMARY I cannot claim to be impartial but I will try. The Samsung is very interesting because of the articulating beautiful AMOLED LCD but the LX5 seems to me to be a better alternative. Comparing the G12 with the Nikon P7000 for me, is a no brainer, the G12 is the gold standard and the P7000 is a poor also ran. If small size is high on your list of critical features then the Canon S95 is your best choice. However, if small size and a smaller price is critical it may pay to take a close look at either the SD4000 or SD4500, especially if you don't need higher ISO capability. Now if you're not in a rush and don't mind waiting what may be a long while, then the Fuji X100 may be for you. But remember, the prototype is a fixed lens with a barely wide angle lens (35mm). Of course, the GF1 discussed here has a 40mm f1.7 lens so not much difference there. On the other hand, the APS sized sensor and an intriguing hybrid sensor could well tip the balance. You may have guessed by now that I was using the GF1 as a sort of standard to measure the other cameras with. Many of them did very well, the G12, S95, LX5, and the TL500 (with some reservation). One could not be compared, the X100, since it has not yet been available for sale. Two did not compare very well, the P7000 and the SD4000 (and SD4500).

If you are in a buying mood you have some really nice choices to weigh. And yes, weigh may be a critical point for you. If size and weight are at the top of your requirements then the Canon S95 should be at the head of that list followed very closely by the LX5. If a longer zoom reach is critical and size/weight not all that important then the Canon G12 is the choice.

If you find yourself shooting most of your pictures indoors or under less than ideal lighting you have several good options, the Samsung TL500, the Panasonic LX5, and the Canon S95. All 3 of these cameras have f2 or faster lenses. But you also need to look at how bright they are at the long end of their zoom range. Here the S95 fails in comparison to the LX5 and TL500 which are several stops brighter at that end of their zoom range. If you are still befuddled, good, welcome to my club

ANONYMITY ON-LINE

TOR ANONYMITY ON-LINE

By Dick Maybach

Member Brookdale Computer U.G. New Jersey
<http://www.bcuq.com> N2nd(at)charter.net

TOR PROTECTS YOUR PRIVACY when you are on-line in two ways:

- (1) it prevents other users of the network you use to reach the Internet (for example a public Wi-Fi hotspot) from seeing the data you exchange and with whom you communicate and
- (2) it hides your identity from those with whom you communicate. For most of us, item (1) is more important. For example, when we use a Wi-Fi hotspot to access the Internet, every byte we send and every one we receive is accessible to all its other users. One defense would be to add a separate defensive tool for every offensive one, which is the approach taken to foil Windows viruses. The result will surely be the same – an ever-increasing kit of defensive programs to counter the neverending supply of offensive programs. A much sounder approach is to run *Tor*, which defends against all such attacks; as a result you need install only one tool. Item (2) is probably less important to you; it prevents sites you visit from knowing who you are or what other sites you've visited.

We are seeing ever more intrusions into our privacy by governments and businesses, and Tor was developed to help us preserve our privacy, safety, and dignity in the face of this. Although Tor is legal in all countries, you can do illegal things using it. In this way, it's similar to the gas pedal on your car, which is essential if you want to go someplace, but must be used with restraint to avoid awkward and expensive discussions with the law.

Tor hides not only what you say, but also who you say it to. You could use it to communicate back home from a location where disclosing your country of origin or religion might expose you to unpleasantness or risk. This feature also allows you to circumvent restrictions that your ISP has placed on the Web sites you visit. It's used by individuals, businesses, activists, reporters, the military, and law enforcement for investigations and to protect themselves, their organizations, and those with whom they communicate. Using it, you can surf the Web, exchange e-mail, use instant messaging, and transfer files. However, please don't just install it and assume you're safe. You need to change some of your habits, and reconfigure your software. Tor by itself is NOT all you need to maintain your anonymity.

Tor consists of two parts – a public, secure virtual private network (VPN) and the software to access it. The software is free and available for Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, and some smart phones at <http://www.torproject.org/>. Most PC and Mac users will want the *Tor Browser Bundle*, which includes the Firefox browser. (For reasons you can read on the

Tor Web site, neither Internet Explorer nor Safari is suitable for secure browsing.) The Tor VPN is distributed and accessible worldwide, is free, and is provided and maintained by volunteers. Because the network consists of thousands of independent Web sites, it's quite robust; there is no single point of failure.

How does Tor work? When you access the Internet with it, you first communicate with a *Tor Directory Server* over an encrypted link (one with a URL beginning <https://>). Here, you obtain a list of available *Tor Nodes*. The Tor software on your computer selects at least three of these; call them Node 1, Node 2, and Node 3. It then sets up a secure link to Node 1, which forwards your traffic to Node 2, which forwards it to Node 3. All these links are secure, and only Node 3 can decrypt your packets. Finally Node 3 sends your packets to your desired end site. Note that if the end site is secure (indicated by a URL beginning with <https://>), even Node 3 can't read your data. Packets coming to you follow the reverse path, Node 3 encrypts them in such a way that only you can do the decryption. As far as the end site knows, it is communicating with Node 3; it has no way of finding your computer's URL. An observer on your local network knows only the URL of the Tor Directory Server and Node 1; he can't find the location of the end site or read any of your packets. Only Node 1 knows your location, and only Node 3 knows that of the end site. Note that Node 3 can also see the data you exchange, unless you're using end-to-end encryption, i.e., talking to a site with a URL beginning <https://>.

When you install Tor, you will also install the Tor-button add-on for Firefox, which allows you to turn Tor anonymous browsing on and off. Turning Tor on changes some of Firefox's operation.

None of the cookies you acquired during normal browsing will be available. This is because cookies can tell the site you are communicating with a lot about you and which sites you've visited. As a result, you will have to reenter passwords where they are required. These cookies will return when you toggle Tor off.

Some sites will be displayed in a foreign language. Since they don't know where you are, they assume you are located in the same country as Node 3. See the Tor site for work-arounds.

You will see moderate delays while surfing the Web. There are at least three intermediate sites on the path to your final destination, and several layers of encryption are involved. While the delays are noticeable, I haven't found them to be obnoxious, and I consider it a good trade-off to achieve better security.

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HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN DVR

HOW TO BUILD YOUR OWN DVR

By **Bob Rankin**

<http://askbobrankin.com/>

The digital video recorder (DVR) has revolutionized television watching. In January, 2006, a survey by A.C. Nielsen found 1.2 percent of U.S. households had a DVR; by February, 2011, that number had mushroomed to 42.2 percent.

A DVR captures television signals and stores them as digital video files on a mass storage device. A DVR may be a standalone appliance; circuitry embedded in a set-top box or the TV itself; or a home-brewed version consisting of a PC, TV tuner card, and the right software.

Sure, DVR units can be rented from TiVo and cable or satellite TV companies. But why rent when you can build your own? If you have an older computer sitting idle, this is a great way to put it to good use. It's also a fun project that doesn't require much in the way of tech skills.

To build a DVR, you need a PC with a large hard drive (500+ GB); a TV tuner card that receives and decodes television signals; and DVR software. These components can be purchased separately or bundled together in different ways. You can build your DVR on a Windows, Mac or Linux computer. Here's what you will need.

DVR Software and Hardware

Windows Media Center is Microsoft's DVR software. It comes with Windows 7 Home Premium, Professional, and Ultimate editions. If your Windows 7 version lacks Media Center, you can buy an upgrade from Microsoft.

Alternatives to Windows Media Center include the \$79.95 [SageTV](#) and Snapstream's \$99 [Beyond TV](#). Free DVR software includes the open source [MythTV](#) and [NextPVR](#), formerly called GV-PVR. All are Windows-based, with the exception of MythTV, which runs on Linux, Mac or PC.

Some of their common features include the ability to pause, rewind, and fast-forward live TV broadcasts; record and store programs for later playback, record multiple TV programs at once using multiple TV tuner cards; burn DVDs of your TV recordings, and support multiple simultaneous viewing on different displays. BeyondTV also has commercial-skipping technology built into it.

TV tuner cards include the Hauppauge WinTV HVR-2250 Media Center Kit, KWorld PC150-U Hybrid ATSC Hybrid HDTV Tuner Card with FM radio receiver, the PCTV HD Card 800i, and the isiontek 900355 ATI All-in-Wonder MC Edition TV Tuner Card - Radeon H. Some TV tuner cards come bundled with DVR software. Prices range from \$40 to \$100.

SageTV offers a compact appliance that includes a TV tuner and its software for around \$150. It has no fan, so there's no noise, and it's easily set up to work with your PC. It also supports HDMI 1.3 and Dolby TrueHD for better sound quality. It even comes with a remote control and supports wireless keyboards.

"Place-shifting" is another benefit of DVR technology. Once you capture your favorite TV shows via a DVR, they become ordinary files on the hard drive. You can copy the files to a laptop or smartphone to view anywhere and any time you like. You can even access your personal video library through a Web browser if your DVR software includes a server function.

Read more: <http://askbobrankin.com/>

ANONYMITY ON-LINE

(Continued from page 12)

Many users need only browser access to the Internet when away from home, since through it they can also exchange e-mail and transfer files. (I've found that the FireFTP add-on is convenient for the latter, but see the Tor site for instructions on how to configure it and follow these exactly.) If you want to use secure instant messaging, use *Pidgin*, which Windows and OS X users can obtain by installing the *Tor IM Bundle*, available on the Web site. (Pidgin is in most Linux repositories.) You can't use Tor for file sharing, i.e., using BitTorrent; instead use the I2P network, <http://www.i2p2.de/>.

See the Tor site for how to configure other Internet access programs, including some that provide access to your home computer. However, if you really need access to files on your home computer, it would be better to transfer them to your laptop or to a cloud service before you go. Otherwise, a power transient or other failure could disable your computer until you return home to restore it.

Accessing the Internet away from home without Tor is like driving without insurance, you can *almost* always get away with it. That doesn't mean it's a smart thing to do.

UNDERSTANDING SYSTEM RESTORE

UNDERSTANDING SYSTEM RESTORE

*By Vinny La Bash, Regular Contributing Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, Inc., FL
March 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
www.spcug.org Vlabash (at) Comcast.net*

Windows 7 has a new and improved version of System Restore that is far superior to the lame utility that came with XP. Setting a restore point was often painfully slow, and it rarely worked as it should have. Windows 7 System Restore easily helps you bring back your computer's system files to an earlier point in time. It's a way to undo system changes to your computer without affecting your personal files, such as e-mail, documents, or photos.

Sometimes, the installation of a program or a driver can cause an unexpected change to your computer or cause Windows to behave unpredictably. Usually, uninstalling the program or driver corrects the problem. If uninstalling does not fix the problem, you can try restoring your computer's system to an earlier date when everything worked correctly.

System Restore uses a feature called System Protection to regularly create and save restore points on your computer. These restore points contain information about registry settings and other system information that Windows uses. You can also create restore points manually.

System Restore is not intended for backing up personal files, so it cannot help you recover a photograph or video that has been deleted or damaged. You should regularly back up your personal files and important data using a backup program. Windows 7 has an excellent built-in backup utility.

Windows 7 uses the Shadow Copy feature, introduced in Vista. It's vastly superior to the process in XP and earlier versions of Windows. The old way used a simple file filter and copied files around the system which was clumsy compared to the Shadow Copy method. Today, Windows creates a snapshot of your drive which can later be used to restore your system should catastrophe occur.

Additional capabilities of Shadow copy include taking snapshots of files even when currently in use.

Microsoft has incorporated this feature into Previous Versions which allows restoring a previous version of an application. Unfortunately, this power is available only in Windows Professional or Ultimate. The easiest way to bring up System Restore is to type System in the Start menu search box and select it from the resulting list. Another way is to select the Recovery option from Control Panel, or you can simply type **rstrui** in the search box.

Whatever method you choose will bring up the System Restore dialog box that gives you some helpful information. Select the Next button to get a list of restore points. Most of the time you will be using the most recent restore point to get your system working again. Focus your attention on the Description list. This can give you an important indication of what went wrong. Did your problem begin after installing a Critical Update, a backup operation, or a new free-ware program that you couldn't resist?

When you apply System Restore the system creates another restore point so you can undo the change if your problem isn't fixed. You can't undo System Restore however, if you use it in safe mode. But you can run System Restore again and select a different restore point.

Restore points are saved until the disk space Windows allocates to the utility is used up. Then the oldest restore points are deleted as new ones are needed. The easiest way to delete all previous restore points is to turn System Restore off, and then turn it back on again. Don't worry about running out of space.

Many computer problems can be traced to sloppy programs written by people who don't know enough about proper programming techniques to get their utilities published by reliable vendors. It's surprising how many problems are generated by faulty uninstall tools. There are many sound free-ware offerings out in cyberspace, but don't use them unless they come tested and approved by a trusted source like Smart Computing.

FAST WAY TO UPDATE OR INSTALL FREE SOFTWARE

EASY AND FAST WAY TO UPDATE OR INSTALL FREE SOFTWARE

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; Radio & Talk Show Host.

WEBSITES:

<http://ninite.com>

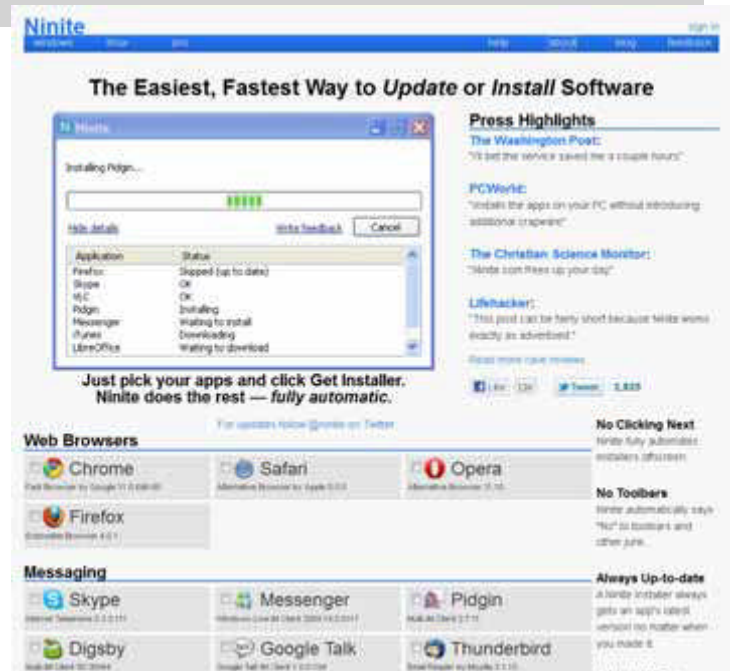
<http://ninite.com/linux>

<http://allmyapps.com>

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/quick-way-install-dozens-free-apps.htm>

Introduction A regular reader of this column suggested that I write about a free service that can automatically install and update the most popular freeware programs available. She recommended Ninite, but I was also familiar with a competitive service from AllMyApps. While both have comprehensive listings of free software, AllMyApps also includes links to some commercial software applications, so I would have to give the edge to Ninite when it comes to the mass installation of free software.

About, Setup, Usage San Francisco based Ninite (ninite.com) offers about 85 of the most widely used free Windows programs which can be selectively installed without any intervention by the user once the programs have been selected from the Ninite list. To implement the Ninite service, the user simply checks the software titles desired, and downloads the small installer that automates the install process. The automated installer installs all of the selected programs without any intervention; there is no "next" to click, and questionable optional items, such as toolbars, are automatically refused during the installation process. The freeware files downloaded and installed by Ninite are always up to date with the latest versions available. What is especially helpful and useful is that the single installer which is downloaded remembers which programs were selected, and rerunning the installer which was originally downloaded will automatically check for the latest versions and updates, and install them; there is no need to re-download a new installer unless additional programs are selected, or previously selected programs are no longer desired. The Ninite installer can identify the operating system of the computer, and intelligently install 32 or 64-bit versions as appropriate.



Since most of the freeware programs are multi-lingual, the programs offer a selection of languages during the install process; Ninite will identify the chosen language on the computer, and install the software with the correct language option. It is not necessary to create an account on the Ninite website, and no signup is required to make full use of the services. For business and other commercial users with a large number of computers to maintain, Ninite offers a "Pro" version for a mere 20 cents per computer per month, which will transparently maintain the free programs on the covered computers, but the Pro version is not necessary for home users who use the free installer. The Ninite website at ninite.com is very intuitive and easy to use; the page is divided up into categories of free software, and all the user needs to do is check the box adjacent to the selected programs, and then download the customized installer at the bottom of the page. The downloaded installer does all of the work with no intervention required of the user.

Software Categories The categories of free software available on the Ninite website are Web Browsers, Messaging, Media, Runtimes, Imaging, Documents, Security, File Sharing, Other, Utilities, Compression and Developer Tools; each category contains from two to fifteen programs, all selectable by check box.

WEB BROWSERS For those who would like to try or use multiple internet browsers, Ninite offers Google's Chrome, Firefox, Apple's Safari and Opera.

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FAST WAY TO UPDATE OR INSTALL FREE SOFTWARE

(Continued from page 15)

As with all Ninite categories, any one, any combination, or all can be automatically downloaded and installed with the Ninite installer. As stated earlier, that same installer can be rerun to automate the update process, insuring that the user is getting the latest updates and versions available. Similar Ninite service is available for all of the other categories listed.

MESSAGING Many people use a variety of messaging, and Ninite can selectively install any or all of several messaging products including Skype (Internet Telephone), Windows Live Messenger, Pidgin (supports multiple instant messaging clients), Digsby (supports multiple instant messaging clients), Google Talk, Thunderbird Email Reader, AIM (AOL Instant Messenger) and the Yahoo! IM Client.

MEDIA The media category includes 15 media utilities, including iTunes, Hulu (internet TV), VLC (most widely used video and audio player which plays almost all known formats), Winamp, and QuickTime.

RUNTIMES Ninite can help to keep the popular "runtimes" (programs used to run other programs) up to date on the users' computer, and include such runtimes as Java, Flash, Silverlight, and .Net.

IMAGING Anyone who may need to view or edit digital images in a variety of formats can select Microsoft's Paint.NET, Google's Picasa, GIMP, IrfanView (my personal favorite that can also play all video and audio files with the "AllPlugIns" option) and a variety of other image editors and viewers.

DOCUMENTS People often find that they need a multiplicity of document utilities in order to open, view or edit a variety of documents, and Ninite obliges by offering a wide assortment of document software. Among the selection are a trial version of Microsoft Office 2007, OpenOffice (reads and writes almost all office documents, including Microsoft office), LibreOffice (my choice that can (read and write almost all office documents, including Microsoft office), and several PDF writers that can create PDF documents from almost any program that can print files.

SECURITY Readers of this column may be aware that I am tenacious about security, and have layered security on all of my computers. The selection of free security software included on Ninite are among the most popular available, and includes Microsoft Security essentials, Avast, AVG, MalwareBytes (on every computer that I use), Ad-Aware, Spybot

Search and Destroy, and SuperAntispyware (my favorite and on every computer that I use).

FILE SHARING Users who are engaged in file sharing (a possibly dangerous online activity) may find that uTorrent and eMule will serve them well.

OTHER The "Other" category on Ninite includes several miscellaneous but useful free utilities including Dropbox (online backup and file sync utility), Evernote (online notes), Google Earth, password managers, file search utilities, and the Mozy online backup service.

UTILITIES Ninite offers 16 assorted utilities, including the very popular CCleaner (disk cleaner with additional utilities), Defraggler (hard drive defragmenting), Recuva (file undelete and recovery), Revo Uninstaller, Glary System Utilities (comprehensive computer maintenance tools) ninite.com/linux and several other useful utilities.

COMPRESSION While recent versions of Windows can handle the common "zip" compressed file format, there are many other compression formats in wide use that Windows cannot natively process. Ninite offers 7-Zip (a popular free compression/ decompression utility that can handle almost all compression formats), and a trial version of the commercial WinZip.

DEVELOPER TOOLS Other useful free utilities available in the Ninite Developer Tools" category are programming tools, FileZilla (FTP client), Notepad++ (text editor that can open and edit many file formats), and some other utilities.

LINUX Ninite is not just for Windows, as it has a similar listing of 17 free programs for those using the Linux operating system, at ninite.com/linux. Just like the Windows version, checking the boxes and downloading the installer simplifies and automates the software installation process for Linux users.

Conclusion With a fine, free, service like Ninite, it is easy for any PC or Linux user to have the most popular free software programs on his computer, and keep them updated.
Thanks Ninite!

Short Circuits...zzzt!

Card of the Realm. Our very own City of Tempe has installed sleek plastic parking meters that accept debit cards. The small digital screens provide details similar to the information on old-style meters, such as how much it costs to park. After a 90-day trial, the meters will be evaluated on usage and efficiency. If results are positive, up to 540 meters will be installed throughout downtown. The minimum charge to use the credit-card option is \$1.50, which pays for one hour. Purists may still use quarters, dimes, and nickels. Georgann Yara, *Arizona Republic*, June 3, 2011.

Outrageous Fortune? Authorities in Washington state say they're arrested a teenage girl for allegedly shooting her dad with an arrow after he took her cell-phone away. A Mason County detective says the man told officers that his 15-year-old daughter used a hunting bow to shoot him after he grounded her and took the phone. The local television station reports he was airlifted from the rural, forested Tahuya area to a Medical Center in Seattle and is currently listed in serious condition. The detective the girl fled into woods behind her home with the bow and arrows but a SWAT team surrounded her and arrested her for investigation of first-degree assault. *Associated Press*, May 26, 2011



Whatever it Takes. Delaware highway officials say a portable road-message sign was hacked to read "Live nudes ahead" instead of advising motorists about a coming road closure near Greenville. A Department of Transportation spokeswoman said that the computerized sign is password-protected, but the contractor that owns the sign was using a password that was easy for his staff to remember, and apparently too easy to guess. The password was reset. But the sign effectively slowed motorists. *Associated Press*, May 21, 2011.

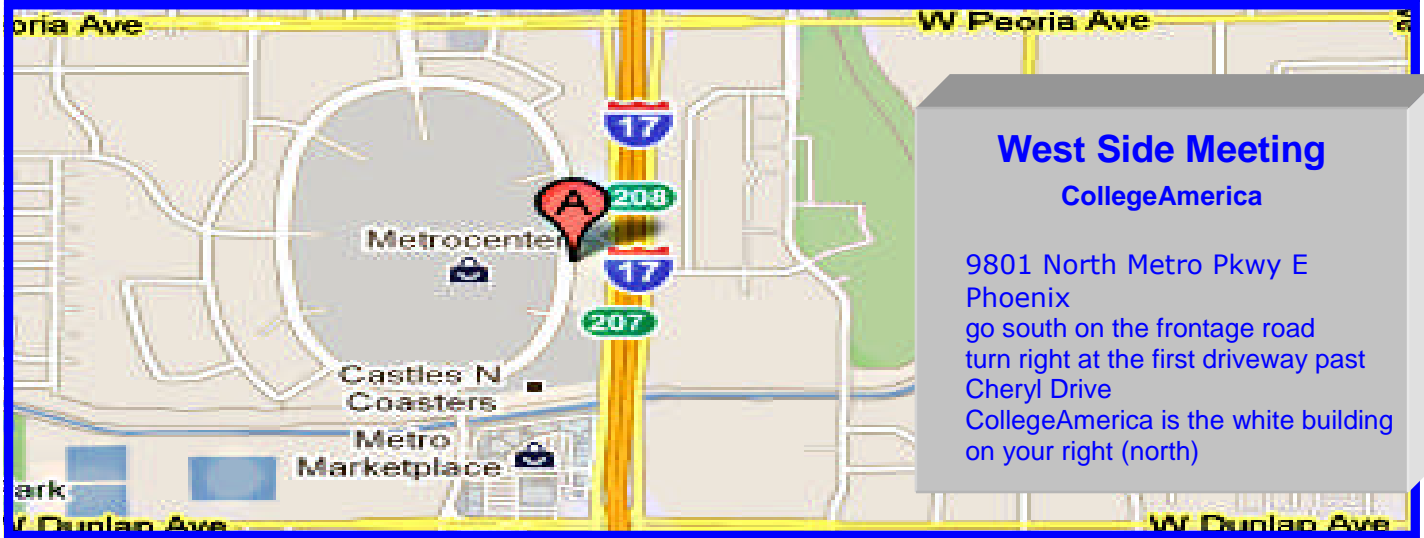


"If you didn't have Facebook when you were a kid, how did you know who your friends were?"

The Monkey and a Jar. Des Moines police say a burglar cut a hole into the roof of a restaurant, dropped down for some loot and escaped through the same hole. According to a Des Moines television station, the theft occurred overnight Wednesday at a Vietnamese restaurant. Police say the burglar got \$200 from a cash register but apparently couldn't get back out of the building with a big-screen TV from the restaurant. The front and back doors remained locked. *Associated Press*, June 2, 2011.

These items are based on articles from the noted sources and have been adapted by the Editor.

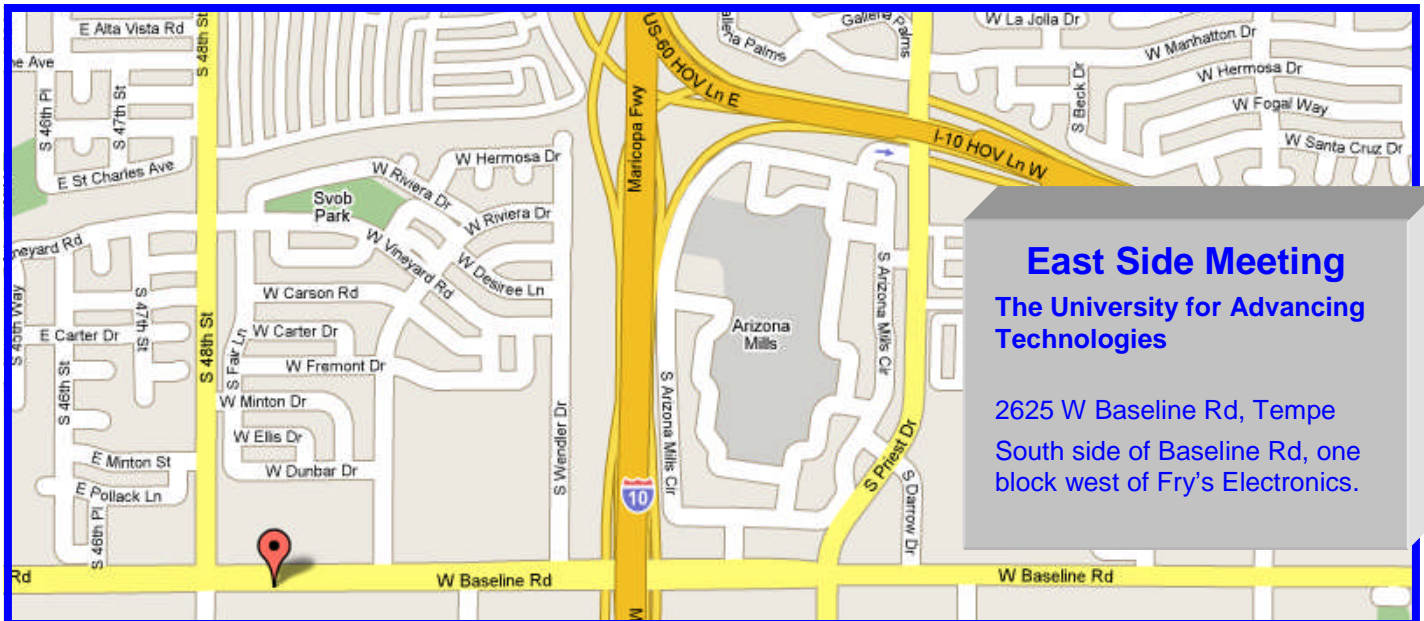
HOW TO GET THERE



West Side Meeting

CollegeAmerica

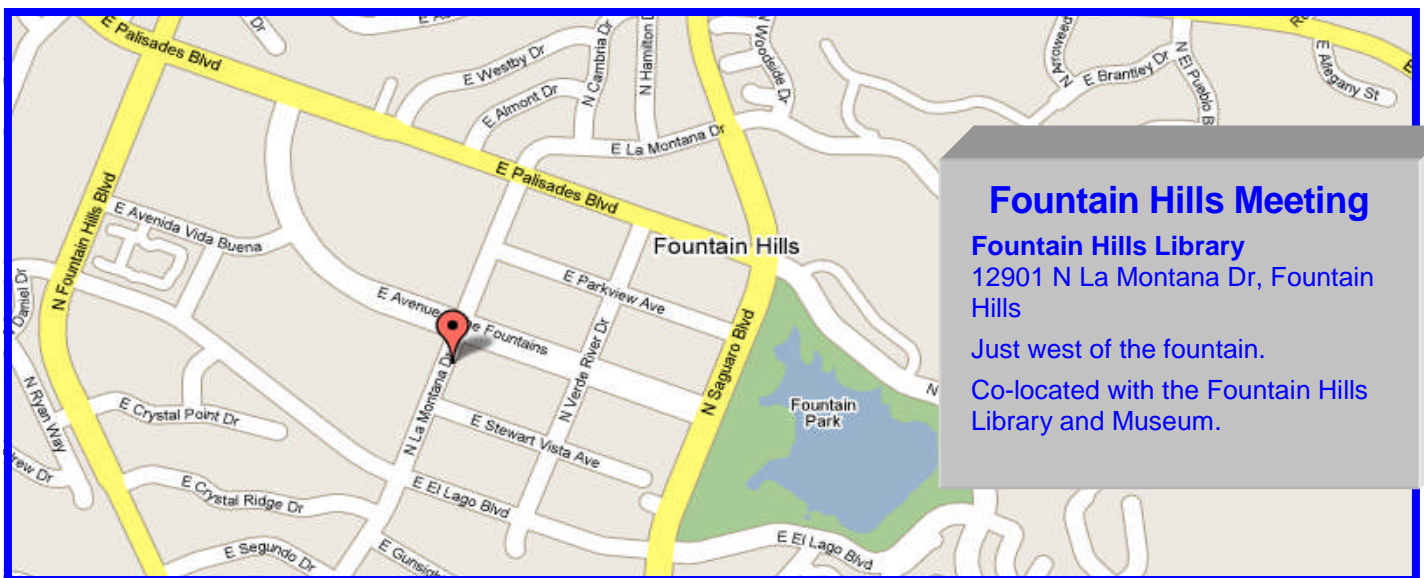
9801 North Metro Pkwy E
 Phoenix
 go south on the frontage road
 turn right at the first driveway past
 Cheryl Drive
 CollegeAmerica is the white building
 on your right (north)



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

First: (Print Legibly) _____ 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

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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Phoenix, AZ 85011-7127



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June 2011

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

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