

Motherboard

a publication of the ibm/pc users group of redding, california

Volume 2002, Number of 11

www.snowcrest.net/ibmpcug/

November 2002

IBM/PCUG OF REDDING PRESENTS

Wednesday, November 13, 2002



Digital Media Updates



Demonstrated By
**The Digital Imaging Guy
Frank Tona!**

If you want info before buying that new digital camera, software, or other digital equipment, come to this meeting! Frank's presentations are always personable and enlightening.

Main Door Prize Is

**Microsoft Picture It! 2003, Money 2002,
and Front Page 2003! Great prizes!**

One free ticket to each person at the door!

Check at the door for your name tag
and please leave it in the Tag Box when the meeting is over.

— Meeting Begins at 7 PM —
coffee and tea available

Future Presentation:
December: Annual Christmas Party!

Club Calendar

GENERAL MEETING — 7 PM
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

WINDOWS & MORE SIG — 10 AM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 11, 18, 25

DTP SIG — 1:30 PM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 11, 25

MULTI-MEDIA SIG — 10 AM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

BOARD MEETING — 1 PM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18
at Jack-In-The-Box, Dana Dr.

INTERNET SIG — 7 PM
CANCELLED

SEE BACK PAGE
FOR MORE SIG INFO

The IBM/PC USERS GROUP OF REDDING
meets at the First Presbyterian Church,
2315 Placer, Redding.
For more information
phone **241-3902**
and leave a message.



Happy Thanksgiving!

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Club Information



Club Mentors

Members volunteering to help members!

Word Perfect	Charlotte Puck 347-3366, Days only cpuck@shastacollege.edu	DTP; Graphics	Christina Schlosser wein46@hotmail.com
New Users PaintShop Pro	Dorothy Kirk 246-9661, Anytime kirk@snowcrest.net	MS Word MS Picture It!	Jane Quinn 365-0825 jqquinn@cs.com
New Users	Bob Rice 357-2143, Anytime ricerl@snowcrest.net	MS Windows	Bill Ball bcard9@charter.net 275-4632
MS Windows Photo Delux	Darold Wright 222-1781	DTP; Graphics	Judi Ball jebed@charter.net 275-4632

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About the Motherboard

The *Motherboard* is published monthly by the IBM/PC Users Group of Redding, PO Box 494778, Redding, CA 96049-4778. The IBM/PCUG is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Subscriptions to the *Motherboard* are included in the \$25 annual membership fee. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform our members of upcoming events and provide information about the use of IBM compatible computers.

Disclaimer: Neither the IBM/PCUG, its Officers, the Editor, nor the newsletter contributors assume any liability for damages occurred due to the use of information provided in this publication.

Reprints: Articles from this newsletter may be reprinted by other user groups if credit is given to both the author and the *Motherboard*. Mail a copy

of the newsletter where the article is reprinted to the Editor at the address in the first paragraph of this text.

Membership Personal Ads:

The requirements are:

1. Advertiser must be a member.
2. The item must be computer-related.
3. The ad must be received by the editor on or before the *third Monday of the month*. Sorry, no exceptions.

Other terms must be approved by the club's Board of Officers and Directors.

Article Submissions: All articles and reviews must be submitted to J. Ball by the *third Monday of the month*. Sorry, no exceptions.

Motherboard Editor reserves the right to make corrections and deletions in all articles in the interest of grammar, style, and space.

Editor's Corner

It's your club. Your input is of value to us...

THE MEETING

Richard McKatz of Microsoft Mindshare impressed his audience by sharing several Microsoft Picture It! features, such as removing "red eye" from a photograph and placing a blue sky behind a scene that was dark with cloud cover. He also presented a Microsoft Golf game that I know intrigued some members. However, his most interesting demonstration was the new Notebook not even on the market yet. You can see him writing on it with a laser pen in the first picture on Page 3. As small as an 8 1/2 by 11 inch tablet, he can hold it easily in one hand. When the notebook is closed, the monitor/screen will rotate to the outside so that a person can take notes in his own *handwriting*. It has a program installed that will recognize the owner's handwriting and change it to editable text. The notebook has a 20 Gig hard drive. I did not get other details, although once it reaches the store shelves next year, I'm sure we'll hear a lot more about it.

We wish to thank Richard McKatz and his partner for a nice evening of impressive products and hope they enjoyed their visit with us. They are on a grand tour across the States and we were one of their first stops.

The door prizes Richard sent ahead of his visit were delayed in shipping — which was beyond anyone's control — so as promised at that meeting, we will have the prizes in November. Following are the packages Richard sent, Picture It! 2003, Money 2002, and Front Page 2003! What a nice line-up and too bad the gifts were not part of Richard's October meeting.

DOOR PRIZE!

Member, Joy Garcia won the color inkjet Epson Printer this month! Congratulations, Joy!

FROM THE CLUB

Most of our club's Special Interest Groups are going strong and certainly well worth your time to attend all that may appeal to you. The SIGs are "open forum," meaning there is no "beginning or end" to the class or information being shared. See times, dates and location on Page 12.

Continued on Page 5, Column 1

October's Microsoft Mindshare Meeting



*Representative Richard McKatz
of Microsoft Mindshare*



A Future Member?



Smile!

Winner!



Look at this "happy camper" club member!
Do you know why Joy Garcia is so happy?
She thought we did not get her picture with her
new Epson printer!



We had a beautiful little visitor at our meeting. She walked up the center aisle, never saying a word, looked up and down each aisle, then turned around walked back out the door at which point she began calling her mommy in earnest. However, distressed as she was, she remained quiet and cool about it and did not interrupt our meeting for even a minute, although it appears she is speaking in the photo.

IBM/PCUG MEMBER WEBSITES

ACTIVE WEBSITE DESIGN

Ruben Lopez
www.activewebsitedesign.com

BUSINESS SERVICES & REAL ESTATE

Mary Richmond
www.richmondbiz.net

DAVE & BECKY HEMP

www.c-zone.net/dochemp/

INTERNET MARKETING

Michael Saccomano
www.saccomano.com

JACK McAULIFFE

Real Estate Broker
www.realtyphoto.com

KITTYSTONE PERSIANS

Lynn Johanson
www.snowcrest.net/kittystone

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Stephen L. Osborn
www.norcal-pronet.org

QUESTIONED DOCUMENT EXAMINATION

Mary Ann Czermak
www.documents-examiner.com

RIVERCITY JAZZ SOCIETY

Joyce Covey
www.c-zone.net/jazzjoy/

FRONTIER SENIOR CENTER

Jane Quinn
www.jett.net/~frontier

SHASTANET

Our Community's Site
www.shastanet.org/

AWESOMETOOLS.COM

Michael Saccomano
www.AwesomeTools.com

STILLWATER HERBALS

Terrie Lemke
www.stillwtr.com/soap

REV. LOWELL'S ELECTRONIC CONGREGATION

Lowell Streiker
www.revlowell.com

ROLAND HOUSER

www.screaminginternet.net/rolandh/

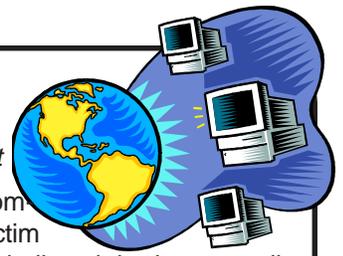
REDDING REAL ESTATE

Rick Goates
www.reddingrealestate.net

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The Surfboard

by Dorothy Kirk
IBM/PCUG of Redding, kirk@snowcrest.net



Who among you has not fallen for a hoax via the computer, usually in your e-mail? Or maybe you are the victim of a hoax and do not even know it. How many of you believed the hoax email about the Budweiser Frogs screen saver that would wipe out your hard drive? Worse yet, are you one of those persons who has sent a copy of a sympathetic plea for help for a crippled child? The truth is, hoax warnings are typically scare alerts started by malicious people — and passed on by innocent users who think they are helping the community by spreading the warning. It may be a genuine document, but it could more easily be a hoax sent by some weirdo. The prime rule is: **CHECK IT OUT!** With all of the sites available in this article there is no excuse for not checking it out. (Why clog the Internet with these extraneous e-mails, only for the joy of a warped personality?)

HOAX NEWS <http://www.stiller.com/hoaxes.htm> — This site contains many descriptions of Internet hoaxes, usually via e-mail, since 1998. Many of them are dire warnings or startling news from a friend who is passing on the information heard from a friend of a friend. What to do? Delete and ignore. Or find out how to report it to a hoax site such as those in this article.

CDC HEALTH <http://www.cdc.gov/hoaxrumors.htm> — There are many hoaxes related to your health. Check them out before believing them. Some examples are : Tainted Coca Cola, poisoned perfume samples, underarm deodorants that cause breast cancer, and many more.

SYMANTEC SECURITY RESPONSE — HOAX PAGE. These hoaxes usually arrive in the form of an e-mail. These contain bogus warnings usually intent on frightening or misleading users. The best course of action is to merely delete these hoax e-mails. This is a good page to access whenever you receive what appears to be a bogus message.

HOAXBUSTERS <http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/> — Besides junk mail and spam cramming Internet email boxes, you might receive dire warnings about devastating new viruses, Trojans that eat the heart out of your system, and malicious software that can steal the computer right off your desk, plus messages about free money, children in trouble, and other items designed to grab you and get you to forward the message to everyone you know. Most of these are hoaxes. This site describes some of the warnings, offers, and pleas for help that are filling our mailboxes and clogging our mail-servers that generally do not have any basis in fact.

VMYTHS.COM <http://www.vmyths.com/> — Want to know the truth about computer security hysteria? This site tells it all. You may even sign up for e-mail alerts. Find out if a virus is a hoax, ways to reduce hoaxes, and False Authority Syndrome. The latter is particularly insidious because the "authority" is often one that you trust.

THE MUSEUM OF HOAXES <http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/> — A very interesting site! There are hoaxes going back to before 1700 to the present. Be sure to take the Gullibility Test, too.

FACE ON MARS http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2001/ast24may_1.htm — Remember the face of Mars that received so much publicity a few years ago? Find out what modern science reveals about it.

HOAX WARNINGS <http://www.f-secure.com/news/hoax.htm> — This page is considered the industry's standard information source for new virus hoaxes and false alerts. Every hoax from A to Z.

Editor's note: Folks, if you don't have anything else by your machine, keep this article handy and pay special heed to the "Check It Out!" warning.



EDITOR'S CORNER

Continued from Page 2

FROM THE BOARD

Fortunately some members have come forward to fill the Officer positions! Officer candidates will be nominated during the November meeting and then voted in. Some of the Officers and Directors have served in different positions on the Board for several years now, and have served the club well and are continuing to do so due to lack of volunteers, so if you are inclined to fill one of these duties, please speak up now or at any time.

We have two openings for Directors in 2003. Please, also consider becoming a Director. A Director's obligation is attending the Board meeting for an hour or two once a month where his/her insight and opinion will be considered about this organization's present and future needs. You do not need computer skills for these volunteer jobs.

All members are vital and important—none more than others. But the individuals who give that little extra time for *any* volunteer duty are truly appreciated for keeping the organization healthy and well with a future for us all.

Line-up of our 2003 Officer staff:

President — **Lyle Van Norman**
Vice President — **Darold Wright**
Secretary — **Paul Colligan**
Treasurer — **Mario Quinn**
Past President — **Jane Quinn**

Also, consider doing an evaluation as explained in the lower box on this page. Remember, once you review a program in this newsletter according to the simple requirements, the program is yours to keep, no matter its value! If you have not done this before, you will most likely be surprised at how easy it is. In most cases you will have three months to learn the program or hardware, and to write the review. A guideline is given to simplify what the software companies want.

Here we are, November already! This means it is dark in the evenings and perhaps you may need a ride to the meetings. Please let us know, and we will attempt to line up a ride for you with another member. Or perhaps you could give someone in your area a ride. Let us know.

See you there...

Judi Ball

Elections Coming Up In Our Club's Job Descriptions

We need you. Please give the following information some thought. All of these positions require only a few hours a month and the proven merit of this club is worth a little time from all of us. If you might be interested please contact any Board Member.

ELECTED POSITIONS: PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, TREASURER, SECRETARY Job Descriptions

PRESIDENT

Lead club meetings and Board meetings.

Organize, and make contacts to publicize club events.

Be the organizational focal point for club meetings and all club events.

Delegate tasks.

Skills Required: Dependability, organizational skills, commitment and genuine interest in the club's survival.

Basic computer skills are required: E-mail and basic word processing.

VICE PRESIDENT

Cover for the President in his/her absence.

Assist the President in major club events i.e., visiting vendors, annual club events.

Attend the monthly board meeting and monthly club meeting.

Skills Required: Dependability, organizational skills, commitment and genuine interest in the club's survival.

Basic computer skills are required: E-mail and basic word processing.

TREASURER

Receive all monies due the PCUG from all sources.

Effect all disbursements to cover all legitimate PCUG obligations.

Manage and control the PCUG'S operating bank account.

Report to the board of directors on a monthly basis and with sufficient detail.

Skills Required: Dependability, Organizational skills, Basic checkbook balancing skills, commitment and genuine interest in the club's survival.

Basic computer skills are not required.

SECRETARY

Attend all Board Meetings and record the minutes.

Distribute the monthly minute report via e-mail to all board members and officers.

File and maintain all the recorded minutes in the club's secretarial log book.

Skills Required: Dependability, organizational skills, commitment and genuine interest in the club's survival.

Basic computer skills are required: E-mail and basic word processing.

Evaluation Program

Contact: Evaluation Manager, Jane Quinn at: jqquinn@cs.com

As a member of this club you are eligible to request Review Software from vendors who support User Groups. See the club's Website on the Evaluation Program for details of this great resource!

Below is the current list of members whose reviews are scheduled to appear in the Motherboard.

Product: **Global Scape's CuteSite
Builder**
Reviewer: Sara Somers
Due 10/02

Product: **Adobe Premier 6.5**
Reviewer: Anna Lee Horton
Due 12/02

Product: **Linux by Mandrake**
Reviewer: Daryl Rumble
Due 12/02

Bits and Pieces

by Rush Blodget; IMB/PCUG of Redding, rblodget@snowcrest.net



THE CONTINUING JOURNEY TOWARD SUCCESSFUL DVD RECORDING

Last month members of IBM/PCUG who attended the Multi-Media SIG at the Churn Creek Golf Club heard Frank Tona of Crown Camera describe his own tortuous path to successful recording of his family movies to DVD. There are many nuances to the process that must be carefully observed — most only found out by trial and error as Frank has done.

There was a great deal of interest in Frank Tona's presentation; Frank has promised to bring all of his equipment to a future Multi-Media SIG meeting and make a hands-on demonstration. Those of you who have been struggling with DVD recording should not miss it.

By the way, Frank commented that he has been using a Pioneer Electronics A04 DVD-R drive, but said that the A05 model is due out shortly; those of you on the verge of a purchase might wait for this later model. The prices have actually come down with each succeeding model released.

THE MEDIA CENTER PC

Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard have joined forces in the release of a newly designed computer utilizing a modification of Windows XP that will also contain a TV tuner and other special features. The model tested by Walter Mossberg, the Technology editor for the Wall Street Journal, came with 512 MB of RAM, a 120 GB hard drive, DVD and CD burners, high-end video and audio cards, and USB and FireWire ports. It also has slots in front for all possible types of memory cards used in digital cameras, portable music players and PDAs. It has a remote control that can switch the desktop to a larger menu readable from six feet. It accepts cable input and can receive all channels that a normal TV can. It can also mimic a TiVo or other digital recorder allowing a person to record and play back any TV program. In Music Mode it can play MP3 or other music files, in Pictures Mode it can give a slide show of pictures stored on the hard drive, and in Video Mode it can play back stored video clips.

The reviewer's recommendation was mixed. He felt that it performed well for music, video clips, photos, and DVDs, however, as a TV receiver it did not

measure up to the quality obtained on a conventional set (*Wall Street Journal*, October 10, 2002).

On-Line Computer Help

On *PC World's* home page I found a listing for several entrepreneurs that offer computer assistance on-line. The first one (*AAATechSupport.com*), was located at <http://www.aaatdchsupport.com>. This organization offered two free minutes of advice by voice line with a charge of \$2.79 per minute thereafter. This was somewhat expensive so I looked up another which was *Speak with a Geek* (<http://www.speakwithageek.com>). They offered toll free assistance for up to two computers, the computer software, printers, cameras, and other peripherals for \$34.95/month for three months, \$24.95/month for 6 months, or \$19.95/month for a one-year contract. I passed again.

A third offering was by *LiveRepair.com* (<http://www.liverepair.com>) which I did try. They offered unlimited on-line support 24-hours/day seven days per week for all computer hardware and software help including peripherals — PCs of any age and all operating systems from Windows 95 through XP and Linux for only \$29.95 for three months. This fee includes all computers and users in a household. I was again having a printer problem, so I thought I would give them a try. I was on-line with them using interactive messaging which worked quite well; they suggested that I protect or delete any sensitive material so that they could take over the computer from their location and attempt to remedy the problem. It took them almost three hours during which time the drivers were loaded and re-loaded multiple times, but they did solve the problem (this particular problem had baffled me as well as several local gurus). There may be a security risk in allowing such access. However, in this case I don't believe I had a credit card number or financial data in this computer.

I was of course intrigued by the low cost, 24-hours/day seven days/week service of the technicians involved, and by their high level of knowledge (I was passed onto a more skilled technician after an initial round of trials). I wondered if perhaps these might be highly skilled

English-speaking computer scientists now unemployed in a country overseas. I posed the question and was told that the technicians were operating from Kiev in the Ukraine.

Digital Imaging Guy



FRANK TONA

Nothing has changed in the digital imaging world! That is to say, digital cameras are still changing and progressing faster than anyone can keep up! There are new cameras and lower prices, there are more pixels and lower prices, there will continue to be new sizes, shapes, capabilities, and lower prices!

Probably the *really* newest news is the introduction of "lower priced" digital SLR cameras, with interchangeable lenses. There are several new cameras this year and they are lower priced (have I said lower priced enough?). The new Nikon D100 and Fuji S2 use all the Nikon lenses rated as six million pixels and the Canon D60 uses all the Canon lenses.

Introduced last year at Photokina in Germany is a camera that we've all been waiting for, but still seems to be "vaporware" so far. It is the Sigma with the Foveon chip! Also introduced at Photokina this fall are two new cameras whose chips are full 35mm size and are rated at 11 and 16 million pixels, by Canon and Kodak! Also Pentax is hinting at a new full size chip camera next year!

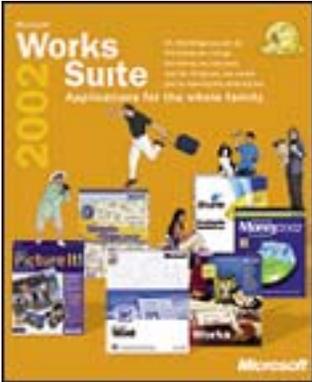
So what does this mean to you? When the Camera manufacturers produce new cameras at the high end and drop the price on previous models, it means *you* get better cameras on the low end with advanced features... Are they worth waiting for? My opinion is to buy what you need now and enjoy it. There will always be faster, better, and cheaper cameras around the corner, no matter *when* you buy!

See you at the meeting!

Frank

Microsoft Works Suite 6.0

by Bud Lawrence, IBM PC User's Group of Redding, bud1035@digital-star.com



I really enjoyed the opportunity to review this Microsoft package. And I have been happy with the number of projects I can finally do with my computer.

The Works Suite 2002 comes with six programs; Works 6.0 (spreadsheet, database, calendar, address book, e-mail tools), Word 2002, Picture It, Money 2002, Encarta Encyclopedia 2002, and Streets & Trips 2002. It's fair to say that all of these programs will enable me to do whatever I need.

The greatest improvement is the Task Launcher. There is a Search feature that allows you to find a task by typing it into the Search Window Box. There are also dozens of pre-set tasks to pick from starting with email and the Internet, House Hold Management, Events and Planning, Cards and Crafts, and Travel Information just to mention a few.

Then there is the Wizard. Choose the Wizard and a window pane will pop-up which lists projects, such as Household Management which then will give you a list of 20 things you can produce within that project; a grocery list, an address book, or a lawn and garden worksheet for example. If you chose the Lawn and Garden worksheet, this Launcher would open the spreadsheet program. Simply follow the Wizard to create your worksheet project. This is a much-improved interface to the past Works' program.

Multi-tasking is another great feature, for example, you could be doing research using the Encarta encyclopedia and immediately capture that information and place it into your Word document.

This version is also easier to understand. There is a handy instruction booklet that has an overview of all the Suite programs. There is one large section devoted to Word 2002.

And speaking of Word, my friends are envious. They only have Works 6.0 on their computers. I was pleased to discover that Word 2002 came in the Suite box, which is sold for about the same price as the single 2002 Word Program package sells for.

As most would agree, Microsoft Word is a great word processing program with hundreds of templates and wizards to create brochures, letters professional looking reports with clip art images to enhance them. I am quite glad to get this word processor as part of my Works Suite. The older versions of Works had its own word processor along with the database and spreadsheet programs. But it was limited to creating very sim-ple letters, reports and forms. It re-minded me of trying to use Word pad on steroids, *not good*. The great thing about this computer revolution is every-one jumped into word processing. But with the ease of creating fancy output with some Word Processors, you found it was impossible to do any of that with the original Works program. I'm so glad it's changed. I am anxious to use my address information with Word 2002 to create labels.

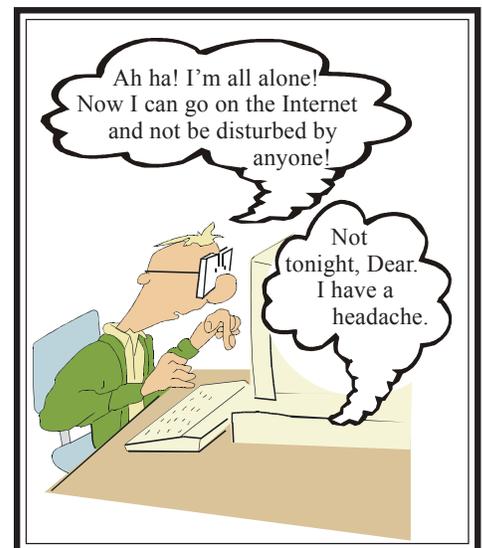
The individual Help Section of the Works' program is also excellent. It is so useful for a novice like myself. You can get yourself tangled and needing help especially when you start to use several programs simultaneously (multi-tasking).

The Streets and Trip program is very good, because either with the Wizard, or a few clicks of information about an up-coming trip, this program will give you detailed driving instructions and trip planning information no matter where you're planning to go, mapping out the quickest route or the scenic route according to your instructions. Or search for a place by using the address and pin-pointing the exact location, taking all the guesswork out of finding

a store or friend's home, etc. You may also add stopovers and be warned in advance of planned road construction and detours all across the country. You can print your map in color in five different styles to take with you. *And* there are still many *more* powerful features to this program that I am still learning about!

My overall impression of the Suite and all that it offers is, in one word, great! And it definitely gives the average user all they need to begin using the family computer. I was talked into getting this Suite by other club members who praised its features. And I have to admit that it certainly works for me:

- The price of the total box is \$81.99.
- System requirements are:
 - P Pentium 90 MHz or faster.
 - P Microsoft Windows 95, 98, Me, or 2000.
 - P 16 MB RAM (32 MB RAM recommended).
 - P 65 - 165 MB hard disk space (depending on number of programs installed).
 - P 4x CD-ROM drive.
 - P SVGA 256-color display.
 - P Mouse.
 - P Internet Explorer 5.5 required (included in Works). Up to an additional 80 MB of hard disk space may be required for Internet Explorer upgrade.



Are You Having “Buffer Underrun” Errors With Your CD Burner?

by Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club
From the October 2002 issue of the I/O Port Newsletter

During one of my recent radio shows (KLVI 560AM, Tuesdays 6-7pm, Saturdays, 1-4pm), I received many calls asking how to overcome the infamous “Buffer Underrun” error when writing to CD-R discs. While many of the newer CD-RW drives have built-in protection to prevent this error, the vast majority of CD-RW drives in use are subject to this most frustrating disc-ruining error.

According to several of the CD-RW drive manufacturers’ websites, as well as the websites of several of the major CD burning software publishers, this error is the single most common problem encountered by users when creating CD-R discs. A buffer underrun occurs when the buffer or memory cache (temporary storage) either built in the CD-RW drive, or supplied by the CD burning software, can not keep up with the data being written to the CD disc. Normally the buffer receives data from the computer, and parcels it out to the disc, the buffer supposedly holding enough data to feed and write smoothly to the CD-R disc as it is also receiving data from the computer. Ideally, the data stream should be smooth and continuous. If, for any of many reasons, the buffer does not have the requisite amount of data available, it is possible that a buffer underrun error may be created. Common causes of this error are inadequate system performance (not enough memory, slow processor, hard drive problems, too many programs loaded and running), and low quality or defective CD-R discs.

There are several simple tasks that can be done to reduce the chance of buffer underrun errors due to poor system performance. Most CD burning software indicates the maximum speed that the CD can write, typically in the format of “8x” or “10x” on a pull down menu. By selecting a writing speed one or two levels lower than the maximum, the error often disappears. Running both the Windows integral Scandisk and Defrag programs, or similar third party utilities, can possibly ensure that the hard drive is not the culprit causing the errors.

Most of the CD burning software uses that hard drive as intermediate storage while the CD is being created, and the rule-of-thumb is that hard drive space of at least 150% of the amount of data being written must be readily available on the hard drive. If cluttered with obsolete data, simply cleaning the c:\windows\temp directory by deleting obsolete files can often help prevent the problem. In many older Windows computers, mostly running Windows 98 and 95, the CD drive settings may be incorrectly configured. Go to My Computer – Control Panel – System – Device Manager – click on the “+” to the left of “CDROM” to show the drive model – click on the CD drive to highlight it – click on properties – Settings – and check both “Disconnect” and “Auto Insert Notification”, and uncheck “Sync Data Transfer”. On many computers, properly setting this configuration alone may be adequate to eliminate the error.

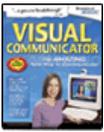
If inadequate system resources cause the problem, it may also be easily resolved without the necessity of spending money to add memory or install a faster processor. Sometimes programs that have been already exited leave kernels of code or data in memory that unnecessarily consumes resources; typically the easiest method to restore those resources is to simply reboot the computer. By simply stopping any unnecessary programs from running in the background, and not performing any other tasks while burning CDs (multi-tasking), system resources consisting of CPU power, memory, and other resources may be easily and quickly made available. That traditional method to stop unwanted programs that may be running is to either right click on their icon in the taskbar and click on “close”, or do a CTRL-ALT-DELETE, followed by task manager on newer operating systems, and “end task” all programs running except “systray” and “explorer”, before burning the CD. After the CD has been successfully created, reboot the computer in order to load antivirus software, and other desired utilities. Another option, which may also improve

general system performance, not just CD writing, is to stop unnecessary programs from loading at all during the boot “start up” sequence. Detailed instructions on how to do this for all Windows operating systems can be found by clicking on the first link on my radio show web page at www.mycomputershow.com. An alphabetical list of programs that may be in the startup, along with an indication of if they are necessary or unnecessary, is the second link on my website. Being connected to an “always on” broadband internet connection, such as DSL or cable can also consume resources. If the error occurs, disconnect from the net.

Another possible cause of the error may be the CD burning software itself. Most software included free with CD-RW drives is the “lite” or “limited” version lacking some of the features of the full commercial versions. Check your software publisher’s website for updates to the version of software being used, as these may resolve the buffer underrun problem. Newer versions of the software, sometimes downloadable either as free upgrades, or available to registered users at a discount, may also resolve the problem. Some CD burning software better manage resources and buffers than others, and a software change may show improvement. Many of the CD software publishers offer a free trial version of their product for download; this may be a useful exercise.

The CD-R media itself can be the culprit. Newer disc technologies, often using a blue or green dye on the writable side of the disc, can usually be written to faster and more reliably than the older, and cheaper, silver dye technology. The difference in price between the better quality blank CDs, and the no-name cheap generics is often small, considering the savings in both ruined discs, and the time to create them.

By properly configuring your computer and software, the CD burning experience can be less frustrating, and more productive.



VISUAL COMMUNICATOR PLUS from SERIOUS MAGIC

by Anna Lee Horton, IBM/PCUG of Redding, alhorton@sbcglobal.net

With the Visual Communicator program you can create videos that look like a live TV broadcast. This makes it easy to create a video presentation in real-time without extensive editing. You can create the video in a short time using a webcam or a camcorder. And your creation can be viewed by anyone using Windows Media Player, which is included with Microsoft Windows. Depending on the file type used, you can send them by e-mail, put them on the Internet, burn them to a CD, or save them to your hard drive. This program is a powerful communication tool for business, education, or for personal messages. And it is fun and easy to use!

When I first loaded the program, I had difficulty getting my camcorder to work with it. I received fast support from Serious Magic. They determined that I needed a newer driver for my video card and even told me which one to get amongst the many choices. I really appreciated the help.

A manual comes with the program, which is a big plus for any software program in my opinion. And this manual's instructions are easy to follow plus it has many helpful hints to make your "broadcasts" more professional.

The first thing to do is set up your studio by attaching a webcam or camcorder to your computer and then position the camera so you see yourself in the center of the output monitor window. You also need adequate lighting.

Start from the program's Wizard where you have a choice of creating your video by Style, Topic, "Instant Hollywood" Show, Miscellaneous, or Blank Video. Within each category there are other choices, such as Styles: You could choose Celebration, then Birthdays, Anniversaries, or Sales Promotions. If you choose Topic Shows, there are Business, School, and Personal category choices. You can create a video from scratch, but built-in wizard templates can instantly build a show with titles, graphics, and music created by television professionals. Then, if you choose, you can add your own graphics and music.

Once your video creation template is selected, you are taken to the main user

interface screen—your work area. On the left is the Output Monitor Window where you can see yourself as a Broadcaster or the actions you selected for the Action Tray, and below it are Show Controls. In the middle is the Teleprompter where you can write your script or outline and read from it as it scrolls up while Visual Communicator records your show. On the right is the Action area where you can put the actions you want, such as effects, titles, graphics, pictures, and music. Just below the Teleprompter and Action area is the Media File Library. This library contains video effects, styles, topics, videos, graphics, audio, and a browse tab so you can bring in (drag & drop) files from your hard-drive. There are many, many choices! You can drag a video and a music file onto the right side of the action tray, while on the left side you can drag in an effect such as a *peel right*.

Visual Communicator Plus comes with a green V-Screen drop cloth and a clip-on microphone. The V-Screen is a green drop cloth set up behind you, so that you can have the background of your choice as a backdrop. Just select an image or a video for the background from Visual Communicator, or select your own. You can be anywhere you like instantly — Paris, Madrid, or your favorite camping spot. Use your digital camera to create your own backgrounds, or go onto the Internet for other backgrounds—have fun with different backgrounds!

I used the wizard to create my first broadcast video for my grandson's birthday. In addition to titles with fanfares, it contained two video clips from Visual Communicator's media library with sounds added, some of my digital photos, all with my voice narration. I sent a compressed file format via e-mail. It produced a laugh, but my grandson thought "grandma had too much time on her hands!"

The next broadcast was created by the wizard using the Topics Show and Family News Bulletin category. This broadcast was about an anniversary celebration and included two videos that I had taken with my camcorder at a family gathering. In addition to those, I brought in still digital

photos of family members from my hard drive. To that I added music and my own narration. I decided to publish it in a non-compressed format (avi), but a box popped up and warned me that there was not enough room on my hard drive to handle this and it would be better to choose another file type. I did as suggested and chose a compressed file type, saved it to my hard drive and burned it to a CD to mail to relatives.

The warning is a good feature as it protects you from a system crash because your video broadcast is too large.

Another good feature is being able to rehearse your broadcast as many times as you want and make changes in real-time before you record it. And even after you record it you can make changes and re-record before publishing it.

Visual Communicator can work with most video, image, and sound formats. The video files it works with are .mpg, .mpeg, .m1v, .mpe, .avi, .asf, .wm, .wmv, and .ivf. In still images it works with .bmp, .jpg, and .png. In audio it works with .wav, .mp3, .wma, .aif, .aiff, .aifc, .au, .mpa, .snd, and .mp2.

The program makes it easy for you to create professional television-like broadcasts in real-time using its Wizard system and its large media library. It's an easy program to use and a lot of fun.

MINIMUM SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

- .Windows 98, 98SE, ME, 2000, & XP
- .Pentium® 111 or equivalent
(Including Pentium 4, Celeron 2, AMD Athlon and Duron)
- .128 MB RAM
- .CD-ROM drive
- .650 MB available hard drive space
- .16MB AGP graphics card with 3-D acceleration

RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS:

- (All the above plus the following)
- .800 MHz or faster processor
- .Audio card with PC microphone

Price:

Visual Communicator Plus, \$149.95
Regular Visual Communicator, \$99.95

Editor's note: Visit our Multi-media SIG and see more about this program!



A Free “Do Almost Everything” Utility

by Ira Wilsker, *Golden Triangle PC Club*

From the October 2002 issue of the I/O Port Newsletter



A lot of us take digital photographs, and need an easy-to-use utility to edit those photos, or add special effects. While most digital cameras save their images in any of several popular formats, particular brands of digital cameras, such as some Casios, save their images in proprietary formats. Many of us enjoy listening to digital music in MP3 or other popular formats. We may use our computers at work, at home to watch or listen to streaming audio or video. Homemade or commercial digital video from CDs, DVDs, or online, in a variety of formats, is becoming more widely distributed, and often requires a viewer in order to play those formats on our computers. Sometimes we may wish to “capture” an image on our screens for any of many purposes. We may also wish to view faxes on our computers, without using any dedicated software. Nokia cell phone users, with optional data cables, may desire to view or edit Nokia formatted images. For those of you who may choose to receive our conventional processed film on Kodak CDs, a special viewer is typically required to view and edit our photos in Kodak’s proprietary format. Many others utilize the popular mail-order “Seattle Film Works” photo finishing service, and receive their film images in the proprietary Seattle format, which “requires” that their photo editor and viewer be used. I, along with millions of others, periodically use a scanner to digitize images; a universally capable scanner import utility would be very helpful. While there are many, often expensive, commercial software utilities that can perform one or a few of these functions, imagine how beneficial it would be if all of these functions, and more, were bundled into one, relatively small program, that is available online for free (free for non-commercial use)! For convenience, what if a single version can work well on any PC that is using any version of Windows from 95 to XP? There is a single program that can do all of that, and more. That program is IrfanView32.

IrfanView32 (pronounced “Ear Fan View”) is written by a young Bosnian programmer, Irfan Skiljan, in his home in Jajce, Bosnia, and is available from any

of the major download sites, or direct from the publisher at www.irfan_view.com. Version 3.75, dated July 2002, is about an 800k download, and is the latest version available. While listed as “free” for personal home, educational, charitable, or humanitarian use, a commercial or business license to use the product is only \$10. Despite its extremely low cost, discounts are available from the \$10 registration for multiple licenses. Once registered, currently stated plans are that updates and upgrades will be available for free. Compared to its competitors, Irfan is both top-rated, and a bargain. Obviously not a secret to computing aficionados, IrfanView32 has been the long running #1 program downloaded from the hundreds of Tucows download sites around the world. While lacking some of the “bells and whistles” of its far more expensive commercial competitors, such as Adobe PhotoShop (www.adobe.com, about \$600 retail) or Paint Shop Pro (www.jasc.com, about \$100 retail), Irfan is amazingly capable of common image editing, as well as manipulating, converting, or playing almost any image, audio, or video used throughout the world. Containing a simple email utility, Irfan can email images directly from the program, without first loading an email program. The author claims that Irfan was explicitly written to be international in scope, and universal in utilization. The Irfan website lists about 75 audio, video, and image formats supported, including both native PC and Mac formats. While the basic 800K download is very capable of viewing, editing, or playing most of the common image and sound formats, Irfan was designed with an open architecture. This allows for additional free “plug-ins” to be downloaded from the Irfan website, and other third parties, which enable the program to process many more media formats than the basic program does.

Many web surfers have stated their frustrations that arise when visiting websites that require the surfer to download large browser plug-ins in order to play animations such as “Flash”, or Apple’s QuickTime, view graphics in non-standard formats, or play streaming audio

and video in such formats as “Real Player RAM”. Irfan makes that simple in that it can be used to play those formats, in some cases better and more efficiently than the other publishers’ freestanding software products. Irfan is also free of the spyware and cookies utilized by some web viewing or streaming software, which some privacy minded individuals find questionable.

If viewing or editing almost any known digital image format is needed, and if view-ing or listening to almost any known audio or video format is desired, then Irfan-View32 should be tried, and strongly con-sidered. Whether used at home for free, or registered for a pittance, Irfan is a more than viable competitor to products many times its price, and should be seriously considered by all Windows users.

WARNING! Some versions of the very common KLEZ worm contain a dangerous payload (the WLKern32 virus) that is next scheduled to execute its “time bomb” on Friday, September 13, or Monday, September 16 (the 13th and 16th day of every odd-numbered month). If your computer is infected with this virus it may have deactivated any installed antivirus software. If “detonated” by an internally selected random number (as much as a one in eight chance), critical Windows system files and important data files on the hard drive may be destroyed, rendering the computer unusable. Since published reports indicate that as many as one in five PCs is infected with some form of KLEZ, I strongly suggest that all Windows users do a free online virus scan (requires Internet Explorer) at either housecall.anti-virus.com or www.pand_aSoft_ware.com (click on “free virus scan”) as soon as possible. Other nefarious payloads are scheduled to execute on the sixth of each month. Protect your computer and its data!

Note: This is Bill Ball’s favorite program. He’s been using and promoting it to his class for years. He enjoyed reading someone else’s view of it. This is taking the place of his Did You Know? Tip.

Please pay special attention to the KLEZ WARNING in the shaded area.

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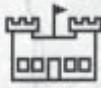
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Have you been looking for a **reliable, honest computer shop** here in Redding? Well, I have great news for you! **Synergy Technology Solutions** is open for business! We have been open since March of 2002 and growing very rapidly. Hello, I'm owner and head technician, Jarred Murphy, serving Redding since 1996.

Synergy sets out to bring Redding the finest in computer repair (inshop and onsite, business and home), networking (including DSL/Cable modem sharing), upgrades, new computer sales, printer repair, computer parts, accessories and more. You will find many items in stock, but get this...**at the lowest prices!** Why so low? We are a new company and know that the best prices in town attracts people. This means great deals for you...Parts that are even competitive with the Internet! From printer cables and serial adapters to the latest in aluminum cases and cooling accessories, from memory and hard drives to routers and hubs, we have what you want!

On the computer repair side, **Synergy** shines even more. Striving for complete customer satisfaction with every repair, **Synergy** goes the extra mile. But don't take our word for it. Take a look at the customer appreciation letters and comments posted in our office, or visit our website to see some online (www.SynergyRedding.com). In fact, we are so confident in establishing life-long partnerships with customers, **we offer all new customers 1/2 off your first service call** (inshop or onsite, two-hour max, applies to labor only), as low as \$25/hour Inshop, or \$30/hour. Onsite for professional computer service!

We invite you to come down and visit us! You can find us downtown to **1796 California St.** (between Jack's Grill and Angelo's Pizza), Mon-Fri; 8:00 to 5:30. Even if you don't need anything right now, stop by and say hello, cool off with Mt. Shasta Spring water, and grab some candy. If you have any questions, call us at **247-3000**.

Thank you for your time! We look forward to meeting you!



Members Helping Members



Windows & More SIG

Classes taught by Bill Ball and George Barber
Monday, Nov. 4, 11, 18, 25 — 10 AM



Bill Ball: 275-4632
bcard9@charter.net

Web Design SIG Wanted!



Some folks are showing an interest in gathering a group of members together to share in web designing. Paul Colligan and Jamie Holmes are joining Lynn Johanson in this exciting venture.

A SIG (Special Interest Group) is a Group of people who appreciate the same subject and get together on a regular basis to share their Special common Interest.

So if you would like to join an informal get together with other club members with this same interest, please contact Lynn Johanson at:

kittystone@snowcrest.net.

New Multi-Media SIG



Discover digital gadgets and their great features!
Includes, but is not limited to Digital Cameras, Burning Music CD's, creating QuickTime Movies

Saturday, Nov. 16 — 10 AM
Churn Creek Golf Course

Meeting Room; 7335 Churn Creek Rd.

Jane Quinn 365-0825
jqquinn@cs.com



Internet SIG

I am sorry to announce that due to Roland's coming season of extensive travel, he is going to give up his Internet SIG leadership.

If anyone would like to keep this SIG going, please contact an Officer or Director.

In the meantime, there will be no Internet SIG meeting.



DTP & Graphics Art SIG

Monday, Nov. 4, 11, 25 — 1:30 PM

Please see map to left for meeting place.

Judi Ball 275-4632
jebed@charter.net

Bring paper, pen, & floppy disk.

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1. Benefit from a common interest in a personal (and costly) investment: Your business or personal computer.
2. Enjoy more of that investment by learning more about it.
3. Share tips and tricks, as well as new and old ideas.
4. Become exposed to a variety of new hardware and software without sales pressure.
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