

The P-See UrGent

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Newsletter of Southwestern IN Personal Computer Users Group ? PO Box 4336 ? Evansville, IN 47724-0336

THE NEW, THE BEST, and THE WORST

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Collected by Pim Borman
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc

Wireless Networking

Once you are used to the speed of cable access to the Web it is unthinkable ever to have to go back to a 56K telephone modem. In addition, a cable connection provides unlimited, always-on access to the Internet, provided you leave your computer up and running all the time. But since I use the computer only a few hours during the evening on most days, I generally shut the system down at night until I need it again the next day. That does not only save electricity, but it also makes it harder for hackers to take over the computer for whatever nefarious purposes they have in mind. Besides, Windows versions prior to XP tend to crash every so often if left running too long. Once in a while, it would be handy during the day to

have immediate access to the Web to look up some information. If the daily crossword stumps you, it would be nice to get quick help at the crossword site www.oneacross.com, but it is hardly worth the effort to hike down to the family room and boot up the computer.

Some time ago, I connected my laptop computer, upstairs in the den, to the desktop downstairs, using 3COM Home Connect network adapters that use the telephone wiring in the house. Getting the connection to work was a major problem until I found detailed instructions in O'Reilly's *Windows ME Annoyances* by David A Karp*. This made it possible to access the Web with the laptop computer as long as the desktop computer downstairs was turned on to provide the connection to the cable. The home network proved to be highly unreliable and with the desktop computer turned off most of

* User Group members get 20% off any O'Reilly book they purchase directly from O'Reilly. Just use code DSUG when ordering.

the time, I still did not have easy always-on access to the Internet from my La-Z-Boy chair.

I have finally found the solution with wireless networking. I obtained a wireless router (Netgear MR 314) and a wireless network PC card for my laptop (Netgear MA401NA) online from NewEgg Computers (www.newegg.com) at a total cost, including shipping, of \$175. I chose Netgear because it was rated the best of the many choices, including ease of installation. I chose NewEgg because they had the best price; Buy.Com is no longer the price leader in many cases. Although I had specified the slowest shipping option to save cost, the units arrived within a few days.

Physical installation was very simple: insert the router between the cable modem and the desktop computer, using the provided networking ("CAT5") cable, and insert the wireless networking card in a PCMCIA slot of the laptop. Of course, untangling the cat's cradle of wires behind the computer desk took some time and effort, but that was to be expected. Following the detailed instruc-

tions for setting up the network software I ran into a snag – it just didn't work as it should. I finally realized that the Internet Sharing Protocols that Windows had installed for the previous telephone network caused the trouble. Once I deleted those, the network was up and running and it has been ever since.

The wireless router is a small box that sits quietly on a corner of my desk, always turned on and connected to the Internet via the cable modem. The desktop computer and the laptop directly connect to the Web via the router; no need to turn the desktop computer on in order to go online with the laptop, and vice versa. The computers also connect to each other via the router, allowing access to each other's files as well as fast file transfers. The laptop now sits on a small table next to my comfortable chair in the den, ready to spring into action at a moment's notice. The network connections are rock solid, as long as the computers are in radio contact. Although the advertised range of the 802.11b protocol is several hundred feet, the presence of walls and floor joists, not to mention air-conditioning ducts, can severely limit that distance. In our split-level home it took some experimentation to make sure that the router downstairs could communicate with the lap-

top upstairs at the opposite end of the house.

Routers (wired or wireless) also significantly improve protection against intrusions by crackers (malevolent hackers). They generally include a hardware firewall and use Network Address Translation (NAT) to hide the network address of the system from crackers searching the Web for accessible computers. It is still recommended to use an additional software firewall on each computer, as well as up-to-date virus protection. At double the cost, wireless routers are becoming available that use the 802.11a protocol that provides increased capacity, but somewhat reduced range. Yet another protocol, 802.11g, is under development. According to recent news from COMDEX the full implementation of 802.11g is being postponed

(<http://www.internetnews.com/wireless/article.php/1503321>).

Palm Wristwatch

Last month I sang the praises in this column of the Zire, a shirt pocket-sized PDA from Palm, using the Palm 4.1 operating system; finally a PDA for ordinary folks without a need for large address books and appointment calendars.

But wait – we ain't seen nothing yet. According to Ziff-Davis's EXTREMETECH (www.extremetech.com), Fossil, Inc. and PalmSource

are showing off a Palm-powered wristwatch at the COMDEX show. "The Wrist PDA will be fully compatible with the Palm OS platform and will run all Palm OS applications," the article states. "It will feature an illuminated touch screen with a stylus integrated into the band for Graffiti input, 2 Mbytes of internal memory, a Rocker switch user interface, infrared port to support beaming between all Palm Powered devices, rechargeable battery, and applications including Palm's Address Book, Date Book, Memo Pad, Calculator and To Do List. Fossil will launch the Wrist PDA with Palm OS under two brands, FOSSIL and ABACUS. Both versions of the new WRIST PDA are scheduled to be available in stores in the United States and internationally by mid-2003."

Minutes of 17 November 2002 SWIPCUP Meeting

Twenty-one members and four guests met at Central Library to discuss the features of various digital cameras that are owned by members. Larry Goss demonstrated his new Sony F-717 which sells in the \$1,000 range. It not only records still pictures but also can make up to one hour of movies on a 64 Meg memory stick. He processes the still photos with the Photo Shop Limited Edition program. The data can be transferred from the camera to the computer via a USB cable or through an AV port. Larry demonstrated the features of the camera by using RCA plugs to connect to a television. The modes included Point & Shoot, Program, Shutter priority or Aperture priority and totally manual. In video mode, the user may choose moving pictures, clip shots or burst of three shots. The tool box set up gives the options to reset file numbers, choose USB connection type, video out, language and clock set. The camera allows an image to be enlarged five times as demonstrated with a picture of the rugged face of John Powell. The blown up image of a portion of a picture can then be saved as a separate file. The sensitivity of the system can be adjusted to the equivalent level of 100 - 800 ISO or the

automatic setting may be chosen. Larry pointed out that there are many features that can be controlled on digital cameras so it is very important that the user study the accompanying manual and keep it handy for future reference.

Joe Logsdon demonstrated his Canon Power Shot G2. When purchased this spring the camera cost around \$800. This and other cameras shown at the meeting contained many of the same controls and capabilities as the Sony F-717 demonstrated by Larry. Only unique features and the price will be related about the other models.

Terry McCraey brought three cameras to the meeting. His Sony Mavica 91 which sold for \$1,400 when he bought it stores data on a floppy disk. It will make up a web page for the user, copy floppies and includes an index mode. It can make a one-minute video. His second camera was a small Easy Shot which he bought for about \$20. It uses a serial port to download low-resolution pictures. If the camera is turned off or the battery dies the images are lost. Terry's third camera was a "spy camera" made by Aiptek. It shoots up to 80 pictures and uses a USB connection to download to a PC. It may also be used as a web cam. His cost \$80 but some versions have been seen for \$25-\$30.

Louis Ritz showed his Sony OSC S-85 which cost \$700 in June but is now available for \$600. He is happy with the camera which includes a text mode for copying documents. The Zeiss lens allows for good reproductions in all modes. Louis commented however that the manual is not up to the efficiency of the camera. It is somewhat hard to understand.

Pim Borman recommended that everyone see the article about digital cameras on the SWIPCUG web page. Pim demonstrated his Olympus D460 which features all of the usual settings. It includes Camedia software with a terrific image editor to brighten / adjust gamma to even out light and dark portions of an image and to crop the pictures. In panorama mode, the user may stitch together images to show a large portion of the horizon.

Jim Geiser showed his Sony DSC PS1. It uses smart memory sticks as well as USB connection to download images. It uses AA batteries for power.

Bettie Cook brought a Canon Power Shot S110 Digital Elf which sold for \$515 a year and one-half ago. Although it is small, it contains many of the features mentioned for larger cameras. She did a stitch shot of mountains on a trip in the western United States.

It connects with a USB port, a serial port or a smart card. With a 16 Meg memory stick, its small size and weight (just 9 ounces) is an especially handy feature of this camera.

Charles DeWig demonstrated a Kodak DC280 zoom camera. It features a 2X optical zoom and a 6X digital zoom. It also contains an optical viewer as well as the LCD screen.

Kay Anne Peake uses an Olympus C-2000 which now sells for about \$258 at Buy.COM on a clearance sale. She uses the Easy JPEG printer program which is offered as freeware at www.igraff.addr.com.

Jim Marsh and Jim DeRudder each have an Olympus DL 360 camera. They described it as a great snapshot camera.

Mike Abaray mentioned that the new main library will use digital cameras to take pictures of patrons to make sure that the owner of a library card is actually the one checking out material. Cameras will also be available for patrons to use in the library to make pictures of text which may be e-mailed to their home computer for later study.

Clara Kress has an Olympus 700 which she bought for \$500.

Respectfully submitted by John W. Powell, Secretary with notes from Kay Anne Peake

Quick: Delete the jdbgmgr.exe file!!

By Gabe Kingsley, PIBMUG's San Francisco Special Correspondent

I've received a few of these dumb alerts over the past week. You haven't received one? It's an e-mail hoax pretending to be a virus warning that tells people to delete their Java Debugger Manager file, called jdbgmgr.exe.

What really ticks me off is the open list of recipients, often 30 to 50 of them, that become fodder for all sorts of junk through the systems of others.

So I'm on a one-man crusade to get people to use Blind Ccs for all mail, unless there is a compelling reason (such as a work group, etc.) in which they need to know who else received the message. Heck, I even send out tutorials for most e-mail programs to eliminate any excuses they may have.

Here's what I tell people whenever they forward me an ALERT!! ALERT!! About any virus:

Hey, Klez?

The most recent e-mail virus you're asking about is the Klez, and it has powers not seen in earlier types.

Klez can select an e-mail address at random from a CC list in a message on your or someone else's computer and send itself to the recipients of other messages. It's not limited to those addresses in your address book. In addition, it can "spooof" the return address, so that even if you were not the sender of a message infected with the Klez virus, your name and address may appear as the originator.

This is bad stuff and we should expect a raft of "me too" versions to come along!

Another, less harmful but no less irritating offense is the warning running around the world, advising you to delete a specific file from your system because it contains a virus. This is a hoax! The file, jdbgmgr.exe, is one that Windows put there and enables certain Java scripting capabilities. You need it!

You may receive either the Klez virus or the relatively innocuous hoax warning described above because your name and address were in someone's CC list.

One of the greatest potential dangers is in the e-mails that are forwarded, forwarded and forwarded again by unwitting people. I'm sure you get

them every day, and may even pass them along. The result is list after list of available addresses the Klez virus can use to send itself to people you don't know, and for people you don't know to send it to you, possibly giving the impression it came from you.

When you forward a message, **COPY ONLY THE TEXT** into a new message and send it to your friends. **DO NOT** just forward the existing message, complete with the previous lists of recipients and their addresses. If you want to forward a message, take care to manually remove the list of previous recipients to preserve their safety. It's really easy.

Learn and Use Blind CC

When sending messages to a group of people, unless it is **REQUIRED** that each one see the names of all others who received the message, **PLEASE USE A BLIND RECIPIENT** list. I am not aware of an e-mail program that does not allow you to send messages to a list of "blind" recipients, in which each person who receives the messages sees only their own address, and not the entire list of recipients.

If you have AOL, it is the easiest thing to do: Simply bracket all recipients in a pair of parentheses (address1, address2) each separated by a comma.

If you use Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express, there is a special field for "Bcc" (Blind copies) just below the "To" and "Cc" rows. If you do not see it when you open the program, click on View and select "Bcc Field." Eudora and Netscape Navigator also have blind recipient capabilities.

Yahoo! And Hotmail users can find the "Bcc" field for entering addresses in the online address header. The Juno mail software works very just like AOL, in that you can enclose multiple addresses in parentheses to make them blind, and as with AOL, they must be separated by a comma. By doing this each recipient will see only their own address, and not anyone else's, just as with this message.

So far, because Mac's represent such a small percentage of the computers in use, the people who create the worms and viruses do not make them work with Mac computers. However, anyone using a Mac who does not hide the recipients of their e-mails makes their recipients vulnerable to the possibility of being hit with a virus from someone else on their CC list!

Anyone who wants to protect their privacy and safety will appreciate your doing this. Few things about e-mail bother me more than when something I sent gets forwarded to a large list of

people I don't know, and because my address is now in their message base, I am then vulnerable to receiving a virus or one of those hoax warnings from them ... or anyone to whom they forward that message. Please try to use blind recipient lists. It will make us all safer from viruses, worms and hoaxes.

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Buying a DVD Recorder

By Bob Elgines, elginesz@rraz.net

Well the prices are coming down, now under \$300 and as low as \$220, for a DVD recorder. The blank disks are now under \$2.50 each in lots of ten or more. But beware, the great decision as to which format is still under debate, DVD-R or DVD+R! If you just wish to make videos either one should work in most DVD players made after the year 2000, but not all. Cheaper DVDR disks and players will not work.

Support out there is very weak to almost NONE! Much time is needed to be invested like 4 to 10 hours to make a 2 hour video DVD, of which several programs require you

to sit in front of your computer.

Most of the software is over priced and does not work without many problems and no support like "Video Studio 6" by Cyber. The best so far has been "MyDVD" by Sonic. Some of the suggestions listed below came from them.

The best input devices are: "USB Instant DVD" by DS (\$160), "Bungee DVD" by Pinnacle (\$150), "DCS 100" (\$170) and "DCS 200" by Dazzle (\$230). They all come with software that have individual problems, and advertise "Fast, Easy & Fun", boy that is a huge JOKE! It's Slow, Hard, & Will drive you nuts.

If you can not provide all of the suggestions (really necessary evils) below then don't get involved. I became one of their guinea pig and I am about to throw it all in the circle file and call it a lost.

My ASUS computer is an Intel P3 @ 866MHz, 256MB RAM @ 133MHz, 60GB Hard Drive @ 7200rpm ATA100, ATI Radeon 32MB video card, with the "USB Instant DVD" input device (I tried out the DAZZLE equipment, but it had big noise problems and they had NO support at all), VIVASTAR (LF311) DVD-R recorder. I have tried two operating systems such as Win '98SE and Win ME and saw no difference, went back to Win'98SE.

For Windows '98 'XP users start off with these suggestions on getting ready to record a DVD:

- *Install at least 256 MB of RAM
- *Disable the Screen Saver
- *Disable the Turn off Hard Disks option
- *Disable the Hibernation option
- *Disable the Network Time Server (Win'XP)
- *Disable Text to Speech (Win'XP)
- *Disable any scheduled tasks (for example, virus scan)
- *Do not increase Virtual Memory beyond Windows' recommended setting
- *Close any other running applications
- *Do not copy any large files while capturing
- *Do not allow any remote activities, such as PC Anywhere or Timbuktu connections
- *Your hard drives are formatted to NTFS (which as no files size limitations Win'XP)
- *You have at least 21 gigs available on a single drive
- *You have the latest drivers for the following: DVD Rom, burner, CD-ROM and burner.
- *Your hard drives have been defragmented.
- *In particular, while capturing video, do not use your PC for any other activity. Video capture requires all your PC's processing power, and any action such as inserting a disc or receiving e-

mail may cause errors in the captured video files.

- *Your monitor resolution must be set to 1024x768 16 or 32 bit color
- *You are running ASPI driver 4.6. No higher, no lower. If you are unsure, you can go here to find out and/or download the appropriate driver: <http://aspi.radified.com>
- *You are not running you machine/session of a network/RAID configuration
- *Make sure you have the latest version DirectX (a must), WMP (a must):
- *If your "Input digital device" is on USB, then remove all other USB external equipment.
- *You may also find it beneficial to enable DMA for all your drives.

There are DVD-RAM and DVD+RAM which allows you to save up to 9.6GB of Data, but hard drives are much cheaper, like 20GB for \$69.00 or lower. It is just not FAST and EASY as they have stated in their advertising!

SWIPCUG

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TIME TO PAY YOUR 2003 DUES!

ON OUR WEB SITE

http://swipcug.apcug.org

Read an excellent discussion of **digital photography** in this month's Bootes page of the **WORM HOLE** (<http://swipcug.apcug.org/wormhole/bootes.htm>). It will give you a good start for the digital camera show-and-tell scheduled for this month's meeting. You'll also find discussions of **firewalls** and **power management** and another computer column by Don Edrington, "**The Computer Tutor.**"

In the **HUMOR** section, read humorous contributions passed along by John West and John Powell, including an anecdote about an unusual cabbie and a list of Lexigrams (whatever those may be).

In the recently opened **PHOTOS** area you can find photos taken during recent meetings. You can read about the **NEXT MEETING** before you receive the next newsletter. Visit the **NEWSLETTERS** section to read previous electronic editions of the P-See Urgent. The online editions do not contain graphics, to reduce file size for faster downloading. **AREA LINKS** has links to member Web sites as well as other local sites of interest.

Please send questions, comments, and especially contributions to Pim Borman, your Web site editor, at swipcug@lycos.com

December 8th, 2003

**The Use of Computers In
Law Enforcement**

*Speaker: Don Stock of the Evansville Police
Department*

Central Library
5th & Locust Street
2nd Floor Auditorium
2 PM - 4PM

Visitors or new members welcome!