

Who is Abby Stokes ? Read Below !



# NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory  
for your PC!*



## MAIN MEETINGS

**West Side.....Tue, Feb 14**

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

**East Side.....Wed, Feb 15**

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

**Fountain Hills.....Thu, Feb 16**

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

### Presentation this month:

A Special Presentation is planned for our Eastside Wednesday meeting at UAT. Our guest will be Abby Stokes. Abby has demystified computers for over 100,000 people. She has taught courses in basic computing and is the author of "Is This Thing On?" A Computer Handbook. She is a real pro and will provide a very entertaining evening. Tues & Thur we'll talk about Drop Box and intro to Google Docs.

For date and time changes, check our website: [phoenixpcug.org](http://phoenixpcug.org)

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### Steering Committee:

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

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## THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

### FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

#### Happy Centennial Arizona!

2012 is quite a year for us in Arizona, our centennial, February 14, 2012. Google "Arizona with Centennial, History, Historical Society, famous people, or name origin" to interesting web sites. Wyatt Earp, Cochise, Geronimo, Theodore Roosevelt; those early people would be astounded - our population growth, economics, education, business, communications, transportation, etc. We take so many things for granted now. Remember 4.77 MHz CPUs? Now Quad Cores!

Likewise our Phoenix PCUG has changed from puny, pricey PCs, only floppy drives, and later slow dial up connections to BBSs, no email or Internet, so heavy & clunky - remember Compaq PC - portable "sewing machine", monochrome screens & dot matrix printers that were noisy & slow?

Abby Stokes, author of a beginner's guide is presenting our main topic on our Wednesday meeting, so everyone come! Buy a book for a sweetie for Valentine's!

Tues & Thur we'll talk about Drop Box and intro to Google Docs.

[http://azacc.org/Benefits/benefits\\_pib.htm](http://azacc.org/Benefits/benefits_pib.htm) has many topics for meetings.

We will plan the March meetings to avoid conflicts since March is the big computer conference at Ft. McDowell Radisson - see & register at [www.comptechconf.com/](http://www.comptechconf.com/) It promises to be a humdinger, click on Presentations... note Microsoft's Harold Wong and Mayo Clinic's Ken Bobis, details online.

Now almost all schools are teaching computing, some better, some not. We can help. Along with APCUG and AZACC, our members have advised 3 colleges and some K-12 schools to improve. Although many kids know how to do PC tricks like inverting the screen image, many including their teachers don't know Windows shortcuts like F11 - full screen in IE, Alt F4 fast close open apps, Windows Key + E for Explorer, etc. Often to justify a course, non useful stuff is taught & more important is omitted. Example - why is a computer tech lab teaching a module on makeup & hairdo's?

To spread the word, tell folks to visit our website for our downloadable newsletters, meetings, bring their Q's and friends and get updated skills. Visit ofteour [www.phoenixpcug.org](http://www.phoenixpcug.org) website for news and developments.

**(Continued on next page)**

### FROM YOUR EDITOR

The telephone is a two-edged sword of our lifetime. A recent call from England to Arizona was a clear as if it was from our next door neighbor. You don't have to be very far into middle-age to remember when such was simply impossible. But then, on the other hand, the number of extra features provided on cell phones makes one wonder if the simple phone call has been forgotten. Commentaries on the excessive use of texting for social networks to the detriment of face-to-face communications are a print media staple. And how many times do we see a driver wobbling down the freeway because there is phone held to one ear?

But the most irritating electronic development associated with a telephone has to be the automatic dialing machine. "Boiler rooms" stacked with these machines allow operators to place scores of calls in an hour. To make it worse, the Do Not Call List of the federal government has not worked as intended. For instance, the three most prolific users of the most advanced autodialing systems - politicians, charities, and surveys - are exempt, by statute, from the restrictions of the Do Not Call List. Hence, in this election year, the political calls have mushroomed. The supporters of the local candidates have already reached the obnoxious stage, and since we are only a "short" 10 months from the next Presidential and Congressional elections, calls for those candidates have also begun.

The telephone User ID feature has also proven to be of limited value. Incoming calls from cell phones do not, as a rule, identify the caller. Similarly, many of the "cold call" operations are able to insert a generic ID, such as "call from Phoenix AZ" or "caller unavailable". The ultimate absurdity, however, is the inability of our local phone company to provide the service sold as "Blocker ID". It seems that it works only on incoming calls that provide the name and number of the caller. But if all of that information is shown on your phone, can you not decide whether you want to answer the call without their help? Furthermore, to get around the generic ID problem, a local phone company representative suggested that the alternative is to establish a "Restricted Call Acceptance List". That is, only a limited number of callers, specified by the receiving party will not be blocked. So how is a valid caller - a distant relative, emergency services, human resources from your company, etc. - supposed to make a connection? Sounds like a step into the past, a time when all calls came through a central operator. "Déjà vu all over again", as Yogi Berra

*Michael*

## MEETINGS

## CALENDAR

For date and time changes, check our  
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A Computer Handbook.  
She is a real pro and will provide  
a very entertaining evening.  
Tues & Thur we'll talk about Drop Box  
and intro to Google Docs.

**GENERAL MEETINGS**

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 16)

- Tuesday, Feb 14, 2012
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee and Election of Officers
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

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

- Wednesday, Feb 15, 2012
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

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

- Thursday, Feb 16 2012
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

**(Continuation of Presidents column)**

CES 2012 Las Vegas - Google & look for Leo Laporte's video clips on CES as well as his TWIT channel's many topics on Youtube. See our website. Hot Stuff - Samsung Galaxy Note phone - has a stylus!

Phoenix Japanese Matsuri 2012 - Google & visit, free, also food & entertainment.

Windows Update article - p. 14: be sure to back up your hard drive prior to doing any Windows updates. Why? Because snafu's even from Win up-

dates can happen. A good backup can recover from any problem even severe ones - theft, loss, drive failures, viruses, etc. Also consider moving from XP or Vista to clean install of Win 7 for better performance & security.

Try Laplink's PC Mover program, which we expect to demo this year.

["www.laplink.com/pcmover"](http://www.laplink.com/pcmover)

Laplink PCmover is the only migration software that can copy, transfer and move PC applications, files and settings computer to computer from an old to new..."

David

## BILL'S PONDER THIS

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a young wife by the name of Dot.

And Dot Com was a comely woman, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com.

And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?"

And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How, dear?"

And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. And the sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price, without ever having to move from his tent.

To prevent neighboring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew. It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she also developed a language to transmit ideas and pictures - Hebrew To The People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or NERDS.

And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums that no one noticed that the real riches were going to that enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought off every drum maker in the land. And indeed did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother Gates' drumheads and drumsticks.

And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others."

And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or eBay as it came to be known.

He said, "We need a name that reflects what we are."

And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators."

"YAHOO," said Abraham.

And because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com.

Abraham's cousin, Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) that he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate things around the countryside.

It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything (GOOGLE).

That is how it all began. And that's the truth. — Would I lie?

Compiled from unknown internet sources by Bill Aulepp courtesy of James Raviola

## HOW TO FIND A LOST OR STOLEN CELL PHONE

### HOW TO FIND A LOST OR STOLEN CELLPHONE

By Bob Rankin

<http://askbobrankin.com>

Help, I Lost My Phone!

Losing a mobile phone can be a very big deal. Your phone probably contains all of your contacts, sensitive personal information, and perhaps work-related confidential data. Not to mention that smartphones can cost several hundred dollars. While there is no sure-fire way to recover a lost or stolen phone, here are a few tricks you can try.

Several carriers offer subscription services that will display the location of your phone(s) on a map. You have to sign up for these services before you lose a phone, because the activation process involves changing some settings or responding to a text message on the phone(s) you wish to enroll. Prices range from \$5 to \$10, allowing you to track two to five phones. Verizon calls it Mobile Recovery, AT&T offers FamilyMap, and Sprint has the Family Locator service.

You should know up front that if your phone is turned off, or the battery has died, your chances of recovery are slim to none. Your phone must also be able to receive both cellular and GPS signals, in order for these phone locator services to work. But as long as the phone is on and within reach of a signal, there is hope.

#### Lost Phone Recovery Apps

If you have an Apple iPhone, you can access the "Find My iPhone" app via a Web browser. Find My iPhone will display the current location of your iPhone on a Google Map, if the phone is turned on. If you can't find the iPhone, you can use Find My iPhone to disable it remotely the next time the phone connects to the cellular network. Find My iPhone was originally part of Apple's paid MobileMe service, but it's now part of the free iCloud service.

Another alternative is the \$3.99/year iHound locator service. The iOS version works with iPhones, iPads, iPods, and iPod Touches. It tracks your device's location. You can push a command to a device that sounds a siren alarm. There's also an Android version that costs the same and does even more. You can send commands to disable the Android phone,

and even wipe all of your data from the phone remotely.

Blackberry users can subscribe to the Berry Locator service for \$6.95 per month. It will send a message to your missing Blackberry and show you its location on a Web-based map.

GadgetTrak Mobile Security is a \$19.95/year service for Android, Blackberry, and iOS devices. It does tracking; sounds an alarm on a stolen phone; backs up phone data to a remote server; and wipes a phone upon receipt of a special SMS message.

Pintail is a free app for Android phones that can help to find a lost or stolen phone. Once the app is installed, you can borrow a friend's phone and send your phone a text message with a PIN code. Pintail will use GPS services to locate the lost phone, and then send a text reply containing the phone's physical location and a link to Google Maps. Pintail can be downloaded from the Android market.

Even if you don't have any locator apps or services pre-installed on your phone, you can still try some old-school tricks to recover a lost or stolen phone.

Call the phone right away, using another phone. If you're lucky, your phone will ring and you will hear it under the sofa cushion. Or some good Samaritan may answer and agree to return your phone, especially if you promise a nice reward. Texting a plea for the phone's return, along with a financial incentive, is another tactic you can try. If all attempts to find a lost or stolen phone are fruitless, ask your carrier to disable the device, so you won't be liable for any misuse.

Read more: [http://askbobrankin.com/how\\_to\\_find\\_a\\_lost\\_or\\_stolen\\_cell\\_phone.html#ixzz1IXNDPnMR](http://askbobrankin.com/how_to_find_a_lost_or_stolen_cell_phone.html#ixzz1IXNDPnMR)

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

## OFFICE 2007'S MAGICAL SPELLING/GRAMMAR CHECKER

### OFFICE 2007'S MAGICAL SPELLING & GRAMMER CHECKER

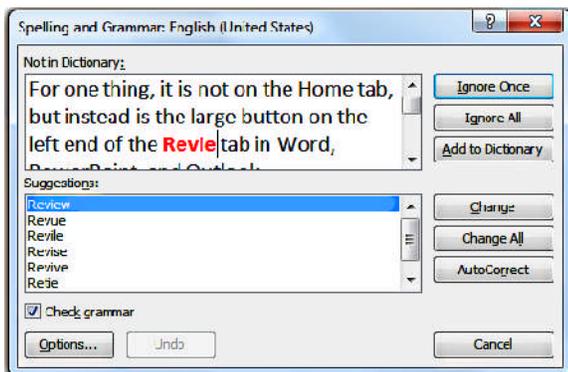
By Nancy DeMarte, Columnist, Office Talk, Sarasota PCUG, Inc., FL  
November 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor  
www.spcug.org  
ndemarte (at) Verizon.net

Among the hundreds of tools which are part of the Word, PowerPoint, and Outlook programs within the Microsoft Office 2007 and 2010 suites, none is as useful and under-utilized by home users as the Spelling & Grammar Checker. For one thing, it is not on the Home tab, but instead is the large button on the left end of the Review tab. (Certain tools are assigned over-sized buttons, by the way, because they were found to be used most often in the workplace). It's time we home users catch up, especially since this tool has been improved in recent versions of Office.

#### How it Works

Spelling & Grammar Checker works in two ways to find your errors and help you correct them. You may have noticed the red, green, and more recently, blue wavy lines appearing under words as you type. These are the alert signals that a word is misspelled (red), the grammar is incorrect (green), or in recent versions, a word doesn't fit the context of the sentence (blue).

The traditional method of using the checker is to let it search from beginning to end of your finished document, stopping at every error. Then you decide whether to accept one of the suggested changes or ignore them all.



Begin by putting your cursor at the start of the document. Click the Spelling & Grammar checker icon to open a dialog box. (Adding this icon to your Quick Access bar will make this step quicker). The box displays a snippet from your document at the top with

the first error highlighted. If the problem is a spelling error, a list of related words and spellings appears

with the recommended correction listed first. Click 'Change' to make the recommended change in your document. 'Change All' will change all instances of this word in the document. The options 'Ignore Once' or 'Ignore All' result in no change. If the word is unique, as with a proper name, but is spelled correctly, click 'Add to Dictionary' to include it in the large Office dictionary. Checking an entire document is a good last step after completing a document where accuracy is important, such as a report or article.

A new and quicker way to check spelling is to go through your document and right click each of the underlined errors. The drop down menu gives you similar choices to those in the dialog box as well as other options, depending on the error. Left click your choice, and your document will be corrected.

#### Using AutoCorrect

You'll notice that one of the choices both in the dialog box and the right click menu is "AutoCorrect." Office includes a list of common misspellings of words in the Options sections of the Office programs. As long as the AutoCorrect function is enabled, these words will automatically be corrected as you type. One example is "teh," which will immediately change to "the" as soon as you hit the space bar.

If you have a word that you type often and constantly misspell, adding it to the AutoCorrect list makes sense. To do this in Word, click the Office (File) button, then 'Word Options'. Click 'Proofing' in the left pane. Here you will find a number of check boxes for adjusting spelling and grammar-related functions. You can, for example, have the spell checker ignore the spellings of Internet addresses or have the program stop checking grammar errors. Next click 'AutoCorrect Options' at the top of the right pane. Here you can adjust more check boxes to change how the checker works. At the bottom of this box is the AutoCorrect list. Symbols appear first, so scroll down to find the list of misspelled words and their corrected counterparts. To add a new word, type your misspelling of it in the box under 'Replace'. Type the correct spelling under 'With' and click OK. This word will now automatically be replaced with the correct spelling as you type.

#### Correcting Grammar

If you haven't adjusted the Proofing options in your program, the Spelling & Grammar checker will identify grammar errors well as spelling. This function has always been a weak link in the checker. As a

*(Continued on page 7)*

## OFFICE 2007'S MAGICAL SPELLING/ GRAMMAR CHECKER

(Continued from page 6)

veteran teacher of English, I sometimes disagree with the checker's opinions. Perhaps it's because 'grammar' needs to be taken loosely in this context. For instance, if you leave an extra space between words, both words will underline in green, indicating a grammar error. It is good to remove extra spaces because they will be blatantly visible when the Word document is printed or the PowerPoint slide show projected on the screen. But I wouldn't define it as "grammar." The checker will also underline real grammar problems, such as sentence fragments, run-on sentences and subject-verb agreement. It is smart to look carefully at these sentences and make improvements as needed. The checker is not perfect, though, so proofread any important documents.

### New: Contextual Spelling

A new feature of the Spelling & Grammar Checker in Word 2007 is the option to check contextual spelling.

This involves flagging of homonyms, words which are pronounced the same, but have different meanings. Some examples are *to - too - two* or *there - their - they're*. This function is not automatically enabled because it uses quite a bit of memory. If your computer has less than 1 GB of Ram, the option will be disabled automatically. It also doesn't always catch errors, but it's a start and will probably be improved in future versions of Office. If you wish to turn on this option, go to Word Options - Proofing and click the check box, "Use contextual spelling." If it slows down your computer, I recommend turning it off.

One last thing: If you use one of the Windows email programs (Outlook Express in XP, Windows Mail in Vista, or Windows Live Mail in Win 7), the Office Spelling & Grammar checker will automatically check your composed messages if you have the option, "Check spelling as you type," enabled.

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

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

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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## BEGINNERS INTERNET

### BEGINNERS/INTERNET/

E-MAIL SIG REPORT

By Kim Stocksedale, LACS

=====

#### Editorial Note:

**At one time we had SIG's (Special Interest Groups) and they were great. The Los Angeles Computer Society ran this report on their SIG for beginners. Maybe one of our members would be interested in starting a SIG for our group. If so let us know by email or at one of our regular meetings.**

=====

There were 16 attendees at the November 14, 2011 meeting of the Beginners/ Internet/E-Mail SIG held at the SMC Bundy campus. Topics included Format Painter, Scroll Bars, and Power Saving options.

**Format Painter** So you have applied a fancy combination of formatting options to a sentence, such as red Arial Font, Bold, 16 point, Italic. And now you want another paragraph to look just like that. What do you do, go through the same lengthy formatting process on that paragraph? Microsoft Office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook) have a powerful feature called Format Painter that makes that task a breeze. At the meeting, Format Painter was first demonstrated in its simplest use by highlighting or clicking inside text with formatting you like, then click the format painter icon, then select the text you want to apply the formatting, and when the mouse is let go the formatting is applied to the highlighted text. In addition Format Painter has two power options that are not intuitive which were also demonstrated. After selecting the text you want to copy formatting, or clicking the cursor anywhere inside the text. Then: 1) Double click Format Painter icon Format Painter stays on until icon clicked again. This can be annoying if you want to click inside your document for any reason other than applying formatting 2) Ctrl + Shift + C Copies formatting and then remembers until you close the document To apply formatting to another selection, Ctrl + Shift + V. This works even

when pasting the formatting to other Office programs.

**Power Saving Options** Your PC provides many different options to conserve power when leaving your computer. At the meeting we discussed Windows XP Screen savers, System Standby, and Hibernate. All these can be set / adjusted by right clicking an empty space on the desktop. The Display Properties window appears, then click the Screen saver tab. **Screen Saver** Screen savers are animated screen images activated when no user activity has been sensed for a certain time. There is minimal to no power saving here. Screen savers were introduced in the early PC days to prevent phosphor burn-in on CRT screens. Now, screen savers are more a decoration. **Standby Mode** Saves the system settings and open programs into the RAM or short-term memory on your computer. This allows you to quickly start up your computer again, and you will not have to wait as long as if you had shut it down. Stand by mode offers different options to save power such as a user set time to shut off monitors and hard drive. Pressing a key on the keyboard or wiggling the mouse will generally bring the computer back to life quickly with everything exactly the way it was prior to going in standby.

**Hibernate** Hibernation is mainly intended for notebook computers operating on battery power. Hibernate saves the information to your hard drive (long term memory that retains information even when unpowered). During Hibernate, Windows will save your Desktop state and all open files and documents to a special spool file on the hard drive until you bring the computer out of hibernation. Pressing a key or wiggling the mouse will bring your computer out of hibernate mode; you must press the power button and login again. Generally speaking, hibernate allows the system to boot faster than a standard cold start and will return your computer in the exact state that you left it.

*(Continued on page 9)*

## BEGINNERS INTERNET

(Continued from page 8)

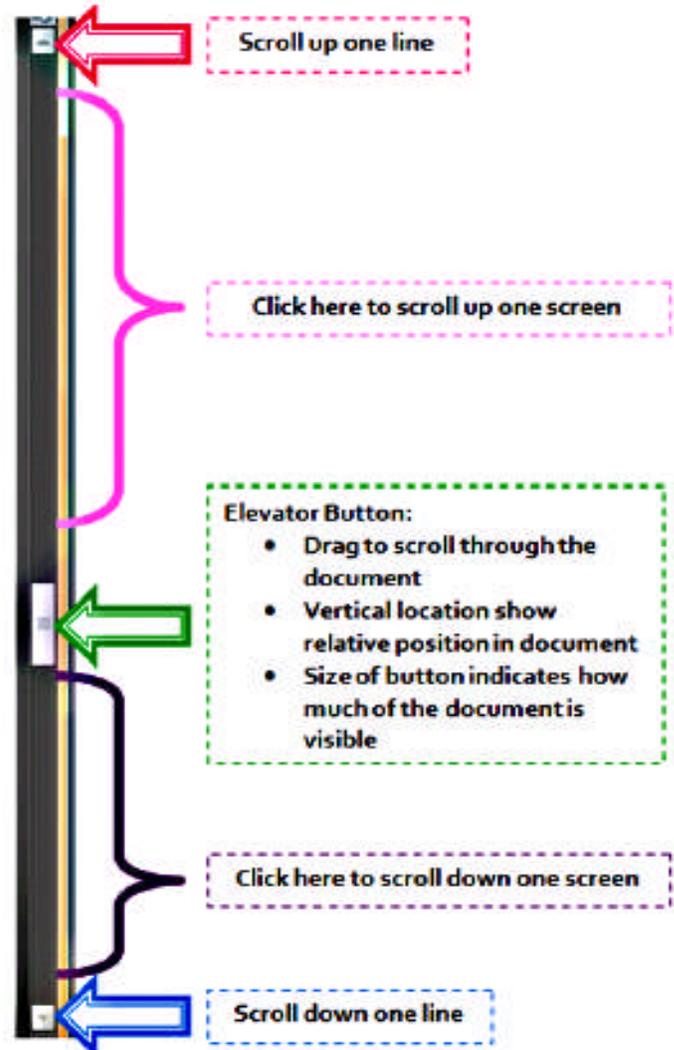
### Getting The Most Out Of Your Vertical Scroll Bars

Moving through lengthy onscreen files or websites can be a pain. We often find ourselves scrolling up and down while things are just moving too fast to really see what's in your current view, and it's entirely possible to accidentally fly right by entire sections. Some may be surprised to discover that there's more to the vertical scroll bar than just grabbing the button and quickly dragging it here and there. Following are vertical scroll bar features demonstrated at the meeting: (see Diagram on Right)

Clicking on the section above the elevator button moves the window up one screen view, and clicking below moves the window down one screen view. At the top and bottom of the vertical scroll bar are two arrow buttons. Click the top arrow button to scroll up one line, and click the bottom arrow button to scroll down one line. The "elevator button" location gives you an idea where the screen view you are looking at is located in relation to the entire document length.

If the elevator button is located near the top, then what you see on screen is located near the top of the entire document. In addition, the vertical length of the elevator button gives you an idea of how big

the window view is in relation to the total document length.



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## FREE E-BOOK READERS

### FREE E-BOOK READERS

For Your Computer and Smart Devices

By Ira Wilsker, Columnist,  
The Examiner, Beaumont TX;  
Radio & Talk Show Host.  
Ira Wilsker <http://inpics.net>

I have been an avid reader since my earliest years. I used to be a regular at the public library, checking out so many books that I was on a first name basis with the librarian. Over the years, I have collected a huge library of books, having read virtually all of them. Even today, it is not unusual for me to purchase several books at a time. Now that more and more books are becoming available in at least one of the several competing e-book formats, and organizations such as Project Gutenberg

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## DROP IT IN THE BOX

### DROP IT IN THE BOX

#### What it is, How it Works Jo Grazide

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Brookdale CUGroup, NJ

FEB '11 Bug Bytes <http://bcug.com>

**What is Dropbox?** Suppose you were able to save work without using a flash drive, a disk (CD or DVD-R or RW), or an external drive, or even email, and move files between your laptop and desktop? For many years, I, like so many of us, had developed methods and procedures to upload, download, and save documents, music and pictures to a storage device, only to have to rely on memory to locate it afterwards. Another irritating problem for me, especially when I was working, was to identify the "latest" version, so that an older file would not overwrite my work during a "Save As."

Enter Dropbox, a useful application that eliminates lots of work and uncertainty.

Dropbox is a free download that offers protection and convenience and is easy to use. There is basically no learning involved. You should, however, be familiar with Drag & Drop and Move vs. Copy. Why not give Dropbox a try and see whether this is for you.

I first heard of Dropbox during a meeting of my camera club. Some members seemed happy with it; there were no negative comments, leading me to investigate. Having a way to store photography files without worrying about loss or corruption seemed an ideal solution to the problem of travel pictures. I got to test this, when I maxed out the Dropbox folder at around 2 GB during a vacation in Boston. There are two ways to increase your storage capacity – you can purchase the program on a monthly or yearly basis, or you can have friends join the service and be rewarded a few more MB's up to a whopping 8 GB.



**Get the App** To acquire Dropbox, you need to go to the website at [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com). The download is quick and easy. Just run it, and follow the instructions. There are six initial steps:

1. Take the tour
2. Install Dropbox
3. Put files in your Dropbox folder
4. Install Dropbox on other computers
5. Share a folder with friends or colleagues
6. Invite friends to join

It is necessary to install the program on all computers that you will be using. The setup is done on the website, and the instructions are easy.

In my case, this is my laptop and my desktop. As I move around with the laptop, to meetings or anywhere I use it, I'm able to save files as they are created, directly into the Dropbox folder, which sits in the system tray area. By clicking on its

icon, Dropbox will provide easy and helpful commands.

In addition, I know that once I reach home, altered files will be available and updated on my desktop machine. They can be dragged into their proper locations on the storage drives. This has been extremely useful. Instead of dealing with two documents, a newer version and an older version, there is only one synchronized version.

Another nice aspect is that I don't have to worry about misplacing storage disks or flash drives, which does happen. I also would think that it lessens stress, as there is nothing to lose!

#### On the Website

There is plenty of information on the Dropbox website. There are videos and explanations of the syncing process. Basically, anything that is put into the local folder is also recorded on the Internet.

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## DROP IT IN THE BOX

(Continued from page 12)

You can also access your files and upload them directly onto the Dropbox server.

It can be compared to using GoogleDocs or Windows Live Mesh. Collaboration, by the way, is possible. I haven't delved into this, because I simply need a way to move data between computers. If you want to learn more, you need to visit the Dropbox website and study this feature.

### The Dropbox website has five tabs:

1. *"Get Started"* walks you through several chores before you can earn some extra space. This is simple and easy to understand.
2. *"Files"* is the online list of your current Dropbox inhabitants, their sizes and the dates they were modified. You can sort each column by clicking on its heading. There are buttons here that let you do even more. A basic knowledge of file management is all you need to comprehend this part of the application.
3. *"Events"* is a listing of various edits, deletions, and other information about your files.
4. *"Sharing"* allows you to create a new folder to share, or share an existing folder. By following the prompts, you can identify who you want to share the folder with. In my case, I began typing my husband's email address, and it was prefilled for me. This would make it easier for multiple shares in a business or committee setting. Perhaps our next Board meeting minutes will appear in a Dropbox folder! I also found that once the shared folder appeared in my local Dropbox folder, I could rename it and manage it locally. A refresh caused the change to appear on the website immediately. I like this type of efficiency. There is no lag time, and information can be relayed quickly between computers.
5. Finally, *"Help"* is all the rest. It seems that the Dropbox website is complete; you can spend much time learning about it. I would suggest that you jump in and try out the program; you can learn by doing as well.

There are a couple of things I would warn you about as a new user. If you simply drag and drop the file back and forth, it copies the file. You may want to right-drag and choose move to ensure you have the latest version of your work or photograph. Also, having a comfort level with storage online to some extent, and not adding things like your Social Security number or banking information, goes without saying. Aside from that, there are no problems I can see with using this reliably.

**One Last Thing** I do have one favor to ask you if you do join Dropbox; please use the link! It will enable both of us to get some extra space, a great reward and well deserved! The link to join on my behalf is <http://db.tt/sHvgWQp>. I promise I will not waste that space!!!!!!

### System Requirements

Hardware: At least 512MB of RAM; free space on your computer equal to your Dropbox storage quota.

### Software:

- Windows: Windows 2003, Windows XP, Windows Vista, and Windows 7 (32 and 64-bit).
- Mac OS X: Tiger (10.4) or later.
- Linux: Ubuntu 7.10+ and Fedora Core 9+.

### (Drop It in the Box...)

- ♦ Also iPhone iOS 3.1, Android 1.5 and Blackberry 4.5.
- ♦ Pricing: Up to 2 gigabytes of free storage space; DropBox 50, up to 50GB storage for \$9.99/ month or \$99/year; Dropbox 100, up to 100GB storage for 19.95/month or \$199/year.

For more information: <https://www.dropbox.com/plansproducts/desktop>

- Also iPhone iOS 3.1, Android 1.5 and Blackberry 4.5. Pricing: Up to 2 gigabytes of free storage space; DropBox 50, up to 50GB storage for \$9.99/ month or \$99/year; Dropbox 100, up to 100GB storage for 19.95/month or \$199/year. For more information: <https://www.dropbox.com/plansproducts/desktop>

## MICROSOFT SOFTWARE UPDATES

### MICROSOFT SOFTWARE UPDATES

**Dick Maybach**

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JUN '11 BCUG Bytes Brookdale CUGroup, NJ

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If you use MS Windows, it's important that you keep all your Microsoft software up-to-date. Most PCs use MS software, and this makes them the most attractive targets for attack. Don't think that installing an anti-virus program and a firewall provides sufficient safety. Some attackers exploit flaws in your operating system or its applications, and the only defense is to correct the flaws. You must rely on your software vendors to do this, and the most important of these is Microsoft.

The two most common programs to keep MS software updated are *Windows Update* and the newer *Microsoft Update*. I prefer the latter, since it maintains all Microsoft software, not just Windows. (If your PC has just Windows Update, read carefully when you run it and you will find a link to install the newer utility.) With both Microsoft Update and Windows Update it is important to use the correct update strategy. You can find what your PC is using by going to the Control Panel, then to Security (the exact title varies with the particular version of Windows), and finally to Updates (again the exact title varies). You will see several options, among them are (1) install automatically at a fixed time every day, (2) download automatically, but not install, and (3) neither download nor install, but just notify you that updates are available. The problem with (1) is the fixed time. If you choose something like 2 a.m., it is unlikely that your PC will be on, and updates will never be installed. If you choose a time when you usually are using your PC, the update process will slow it down, perhaps for an extended time. Option (2) is less intrusive, but you must remember to install the downloaded updates. I prefer (3), because I can see what the updates are before they happen and can choose a time to do them. If you also take this approach, don't put off the updates, because your PC is vulnerable until they are complete.

Be careful not to turn off your PC during the update process. Windows is supposed to survive this, but a friend had to reinstall Windows from scratch, be-

cause she became impatient. This is easy to do; a recent update for XP required two hours to complete. I am even reluctant to do any other computing while a patch is in progress. This is probably being over-cautious, but the consequences of a problem here are ugly. This hazard is also a good reason to do your updates manually; that way you know when they take place. If they happen automatically, you may not realize they are in progress. Finally, if you patch manually, you can make a system backup prior to each one, which lets you recover with minimum fuss if disaster strikes.

Microsoft usually releases security patches on the second Tuesday of each month, with the result that this is called "Patch Tuesday." Some people immediately analyze the patches so they can develop malware to exploit the flaws they correct on PCs that haven't yet been patched. Their goal is to release this malware within a day, so "Exploit Wednesday" follows Patch Tuesday. This makes it important that you apply patches as soon as possible. Sometimes the bad guys find a flaw before Microsoft releases a patch. If they develop a program to exploit it, it's called a "Zero day exploit," and you have to rely on your antimalware software, your firewall, and luck for defense.

While most operating systems are updated by replacing entire modules, Microsoft appears to attach patches to the existing modules. When the module is executed, your PC jumps to the patch and then back to the module. As a result, as these patches accumulate, you slowly lose disk space and your computer becomes slower. I still use XP, which now has about ten years of patches, and it's slowed to a stately tectonic speed. I've also had to remove a substantial amount of software to free disk space. (What was a huge disk ten years ago is quite cramped today.) For this reason, when you review the available downloads from Microsoft, of course install the essential patches, but be reluctant to download any new software unless you are really sure you will use it.

After hearing about the potential problems associated with updates, you might prefer to avoid them, but this would be a big mistake. So long as you are careful, the risks are minimal.

## Short Circuits...zzzt!

**Cool Trap.** The Amherst (Mass.) Fire Department was called to the local middle school for an unusual rescue. A student got her arm stuck in a vending machine. Firefighters were called to free the girl. The student was reaching up and into the vending slot in an attempt to retrieve a bottle of water that she had paid for, but she got stuck up to her shoulder for about 20 minutes. She was not seriously hurt but complained that her hand was cold from being stuck in the refrigerated section. She refused medical treatment at the scene but her mother brought her to the family pediatrician. *Associated Press* Jan. 27, 2012

**Cool calls.** Alexander Graham Bell foresaw many things, including that people could someday talk over a telephone. But the inventor certainly never could have anticipated that his audio-recording experiments in a Washington, D.C., lab could be recovered 130 years later and played for a gathering of scientists, curators and journalists. A man's voice can be heard saying "to be or not to be" in one recording as it was played on a computer at the Library of Congress on Tuesday. The speaker from the 1880s recites a portion of Hamlet's soliloquy as a green wax disc crackles to life from computer speakers. The early audio recordings, which revealed recitations of Shakespeare, numbers and other familiar lines, had been packed away and deemed obsolete at the Smithsonian Institution for more than a century. But new technology has allowed them to be recovered and played. The technology reads the sound from tiny grooves with light and a 3-D camera. The recordings offer a glimpse into the dawn of the Information Age when inventors were scrambling to make new discoveries and secure patents for the first telephones and phonographs, even early fiber optics. *Associated Press* Dec. 14, 2011



"Google, Twitter, Yahoo, Bing...  
I think the Internet was created by  
happy little elves in the forest."



"Here's your problem ... the onboard computer  
has to be double-kicked."

**Cool Coffin.** The manager of U-Stor Self Storage in Clearwater, Florida heard a bizarre tale when he notified a woman that the items stored in Unit B8 would be auctioned because she'd fallen behind on rent. The woman told him her grandmother was inside the storage unit. The police found skeletal remains inside a blue coffin stored there. The woman told authorities that her mother told her about the remains as she was on her deathbed last year. The death certificate for the woman, who died in 1995, was recovered. Medical examiners told police the grandmother's body had been properly processed for burial but it was unclear why the casket was in the storage unit. Police say they don't believe she died under suspicious circumstances. *Associated Press* Jan. 27, 2012

**Cool boots.** A suburban Philadelphia middle school's ban on a popular type of fur-lined boots isn't about fashion, it's about cellphones. Pottstown Middle School parents were informed of the new ban on the unlaced boots on Wednesday. Students are using the boots to hide cellphones and bring them into class. Current school policy allows students to bring their phones to school but requires them to be kept in their locker during the day. The ban targets the unlaced boots with fur or faux fur lining made by footwear companies including Ugg. The school Principal says students can still wear the boots to school, but must remove them before going to class. *Associated Press* Jan. 27, 2012

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



# 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, 2012*

## Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

First: (Print Legibly) \_\_\_\_\_ Initial: \_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Ext: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one:  Yes  No

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Legibly)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

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

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

With club approved vendors?  Yes  No

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