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Steering Committee:

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

NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side.....Tuesday, July 14

CollegeAmerica, 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy, Phoenix

East Side .Wednesday, July 15

University of Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe

(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

Fountain Hills ..Thurs, July 16

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

**This month's presentation is on Spreadsheets.
Lo Hardman is the presenter.**

**Check our Website at www.PhoenixPCUG.org
to verify subject matter and time changes .**

ALL meetings!

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THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

The topic for this month's presentation is Spreadsheets. Lo Hardman will be the presenter. All I know about spreadsheets would fit in the point of a needle so there will be lots of information for me. We are still looking for additional topics to add to our list of presentation topics.

Speaking of presentations, I would like some feedback on last month's presentation about Windows File Systems. Did you find it boring, informative, too informative, interesting or What? Your comments will help us give better presentations in the future. We receive only a few comments about our presentations so, here is your chance! We are listening,

president@phoenixpcug.org.

This quarter's Executive Board Meeting has been delayed a week so there will not be enough time to include news of the meeting. A report of the meeting will be in next month's Newsletter. Summer months are slow news months so my report is small this month.

Dean

SIG (Special Interest Groups)

GENERAL INTEREST:

Chuck Lewis leads this SIG.

At present it is on hiatus

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY:

Bill Funk leads this SIG

At CollegeAmerica

DIGITAL VIDEO:

David Yamamoto leads this SIG.

Meets: After Photography Sig.

Both on Summer hiatus

FROM YOUR EDITOR

This month we introduce a new column to our Newsletter by Joe Shipley. Joe is a longtime member, and was for a long period of time our Treasurer. He has also given the group some memorable presentations and [contributed articles to the Newsletter from 1995 – 2008 on a monthly basis](#).

Joe is a computer consultant, independent network administrator, builds custom computers, trains users on software, and sells software and hardware in Mesa, AZ. You can reach Joe at joeship@cox.net. Let him know if you enjoyed his column.

His Computer Corner is on page 9.

If you look across to page 3, you will see the results of our Presentation Topics Survey. As Dean points out we are hoping members will continue to let us know what presentation subjects are meaningful to them.



Last month we ran an article on Google's Android Operating System. We predicted a google operating system would become an important rival to Microsoft's Windows. As you can see above "Drudge" is of a like mind.

Google reports it will have two operating systems this Fall. Chrome OS and Android OS. More about this in future Newsletters.

Bill Aulepp

PRESENTATION TOPICS

Presentation Topic suggestions.

From all meetings

FIRST (The most votes)

Spreadsheets

Windows 7

Windows File System XP / Vista

Global Positioning (GPS)

SECOND

Various Browsers and mobile browsers

Printer Maintenance

E-Mail clients

Website construction

Re-inking cartridges

Paintshop Pro (or other)

THIRD

Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS)

Software Drivers

FOURTH

Computer Aided Design (CAD)

Financial Applications

Hands-On PC lab

FIFTH

Virtual PC

Power Management

OTHER SUBJECTS

added by members as additional subjects.

Multi printers, Scanners and Fax Machines

Wireless Printers

Restoring Files lost on a crashed Hard Drive

Raid setup and use

Creating a boot drive

Skype

Power Point and Access

External HD setup and use

Online Backups

Making CDs and DVDs

FIFTH (continued)

Cadd or Vissio

Health, WebMD

Old and New PC parts, Forums, Techtips

Various Utility Applications

Sandboxie

Flight simulators

Desk Top Publishing

SIXTH

Robotics

Microsoft MSDN, EDU, Technet

Computer Magazine Articles

Shop Talk

Mobile Devices

Google Projects and applications

USB / Firewire Ports

Spinrite (grc.com)

PC Partsw forums techtips

Microsoft technet

AutoHotKey

Pen Devices

Video stripping, streaming, and saving

Fighting Spam and Malware

Geographic Information System (GIS)

Laptop Batteries

DVR to DVD processing

Ham Radio

Photo Processing

Video Editing

Networking

IE Explorer, Word Pad

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map - page 18)

- Tuesday, July 14, 2009
- 6:00 PM Steering Committee
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation on Spreadsheets.

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map - page 18)

- Wednesday, July 15, 2009
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation on Spreadsheets.

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

- Thursday, July 16, 2009
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- Followed by Presentation on Spreadsheets.

SIG MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map - page 18)

- Digital Photography Sig
- Followed by: Digital Video Sig
- On hiatus for summer

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Library (see map—page 18)

- General Sig Meeting is also on hiatus

CREATING A PDF

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Someday, all information will be electronic. In the meantime, paper documents—such as real estate agreements, loan applications, and product spec sheets—will continue to thrive.

In 1992, Adobe (www.adobe.com) unveiled a new way to handle any document, called PDF (Portable Document Format). The idea, which Dr. John Warnock proposed in 1991, was to create a highly portable format for the Web that retains the original formatting. You can share a PDF with anyone, print them on your local computer, and archive PDFs for long-term storage. For example, if you use Microsoft Word along with the right tools, you can create a PDF and send the document to any other user, regardless of whether they use Word.

A PDF is comparable to a photograph: It's great to have the image in physical form for a photo album, but you can also scan a photo into your PC. Once you do, it takes on an electronic form, but the original image doesn't change—you still see the smiling faces of your kids or that winding mountain path. Similarly, a PDF can use fonts of different styles and sizes, and it can contain photos, text layout, and clip art. A PDF solves a common problem: There are hundreds of file formats on the Web and on your PC, but not every program can read those formats. While a PDF often looks like a document you would print, you can choose to read it online and save a few trees (and some printer ink) in the process.

Reading A PDF File

Microsoft Word 2007 supports an Adobe add-in that lets you save your documents as PDFs.

A free program called Adobe Reader (get.adobe.com/reader/) lets you read PDF files. The latest version at press time, Adobe Reader 9.1, supports Windows 2000/ XP/Vista and Mac OS X 10. On the Web, look for documents with

a .PDF extension. It's usually best to download the PDF to your computer because a PDF file is sometimes quite large (more than a megabyte). PDF files that do not contain photos or a lot of rich formatting are smaller. In that case, you can usually just

click the link. The latest Web browsers, such as Google Chrome (www.google.com/chrome), support PDFs from within the browser so you can click the file and view it without downloading it.

When you open a PDF in Reader, you can scroll through the document on-screen as though you are reading on the Web or in Word 2007. You can also use the search field (the box that says Find) to search for a term or even a string of text. You can also print the PDF, which retains all of the formatting you see on the screen. A PDF lets you zoom in on the document, and there's a hand icon you can use to "grab" a page and move it around. The Adobe Reader program is easy to use by design; it's primarily used for reading documents, so there are not that many advanced features to cause confusion.

Once you download a PDF, you can easily email it to another user. You simply compose a new message and attach the PDF file. You can also share PDF files by posting them on a Web site, such as Acrobat.com (more about Acrobat.com later). There are billions of PDF files in circula-

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***Microsoft Word 2007
supports an Adobe
add-in that lets you
save your documents as
PDFs.***

SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE - SUPPORT



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

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

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



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MEMBERS ASK

Question: Where can I easily find File Extension information?

Short Answer:

www.fileinfo.com

www.sharpened.net/helpcenter/extensions.php

www.file-extensions.org

There are many online sites that have extension info. The listed sites have fairly comprehensive listings. Some not only give the purpose but, what applications use and read them. Google for others.

Long Answer:

The filename dot extension came long before Microsoft Windows and MSDOS and is carried on to this day. The 8.3 format was used in the earliest days of the personal computer. Eight digit names were given to identify each unique file and dot three digit extension name to identify the type of content in the file. A wild card (*) was assigned to signify 'all' and a (?) assigned to replace an unknown character in a name. Temporary files used a (\$). I doubt if anyone, at the time, thought there would ever be a need for anything longer.

Do the math. If only numeric characters are used, a 3 digit extension could have 1000 unique file types. If only alpha characters are used, there could be 17576 types. But, if only alpha-numeric characters are used, 46656 unique file types.

Normally the extension name should not be changed. Many applications will not recognize an

associated file if the extension is changed. However, some extension names can be changed without harm to the file's function. For example: sometimes my video editor will save a movie in .M2V format which some players do not recognize. This file is in reality an .MPG file without the audio. So, I can change M2V to MPG and the player then plays the movie without sound. Understanding file extensions can sometimes be of great assistance.

Check out the websites I have listed. There are more I have not checked out. Have fun.

Dean

PPCUG's Ride Sharing Program

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

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

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

Able to Provide a Ride?

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

BUSINESS CARDS



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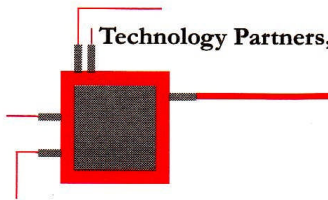
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For questions please contact David Yamamoto 602 418-1249 or write to above.

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

THE COMPUTER CORNER

The Computer Corner

*by Joe Shipley with a copyrighted excerpt
by Scott Spanbauer from Windows Secrets*

So You Can't Open that File?

I subscribe to the philosophy that "if it's not broken, don't fix it!" With respect to computing, I still prefer to use Windows XP Pro, Microsoft Office 2003, and a host of other programs that are several years old, but still work just fine. It's a shame that software developers try to force us to buy the newest and best; but let's face it--- we still primarily write letters and email, do spreadsheets, surf the Internet and create presentations. And most of us get along just fine doing things the way we have done them for years.

So what do you do when you get a Word document from a friend written on a newer computer and you can't open it? Or when the same thing happens with files created in newer versions of Excel and other Microsoft Office components?

For several years now, Microsoft Office has been using its 2007 productivity suite. This includes Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, Visio, Publisher, Access and more. When Microsoft introduced this suite of programs, they changed the default format in which files for these applications are saved. For example, the default format for a Word 2007 document is a file that has the extension ".docx," not the ".doc" so many of us are used to. When you receive a ".docx" file and try to open it in your Word 2003, or Word 2000, you get an error telling you Word does not recognize the file format.

Not to worry! Millions of us have been in the same boat. Enough so that Microsoft has resolved the issue by developing a 28 MB file: **FileFormatConverters.exe**. You can find this file on Microsoft's web site at: <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=941b3470-3ae9-4aee-8f43-c6bb74cd1466&displaylang=en> or by doing a search for it. Once you download and install it, it will let you open files created in applications found in the Office 2007 Suite in their respective predecessors in the 2003 Suite.

If you do a search on "File Format Converters" at Microsoft's website, you can find converters to go

from the Office 2000 products to the Office 2003 products. These converters might help you get from the 20th into the 21st centuries.

But if you are the sender of a file that was created in a newer version of Office than your recipient uses, there's a way to resolve this issue going backwards. When you save a file using the "File- Save As" option, one choice you have is to open the drop down list and select other file types. If your default document type is ".docx" and your friends tell you they can't open your files, you can choose the "*.doc" option, which is the format used by Word 2003 and earlier versions. If *all* your friends tell you they can't read your files, you can select an option in Word making "doc" the default file format. Then all your documents will be in "doc" format unless you do a "Save As" to a different format.

The process mentioned above also works for Excel and the other applications in the Office 2007 Suite.

If you install FileFormatConverters, you'll then have the ability to use the coverter to create files in Word 2003 and convert them to Word 2007 format using the "File- Save As" method mentioned above. I hope this comes in useful for you and saves that call to Tech Support!

What I'm Reading . . .

In my line of work, I do a lot of reading and re-searching to solve problems. And sometimes I come across things that are so well written and to the point that, truth be told, it's easier to present them as I see them than for me to summarize.

One of the few electronic newsletters I look for weekly is a publication called Windows Secrets (<http://www.windowssecrets.com>). The Editorial Director of Windows Secrets is Brian Livingston, author of nine Windows Secrets books, all of which are terrific.

Having received permission to reprint an excerpt from Windows Secrets, the June 18, 2009 issue, I present here some thoughts by Scott Spanbauer. The full article can be found at this link: <http://windowssecrets.com/comp/090618>. What I liked about what Scott says follows.

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SECURITY AND DELETING FILES

Security and Deleting Files: A Common Misconception
by Bob Schwartz, Member of HAL-PC, Texas

www.hal-pc.org

bobx(at)hal-pc.org.

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

You have just deleted a file from your hard drive. It's gone, isn't it? Sorry! It is still there.

You want to clean up your hard drive, so you format it. It is now clean. Nothing is on it anymore, right? Nope! Everything is still there, except for the file directory.

How can this be? Doesn't Delete mean remove? Doesn't Format clean the disk? Each file system - has a file directory which records the file name and it's location.

To delete a file, the disk system only alters the file's name in the file directory, usually by changing the first letter of the name. Formatting goes one step further, it just empties the file directory. Neither does anything to the files on the disk! They remain.

To clean a drive, either overwrite the whole drive or the unused space. The most common way to clean drives, especially older drives, is to write fixed or random data obliterate the old files.

Fortunately, all ATA drives over 15-20 GB produced since 2001 have an internal drive command that will clean the drive sufficiently that it will meet DOD requirements. At the University of California at San Diego's Center for Magnetic Recording Research (CMRR) you can download their free program for Secure Erase, entitled "HDDerase.exe". Its use meets U.S. Government requirements for disk erasure. Secure Erase should provide the greatest peace of mind. Internet Commentary suggests it is even better than mechanically shredding the disks.

If you have a good machine with good software that you would like to pass on to some else, and you don't have all the original disks - remove personal information. I suggest this approach:

1. "Delete" the contents of: all the "My" folders - My Documents, My Pictures, My Music; Recent; Temp or Temporary folders; Recycle Bin; Cookies; Downloads; and the entire folders for Quicken and Tax preparation software.
2. Clean your Registry of all personal data. For XP, go to Start/Run, type regedit and press Enter. Go to edit and click on find. Enter your last name, click on find next.

When the first entry is found, go to edit and select modify. Delete your name (it should be in color). Depressing the space bar may clear it. Go back to edit and click on find next, etc. Keep on until you get a message that you have reached the end. Then repeat the above with your first name, then your street, your phone number, bank name, broker name, and anything else of a personal nature that you used.

3. Find and download a registry cleaner. Use it to remove unnecessary items from the registry. Ccleaner is an example.

4. Defragment the drive. This condenses the files and moves them toward the beginning of the drive.

5. Locate and download a wipe application such as bcwipe. Use it to wipe (overwrite) all unused space.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Before editing your "registry", back it up first, please. This should effectively sanitize your disk, leaving it clean, safe and usable.

Loss of personal information and the risk of identity theft is a risk for you. For a business, the loss of personal, financial, or medical data may subject it to risk from recent laws, both federal and state.

I have been repairing or rehabilitating older machines as a hobby to give them a second life. There are many good machines and plenty of worthy recipients. If there is good software worth keeping, remove all personal data. If the software is not worth keeping, then wipe the disk clean to install an operating system and applications.

Removing the hard drive before you dispose of an old machine is not a solution, unless you plan to use it in your new machine, or store it permanently - you still ultimately have to sanitize it.

Programs available, free or fee, include: Secure Erase (mentioned above), Secure Delete, Wipe Drive, Acronis Privacy Expert, East-Tec Eraser, East-Tec Dispose Secure, Eraser, SysInternals SDelete, Darik's Boot and Nuke (dban), OverWrite, Wipe, Kill Disk, BCWipe, and Autoclave. This list is NOT exhaustive. And, you have to determine which is suitable to (1) wipe the entire drive or (2) wipe only the unused space.

Bottom line is, when you give away or dispose of a used computer, either clean the hard drive yourself or give the

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TALES FROM THE TRENCHES

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We All Believe In Groupthink

You probably already know about Google's plans to take over the world. The ubiquitous "search" company already delivers YouTube, Gmail, Maps, an office suite, and an Internet browser. Believe it or not, however, there's one powerful piece of the Google Empire that you probably aren't using enough. Like the rest of the company's offerings, it can make life a lot easier. No, I'm not talking about Google Babysitter or GCar-Wash—though both would be nice, wouldn't they? I'm talking about Google Groups, and it's a powerful tool for helping solve tech support issues. The best thing is, you probably already know how to use it.

You may be wondering what I'm talking about. Just as Google's famous search engine scours and indexes the World Wide Web, collecting billions of links to Web pages all over the world, Google Groups does the same for the world of newsgroups. Online message boards go way back before the Web, when BBS (bulletin board systems) and Usenet roamed the earth, and no one could imagine a good reason for putting anything but text online. Newsgroups contain ongoing discussion threads between their users, some of which can span years and provide assistance to people reviewing the conversation long after it ends. Because newsgroups tended to be a tool of technology folks, a side benefit is that they often focus on technology issues. So you're likely to find plenty of discussion relevant to any technical problem you're experiencing.

Another nice thing is that Google Groups couldn't be easier to find. Just go to Google's main search page (www.google.com) and click More and then Groups. If you're looking to add a Favorite or Shortcut, you can go direct via groups.google.com. Enter your search terms (using all the same Boolean terms you apply to regular searches) and click Search Groups. Alternatively, you can run a regular Google search and then click the Groups link to see results for the same query across the discussion group universe. Click the assembled results for live or cached newsgroup posts, just as you do for Web links.

Of course, as with all things Google, there are plenty of ways to do more than just type in search terms and browse results. If you find a group focusing specifically on an issue you deal with often, subscribe to the group to keep a regular eye on what's going on. The Preferences link next to the Search box lets you select various languages to search in and control SafeSearch filtering. This is especially useful if you're interested in technical tips for amateur video editing and don't want to have to dodge all sorts of other, um, nontechnical discussion. You can also use the categories listed in the Explore Groups section on the main Google Groups page to browse newsgroups looking for just the right forum topic.

Just like a discussion board or file-sharing site, you can only lurk so long, gathering community wisdom, before you start to feel like a leech. At some point, you'll want to let people know that their tips worked, or you'll want to record your own solution for the next poor sap that comes along. Moreover, if you can't find a solution that

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NEWSLETTER POLICIES

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The Phoenix PC Users Group News, a newsletter, is published monthly, with article submission deadlines occurring the 29th of each month. This publication is mailed with the intention of reaching members before the monthly meeting of issue date. The Group is not responsible for lost or destroyed newsletters, other than replacing an issue lost in the mail. Notify the group Membership Coordinator at least four weeks in advance of change of address when moving.

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Submissions to the "News" should be in MS Word, RTF or unformatted text.

Articles, photos, screen shots may be e-mailed over the Internet directly to the editor at:

editor@PhoenixPCUG.org

Please include the author's name, address, phone number and e-mail address on the first lines of the article.

All materials submitted will be considered for inclusion in the "News", but the Editor reserves the right to edit as necessary, to maintain standards of literacy, grammar, and length requirements. No materials will be returned unless arrangements are made in advance.

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MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS !

CREATING A PDF

(Continued from page 5)

tion today, and there's a good chance a friend or co-worker already has Adobe Reader installed or can open the file directly within a Web browser.

Creating A PDF

Knowing how to read and share PDF files is one thing. Yet, creating a PDF provides even more control over how you use rich documents. For example, you can create a document in Word for a birthday party—with a big headline, colored balloons, and photos—and create a PDF file that you can share by email. Or, let's say you receive a loan application by email that you need to sign. You can print it out, sign it, scan it back into the computer, and then create a PDF file that you can send back to the banker. You can create a PDF file from just about any program that lets you print, including spreadsheet programs, image-editing tools, accounting programs, and even your Web browser.

Adobe offers the best tools for creating PDF files, and no wonder, considering it created the format. The most comprehensive tool is called Acrobat 9 (www.adobe.com/products/acrobat). The program comes in three versions: Acrobat Standard, Acrobat Pro, and Acrobat Pro Extended. Each version adds a few extra powerful features.

Once you use the Adobe PDF option in the Print dialog box, you can name the PDF file.

Once you purchase and install Acrobat, the easiest way to create a PDF is through the Print dialog box of any program. For example, let's say you want to make a PDF of an Apple iTunes playlist so you can send it to a buddy who has the same audio files. Once you create the playlist and print, you can select the Adobe PDF option for your printer and save the file as a PDF.

You can follow this process to create a PDF in any application because the Adobe PDF option is always available when you print.

Of course, Acrobat provides many additional features. One of the most useful is a form creation wizard. Essentially, it's a way to make online forms. For example, let's say you want to create a loan application. You want to send a PDF to an applicant, have that person fill out the form online using the PDF, and then send back the completed application. You first create the original document in Word or Adobe Photoshop (or any program you want). Then, in Acrobat,

click the Create button and then select the PDF From File option. Open the document you created. Click the Forms menu and select Start Form Wizard. Select the An Existing Electronic Document option and click Next. Select the Use The Current Document option and click Next. Now, you can click the Add New Field button on the top left of the screen and add form fields. When you're done, you can save the document as a PDF file and send it by email. The recipient can fill out the online form, save it, and send it back to you with the completed information.

Acrobat also supports an Adobe service called Acrobat.com, in which you can post and share PDF files. There's also a new feature called PDF Portfolio, which lets you create a magazine-like portfolio that contains a series of PDF files. The most advanced features in Acrobat allow you to work with CAD (computer-aided design) programs, convert 2D documents into 3D files, and embed video files into a PDF.

Third-Party PDF Creation Tools

Creating a PDF is a simple process: You just select Print and choose the Adobe PDF option. Adobe is not the only company that makes PDF creation tools. In fact, ever since Adobe made



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CREATING A PDF

Continued from page 13)

PDF an open standard last year, several tools have become available for creating a PDF file.

One of the most popular tools is the Save As PDF add-in for Microsoft Office 2007. To download the add-in, go to www.microsoft.com/downloads and search for Save As PDF. Click the link titled "2007 Microsoft Office Add-In: Microsoft Save As PDF." Click the Download button and then run the installer program. Now, when you open a document in Word or any other Office application, click the Office button in the upper-left corner. Click Save As and select the PDF option. Choose the location to save the PDF file, enter a name for the file, and then click Publish. Another popular tool for creating a PDF is called CutePDF (www.cutepdf.com).

This program works the same as the Office Save As PDF add-in, except that it will appear in the Print dialog box for any program, not just Microsoft Office. CutePDF Writer is a free program and requires that you install the Writer application (www.cutepdf.com/download/cutewriter.exe) and a PDF conversion tool called Converter (www.cutepdf.com/download/converter.exe).

***Creating a PDF is a simple process:
You just select Print and choose the
Adobe PDF option.***

Once installed, you can select CutePDF from the Print dialog box of any program. Just name the file and save the PDF.

PDFs open up a world of opportunity, especially once you start creating them yourself. You'll print documents less frequently and share richly formatted files that retain their formatting. And, who knows? Maybe PDFs will make printing a quaint, long-forgotten activity.

by John Brandon

SECURITY AND DELETING FILES

(Continued from page 10)

machine to someone you can trust who will do it for you. The comments and opinions here are wholly mine. I welcome alternative perspectives.

Bob Schwartz is a HAL-PC member, retired EE, 14 patents, technical writer, active in civic affairs: President, Brays Bayou Association.

TALES FROM THE TRENCHES

(Continued from page 11)

works, your next step is to ask for help from all of the nice people out there. That's when it's time to speak up. Most of the newsgroups linked from Google Group's search results, and all official Google-hosted groups, let you post replies to existing threads or create new discussion top

ics. Sometimes you need to become a registered user of whatever forum you're browsing, and some groups control membership more strictly than others (like political parties, but that's a different column). In any case, make a contribution every once in a while, and you'll make the whole newsgroup community a richer place.

The next time you're in a support pickle, think of that plucky little startup from Mountain View, CA. Sure, they can find you 80 gazillion Web sites about whatever topic piques your curiosity. When you need help solving specific problems, though, going along with the crowd can be good after all.

by Gregory Anderson

THE COMPUTER CORNER

(Continued from page 9)

By Scott Spanbauer

If you're thinking of skipping the next expensive Microsoft Office upgrade, you can begin preparing today for the move to a free Office-like suite or Web service.

A gradual and easy transition allows you to avoid any possible file incompatibilities, because you can still keep an old copy of Office available as a safety net.

I like almost everything about Microsoft Office except its price. Even so, like many people, I use only a fraction of the suite's features. I rely mostly on the basic formatting, spellcheck, grammar, and review features of Word, with an occasional Excel spreadsheet or PowerPoint slide thrown in for good measure. The rest of Office is bloatware to me. . . .

I stuck with the Microsoft behemoth all the way through Office 2003. To date, I've never felt a need for Office 2007. In recent years, meanwhile, upstart productivity applications have seduced me away from Microsoft's ubiquitous suite.

I started using the free, open-source OpenOffice.org suite on a daily basis several years ago to see whether it could really replace Office. Though OpenOffice's menu commands, dialog boxes, and settings often vary only slightly from those of the corresponding Microsoft Office applications, I found the switch to OpenOffice's Writer and Calc applications easy.

And because OpenOffice is free, I can install the program on every one of the PCs I use, whether it runs Windows, Linux, or OS X. You can get your copy — or copies — at the OpenOffice.org <http://download.openoffice.org/> . . .

Compatibility with Office file types remains a problem for OpenOffice and other Office alternatives. Before you make the switch, open your most important Office documents in the Office replacement of your choice to ensure that the files look and function as expected.

*OpenOffice opens and saves files in **.doc**, **.xls**,*

*and **.ppt** formats (among others), usually without a problem. In my experience, however, those documents may not always look and behave exactly as they do in Microsoft Office.*

Stick with standard Office file formats

You can minimize file-compatibility issues by standardizing on the most common file formats. By default, OpenOffice.org saves files in Open Document Format (ODF). Microsoft's by-the-book support for ODF, unfortunately, breaks some spreadsheet files, according to a recent ZDNet article.

<http://blogs.zdnet.com/BTL/?p=18317>

*OpenOffice reads and writes Office 2007's default **.docx** and **.xlsx** XML file formats. But the older **.doc** and **.xls** formats are still the ones most often used. I suggest that you make the classic Office formats your defaults in OpenOffice. To set **.doc** as the document default, for example, open any OpenOffice program and do the following:*

Step 1. Choose Tools, Options;

Step 2. Select General under Load/Save;

Step 3. Click Text Document under **Document type** in the **Default file format and ODF settings** section;

Step 4. Choose Microsoft Word 97/2000/XP in the **Always save as** drop-down menu and click OK.

*To make **.xls** the default worksheet format, open the same dialog box and follow the same steps, with the following differences:*

Step 1. Choose Spreadsheet under **Document type** in the **Default file format and ODF settings** section;

Step 2. Choose Microsoft Excel 97/2000/XP in the **Always save as** drop-down list and click OK. . . .

Stay cool during this hot summer!

By Scott Spanbauer

Joe Shipley, Owner of SMART IDEAS!, is a computer consultant, independent network administrator, builds custom computers, trains users on software, and sells software and hardware in Mesa, AZ. You can reach Joe at joeship@cox.net.

DRIVER QUERY

Driver Query Helps Resolve Driver Problems
 by Vinny La Bash, Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

www.spcug.org vlabash (at) comcast.net

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Anyone using Vista for any length of time knows that most of the common driver problems were resolved long ago. Advances in computer technology including removable devices however, have called attention to problems that may be caused by device drivers that are no longer needed, but still installed on the system. These drivers can become corrupt over time. If they become inadvertently enabled they can cause memory conflicts which under some circumstances could crash your system.

Most people beyond the novice level have some familiarity with Device Manager, but are usually not knowledgeable with its limitations. They know that Device Manager will allow a rollback to a previous version of a driver if problems are encountered, but few know that Device Manager has no way of keeping track of a device driver's history. This is important because you can't document

which version of a device driver is good and which version could cause problems.\

You can get around this limitation by using a command-line tool called Driver Query that will track the history of all the device drivers on your system. From the Start Menu, open Accessories, and activate the Command Prompt. Type driverquery.exe at the command line and you will see a list of all the device drivers with some basic information included. This list by itself won't do you much good. You need to use some command-line switches to get the information that you need. At the command prompt type:

```
DRIVERQUERY /FO:CSV /V > C:\ DRIVER-INFO .CSV
```

DRIVERQUERY is the primary command that tells the operating system to run the query. The /FO switch says you want the output to be formatted. CSV (Comma Separated Variable) tells Vista to format the output so it can be displayed in a spreadsheet.

/V (Verbose) tells the query to blab its head off and tell everything it knows about each driver in the system.

C:\ says to put the output file in the root (primary) directory of the primary drive where your operating system is installed. This makes the file easy to find in case you can't remember where you put it. DRIVERINFO.CSV is the name of the file with an old DOS style extension.

Module Name	Display Name	Description	Driver Type	Start Mode	State	Status	Accept Stop	Accept Pause	Paged I
ACPI	Microsoft ACPI Driver	Microsoft ACPI Driver	Kernel	Boot	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
adp94xx	adp94xx	adp94xx	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
adpahci	adpahci	adpahci	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
adpu160m	adpu160m	adpu160m	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
adpu320	adpu320	adpu320	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
AFD	Ancillary Function Driver for W	Ancillary Function Driver for W	Kernel	System	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
agp440	Intel AGP Bus Filter	Intel AGP Bus Filter	Kernel	Manual	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
aic78xx	aic78xx	aic78xx	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
aliide	aliide	aliide	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
amdide	amdide	amdide	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
AmdK8	AMD K8 Processor Driver	AMD K8 Processor Driver	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
arc	arc	arc	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
arcsas	arcsas	arcsas	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
aswFsBlk	aswFsBlk	aswFsBlk	File System	Auto	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
aswMonFlt	aswMonFlt	aswMonFlt	File System	Auto	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
aswRdr	aswRdr	aswRdr	Kernel	System	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
aswSP	avast! Self Protection	avast! Self Protection	Kernel	System	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
aswTdi	avast! Network Shield Support	avast! Network Shield Support	Kernel	System	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
AsyncMac	RAS Asynchronous Media Driv	RAS Asynchronous Media Driv	Kernel	Manual	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
atapi	IDE Channel	IDE Channel	Kernel	Boot	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
browser	Browser	Browser	File System	Manual	Running	OK	TRUE	FALSE	
BrFltLo	Brother USB Mass-Storage Lo	Brother USB Mass-Storage Low	Kernel	Manual	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
BrFltUp	Brother USB Mass-Storage Up	Brother USB Mass-Storage Up	Kernel	Manual	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
BrSend	Brother MFC Serial Port Interfa	Brother MFC Serial Port Interfac	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
BrSerWdm	Brother WDM Serial driver	Brother WDM Serial driver	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	
BrUsbMdm	Brother MFC USB Fax Only M	Brother MFC USB Fax Only Mo	Kernel	Disabled	Stopped	OK	FALSE	FALSE	

(Continued on page 17)

WEBTOUR

DRIVER QUERY

Free Spreadsheet Programs

July 2009

This month Web Tour complements our Spreadsheet Theme.

Possibly you think Microsoft Excel is the only capable spreadsheet software. Think again because you are wrong. There are quite a number of free/open-source spreadsheet programs that are good and compare favorably with Excel.

OpenOffice.org Calc <http://www.openoffice.org/product/calc.html>

OpenOffice.org Calc is a segment of the OpenOffice.org software package. It is similar to Microsoft Excel, with many similar features. Calc is capable of opening and saving spreadsheets in Microsoft Excel file format. It provides a number of features Excel does not include in the graphical area. Calc can convert spreadsheets to PDF files.

Gnumeric <http://projects.gnome.org/gnumeric/>

Gnumeric has Windows installers available. It is intended to be a free replacement for proprietary spreadsheet programs. Gnumeric's accuracy has helped it to establish itself for statistical analysis and other scientific tasks

SimpleSpreadsheet <http://www.simple-grouppware.de/cms/Spreadsheet/Home>

Simple Spreadsheet is a web-based spreadsheet program. It is released under the GNU General Public License, and is thus free software. It includes formulas, charts, formats, cell/row merging, cell locking, keyboard navigation, etc.

wikiCalc <http://www.softwaregarden.com/products/wikicalc/>

WikiCalc is a web application, created by Dan Bricklin who 27 years earlier created VisiCalc the first computer spreadsheet. It is currently in Version 1.0 and available for Windows, Mac and Linux/Unix.

(Continued from page 16)

You can name the file anything you want, but do end it with the CSV extension or you might confuse your spreadsheet when you try to open it.

After creating the file, open your spreadsheet, click the file open icon and in the File name: box type: C:\DRIVERINFO.CSV

By opening the file this way you don't have to get into DOS commands. You may, of course, use DOS if you feel Vista isn't complicated enough.

Your spreadsheet will resemble the illustration on the previous page. After expanding the columns you will have to scroll horizontally to see all the available information. The amount of information for each driver has greatly increased, but you still don't get the driver version. Tracking driver changes is possible if you run the query periodically and compare the Link Date column for changes. It's clunky and cumbersome, but it does the job.

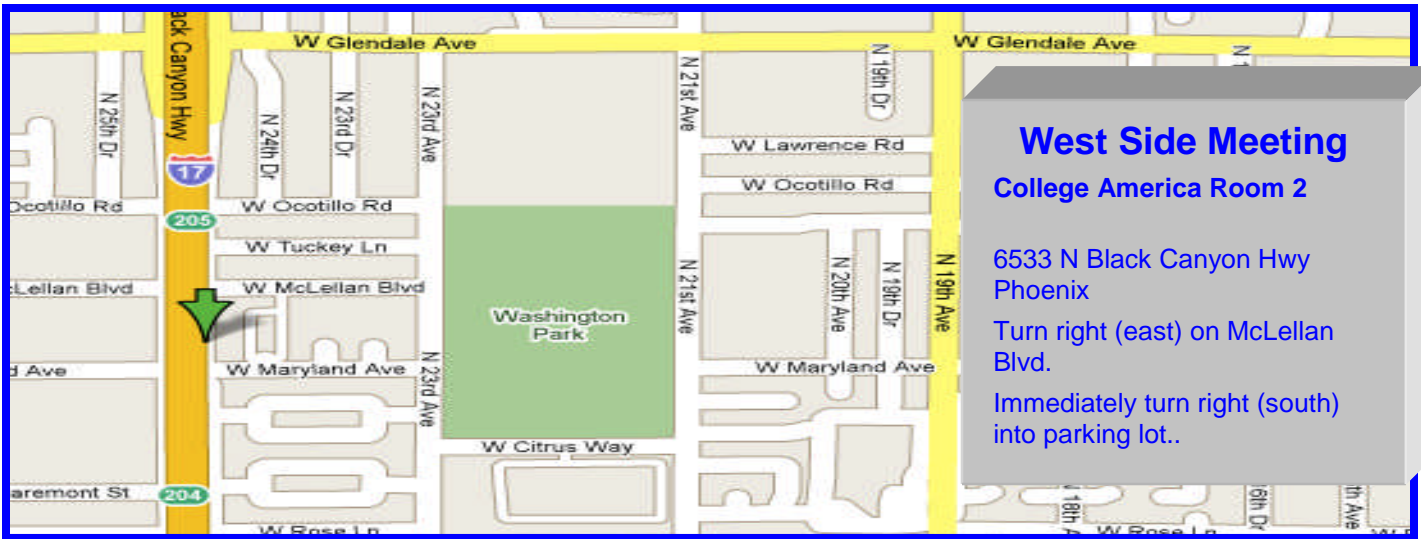
Another important piece of information that's missing is any data about whether or not the driver is signed. A signed driver is a device driver that includes a digital signature which is an electronic security mark that tells you who published the driver. It also indicates if the original software has been altered in any way. Signed drivers provide assurance that the software actually comes from the manufacturer and hasn't been changed.

This exercise is an excellent illustration of the laws of information availability.

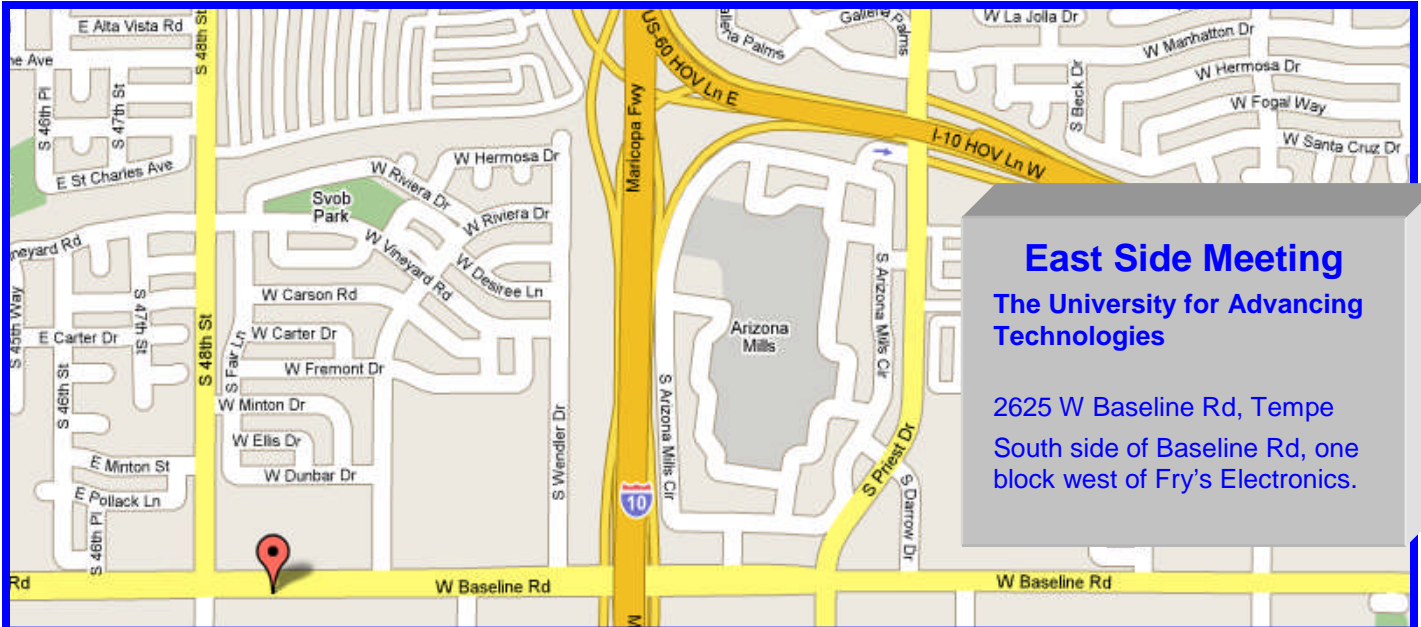
1. The information you have is not the information you want
2. The information you want is not the information you need.
3. The information you need you can't get.
4. The information you can get is either too expensive or too troublesome to obtain.

**HELP INCREASE OUR MEMBERSHIP.
BRING A GUEST TO THE NEXT MEETING.**

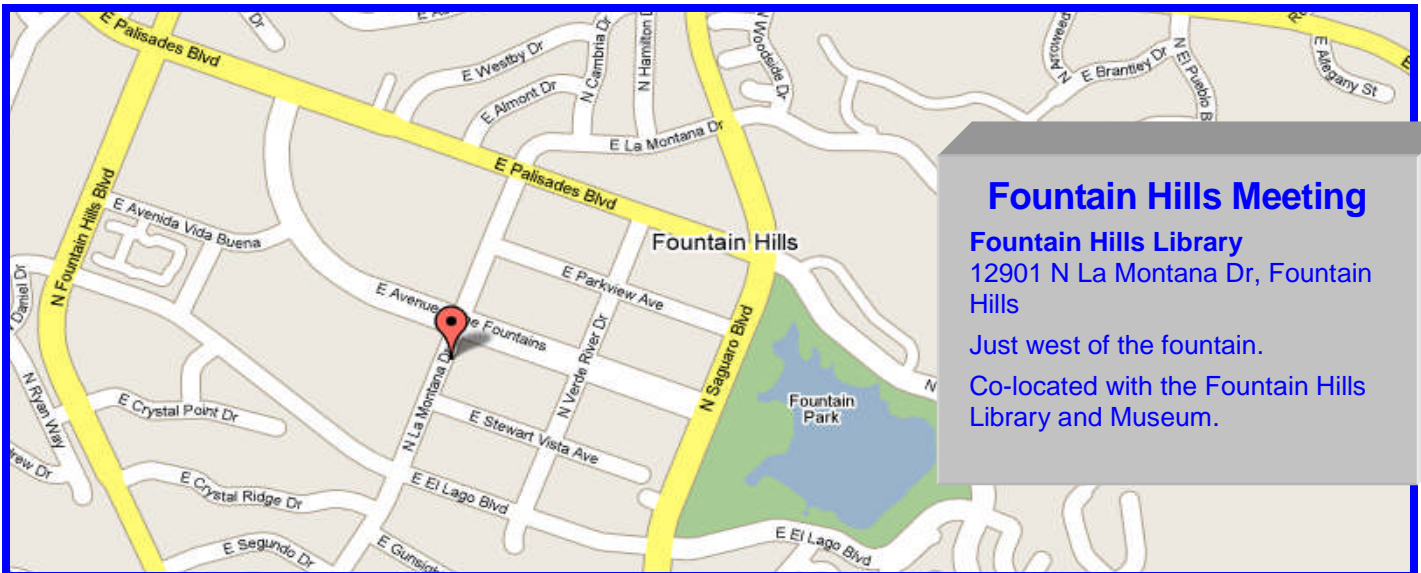
HOW TO GET THERE



West Side Meeting
College America Room 2
 6533 N Black Canyon Hwy
 Phoenix
 Turn right (east) on McLellan Blvd.
 Immediately turn right (south) into parking lot..



East Side Meeting
The University for Advancing Technologies
 2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe
 South side of Baseline Rd, one block west of Fry's Electronics.



Fountain Hills Meeting
Fountain Hills Library
 12901 N La Montana Dr, Fountain Hills
 Just west of the fountain.
 Co-located with the Fountain Hills Library and Museum.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

*DUES \$36 FOR YEAR.
 JAN 1, THROUGH DEC 31, 2009
 JULY DUES TO DEC 31, 2009 \$18*

Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

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

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Ext: _____

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

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

E-mail address: _____ Signature _____ Date ___/___/___

May the club share your e-mail address with other members only? Yes No

With club approved vendors? Yes No

Please do not share my e-mail address

Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one Yes No

Mail this completed form with payment to:

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 PMB101
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July 2009

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

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