


# MOTHERBOARD

A Publication of the Computer  Users Group Of Redding, CA

Volume 2006, Number 02

<http://users.snowcrest.net/ibmpcugr>

February 2006

## YOUR C.U.G. PRESENTS

Tuesday, February 21, 2006

### Pro Show Gold Program

Presented by

Paul Colligan and Darold Wright

See how this program creates productive slide shows, such as compiling all of your photos into one or more slide shows for the family to save and view!

Main Door Prize

**Microsoft Professional Office Suite 2003, (\$500 Program!)**



Plus two other door prizes

One free ticket to each member at the door!

*Club Business and Program Presentation 7 PM, coffee and tea available*

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

General meetings are at the Palo Cedro Church Of Christ, 21895 St. Francis Way, Palo Cedro, CA.

Official Website: <http://users.snowcrest.net/ibmpcugr>

For more information call any Board member listed on Page 2.

March Presentation:

Computer Crash Recovery, Panel and Audience Participation



### CUG Calendar

#### CUG Board Meeting

1 PM, Monday, Feb 27

at Jack-In-The-Box, Dana Drive

#### MULTI-MEDIA

10 AM, Saturday, Feb 18

#### DTP SIG

2 PM, Wednesdays

Feb 8, 15, 22

#### WINDOWS & MORE

11:30 AM, Wednesdays

Feb 8, 15, 22

SEE BACK PAGE FOR MORE SIG INFO

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## Club Information

Club Website: <http://users.snowcrest.net/ibmpcugr>

**Club Mentors** Members volunteering to help members!

<b>New Users</b>	<b>Dorothy Kirk</b>	<b>MS Windows</b>	<b>Bill Ball</b>
<b>PaintShop Pro</b>	246-9661, Anytime dak75@sbcglobal.net	<b>98, ME, XP</b>	bcard9@charter.net
		<b>Hardware, Software</b>	275-4632
<b>New Users</b>	<b>Bob Rice</b>	<b>DTP;</b>	<b>Judi Ball</b>
	357-2143, Anytime ricerl@snowcrest.net	<b>Graphic Prgs</b>	275-4632
		<b>Photo Editing</b>	jebed@charter.net
<b>MSWindows</b>	<b>Darold Wright</b>	<b>MS Word, PowerPoint</b>	<b>Jane Quinn</b>
<b>Photo Delux</b>	222-1781 daroldwright@yahoo.com	<b>Movie, Maker 2, DVD Prgs.</b>	365-0825
		<b>Digital Image Pro</b>	jquinn@charter.net

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## Motherboard Newsletter Policies and Deadlines

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

**Disclaimer:** Neither the CUG, 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, CUG 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.

### Personal Ads For Members:

Requirements are:

1. Advertiser must be a member.
2. The item must be computer-related.
3. The ad must be received by editor J. Ball by the *monthly date of the board meeting*. 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 *Monday of the monthly Board meeting (see Page 1 for date.)* Sorry, no exceptions.

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

## President's Message

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

### BOARD MEETING

In the words of Bill Cosby, "The secret of failure is attempting to please everybody." At the board meeting on January 23, your directors were very aware that they would not please everyone by their decision to continue meeting in the evening. After much debate over the past few months and considering all the possibilities, the board agreed that (1) we do not have the resources to hold more than one meeting each month, and (2) that it would be inappropriate to exclude opportunities for working people to be part of the group. One consideration is that if we changed to daytime meetings, it would characterize our group as seniors who *play* with computers rather than an organization of computer savvy people with the ability and the willingness to help people of any age. Yes, most of our current members are senior citizens, but if we do not keep the door open to younger generations, we will lose the club as our energy fades. I salute our board members for their courage and com-mitment in this decision.

If you need a ride to a meeting, please call me at 247-7044 or e-mail me at [pc5555@gmail.com](mailto:pc5555@gmail.com).

### FUTURE MEETINGS

February 15. Our topic for this month is "ProShow Gold," a powerful and totally "learnable" program for preparing slide shows for use with a TV or on a computer. Two experienced users — Darold Wright and myself — will show you how.

### PRESIDENTIAL CRASH!

In November, I experienced a total "meltdown" of both computers in our home. "Crash" is much too polite a term for what happened. Both my wife and I were without e-mail, bank records, pictures of our grandchildren, addresses and telephone numbers, etc., for over a month. Quite devastating and it prompted the March meeting subject. We're assembling a panel of survivors to tell why their disaster occurred, what they did about it, how they plan to prevent, or at least minimize, the consequences of future disasters. We still need more members for that panel. Let me know if you are interested.

Paul Colligan

## January Meeting



Paul's first duty as our 2006 President was to present the club business to the audience and to introduce the club's three SIG Leaders. (SIG means Special Interest Groups.) Jane Quinn, Bill Ball, and Judi Ball took the stage individually to familiarize the membership with the functions of their SIGs and invited all members to attend. This proved to be an enlightening evening, because all three SIGs have enjoyed the attendance of new SIG participants. Why don't you come and check us out also.

## Congratulations Winners!



Ken Downs won a Smart Computing subscription

## CUG Club Announcements

### Welcome To New Members & Renewals New Members

*Ed Beaulac and Patricia Carlile*

### Renewals

*Alice Pringle, Hene Speck,  
Hordon and Anna Dawson, Jim Smith,  
Jo Ann Pulliam, Margaret Martinovich,  
and Richard Marx*



Dick Marx won the 64 Megabyte Jump Drive

## March Only General Meeting Date Change

The Palo Cedro Church Of Christ is having a 3-day seminar on our usual Tuesday meeting in March, so we will be meeting that **Thursday, March 23, 6:30 PM**. Please make note of this one date change.



Dick Freel won the Humor Card Program

# On A Personal Note

by Paul Colligan

This is a picture of my granddaughter. (You'll probably see more grandkid pictures this year.) It shows what five-year-old girls do these days while waiting for their little sister to get a haircut. No more playing house. How times have changed!



## IBM/PCUG MEMBER WEBSITES

### DAVE & BECKY HEMP

[www.c-zone.net/dochemp/](http://www.c-zone.net/dochemp/)

### JACK McAULIFFE

Real Estate Broker  
[www.realtyphoto.com](http://www.realtyphoto.com)

### KITTYSTONE PERSIANS

Lynn Johanson  
[kittystone.com](http://kittystone.com)

### MEXICAN-TOURS

Lyle VanNorman  
[www.mexican-tours.com](http://www.mexican-tours.com)  
[lyle@mexican-tours.com](mailto:lyle@mexican-tours.com)

### INFORMATIONAL SITE FOR AIR QUALITY

[EnvironmentalMold.com](http://EnvironmentalMold.com)  
[lyle@EnvironmentalMold.com](mailto:lyle@EnvironmentalMold.com)

### QUESTIONED DOCUMENT EXAMINATION

Mary Ann Czermak  
[www.documents-examiner.com](http://www.documents-examiner.com)

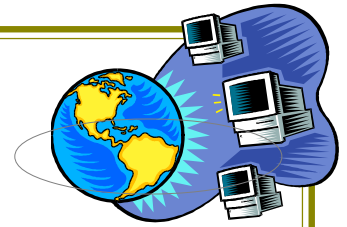
### REDDING REAL ESTATE

Rick Goates  
[www.reddingrealestate.net](http://www.reddingrealestate.net)

**Publicize Your WebSite  
Here for FREE!**  
(Members Only Please)

# The Surfboard

by Mary Montague, [twinsgranny228@aol.com](mailto:twinsgranny228@aol.com)



As your Motherboard proofreader I am obviously very interested in grammar, punctuation, diction, and proper English usage in general. I have many books on these subjects, but I have also found some interesting websites which just about anyone could use and enjoy. Ever have a grammar question or dispute to settle? I would be happy to answer your questions or be a referee (really, by phone or e-mail!) but I also recommend Grammar Slammer, which is actually a link on the English Plus website. I recommend going directly to: [www.englishplus.com/grammar/](http://www.englishplus.com/grammar/)

The subjects covered include, among others, Style and Usage, Capitalization, Abbreviation, Punctuation, and (my favorite), Common Mistakes and Choices. But you might even want to start with the alphabetized Glossary of Grammatical Terms, from "abbreviations" to "wordy/wordiness." I checked random items such as Absolute Modifiers which takes on one of my most annoying errors, "very unique," and Common Mistakes and Choices (A-Z) which tackles another of my pet peeves, the misuse of the word "parameters."

This site offers a grammar program for sale, which is touted as better than the one available in Word. It may well be, as I am not very impressed with Word's grammar help. But I have no recommendation one way or the other as I do not plan to buy it. For everyday situations involving English writing or speaking, this is a handy reference on line.

If you want a specific answer to a question about a particular grammatical problem, you can actually contact a real person with your question by going to <http://aacton.gladbrook.iowapages.org/d3.html> "Ask the Grammar Lady. It's Free." Mrs. Acton, an experienced teacher, will respond with an answer. It will probably not be immediate, as in instant messaging, but the wait will probably be within 24 hours. I posted a question before I went to bed and received an answer by the next morning.

### [www.wordorigins.org](http://www.wordorigins.org)

This site is just a lot of fun for word lovers. If you have ever wondered about the derivation of a particular word or phrase, I recommend this entertaining and enlightening website. It explains the history

of many common words and phrases and also debunks many popularly accepted versions of how many expressions came to be part of our everyday language. In alphabetical order, "The Big List" has 400 entries. At random, I selected certain ones I was curious about and others that I thought I knew all about but found myself mistaken: New York minute, raining cats and dogs, whole shebang, push the envelope, posh, generation X, and on and on.

Another feature of this website is a free subscription to a more or less weekly electronic newsletter featuring articles about language. Past articles are archived, as well.

### [www.etymonline](http://www.etymonline)

As a student of Latin and English and the relationship between the two, I can usually figure out or make a good guess at the meaning or derivation of most words by noting their Latin or Indo-European roots. But let's face it. Our wonderfully eclectic language is a great and varied mixture of tongues from all over the globe, due to our history of trade and exploration and scientific discovery and technology, and other factors too numerous to count. Any given word is likely to have originated from any continent, indigenous tribe, occupation, neighborhood or even the inventive mind of one person. In any case the subject of etymology, or the origin of words is fascinating. This site is a great source of fun for the lover of words and the just plain curious.

Enter a word and press OK. It's that simple. May I suggest starting with "monolith" and then "misnomer?" All right, so I have a "beef" (first recorded as slang for "complaint" in 1888) about the name of that pile of old concrete at Turtle Bay Park. Seriously, though, this website is a great source of information, and I heartily recommend it as a great reference tool.

### NOTE TO READERS

I will be happy to hear from you about interesting websites you have discovered or subjects that you would like to see highlighted in this column.

# Bits and Pieces

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



## PRINTING YOUR FAVORITES LIST WITH THE E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Printing a List of Favorites with their e-mail Addresses: I once paid \$29 for a program that did this same thing without realizing that the capability was already embedded in Internet Explorer. This method was published in David Einstein's column of computer tips in the *San Francisco Chronicle* for July 18, 2005. The method: Go to Internet Explorer's File menu and click on Import and Export. This launches a wizard that will guide you through the process of saving your Favorites in a new file entitled **bookmark.htm**. The exported file will by default be saved in the My Documents folder. You may now go to Print in the File menu, then to Options and select Print Table of Links. You may now click on Print to print the Favorites list including their e-mail addresses.

## HIDDEN MESSAGES OR BACKMASKING

One of the *Wall Street Journal's* Technical editors, Dionne Searcy, on January 9, 2006, states that since the advent of digital recording, many music CDs have been so programmed by artful recording experts that they will provide a

different tune or a message (possibly ribald) if played in reverse. She states that an entire cult has now grown up around this and that the practice is called backmasking. Information and data on this are available at [jeffmilner.com/backmasking.htm](http://jeffmilner.com/backmasking.htm). I have not tried it.

## ARE EXTENDED WARRANTIES WORTHWHILE?

Dell, Whirlpool, and General Electric have recently cut the length of their own warranties to give buyers more incentive to buy an extended warranty. A warranty consulting firm states that only 20 cents of every dollar spent on them is needed for claims. The retailer is said to end up with 50 cents on that dollar as pure profit and the balance goes to the insurer. A *Consumers' Reports* survey shows that only one third of computers need work in the first three years. *Warranty Week* suggests that it may possibly be worth the extra cost if the policy not only covers repairs, but gives you someone to talk to when it isn't broken but doesn't work as expected.

It is suggested that you first read the manufacturer's warranty to see if the company offers extended coverage; if

it does, then read the extended warranty brochure. Also, credit card companies such as Master Card, American Express, and VISA frequently extend warranties on products bought using their cards. One is advised to read the warranty offers carefully. Some run concurrently with the manufacturers warranty and others don't begin until the manufacturer's warranty runs out. Prices are frequently comparable from different vendors but the coverage may vary (*Wall Street Journal*, January 14, 2006).

## DTP SIG Update

Besides the photo/graphic's editing and desktop publishing subjects we tackle weekly, we are also learning how to use graphic tablets and pressure sensitive pens. And I am very happy to report that the tablets and pens are much easier to use than most of us thought.



These USB tablets can be used to write in your own handwriting by using the pen or mouse in any program that has a free-hand drawing tool. Microsoft Publishing for example, to any art program, or card creating program, etc. Easy tracing is also a plus.

This SIG is an informal combination of class and computer experience sharing. Questions are encouraged, and answers can be voiced by any participant. It is **not** an artist or drawing class. It is a graphic editing and publishing environment. If you can dream up a project to do in an art editing program, or a publishing type program, we can probably tackle it with you and turn out a pleasing result.

Come and give us a try. Map directions, times, and dates are on the last page of this newsletter.

SIG Leader, Judi Ball

## Monthly Treasury Report

by Treasurer Mario Quinn

Nov - Dec 2005, Reported on Jan 23, 2006

Beginning Balance		\$1742.55
Income:		
Membership Dues	\$ 325.00	
Door Prize Ticket Donations	72.00	
Post Office Refund	9.68	
Total April Income	\$406.68	+406.68
New April Income Balance		\$2149.23
Outlay:		
Church Rent	\$ 60.00	
New Laptop Warranty	129.00	
Motherboard Printing (Nov & Dec)	183.57	
Post Office Box, 6 months	22.00	
Total Outlay	\$394.57	\$394.57
Bank statement agreement, Dec 30, 05		\$1754.66
CD at North Valley Bank, Dec 30, 05		3000.00
Total Liquid Assets		\$4754.66

The membership dues for springtime (in general) are the highest as most dues are paid during this time of year. This income drastically falls off in the summer as our monthly expenses will be more than we take in.

Also, the total assets, including the CD, are to be understood as the club's backup for all equipment used at the general meetings and for the use of the SIGs, such as the screen, laptop, projector (\$2-3000), projector lamps, etc. This backup is necessary, as property insurance is too expensive and these items need replacing periodically to keep up with the ever-changing technology.

# Multi Media SIG UpDate

SIG Group meetings are every Thursday at the Senior Center in Anderson from 1 to 3 PM. Members only will be able to use the club's laptop to burn their DVD movie projects. We also meet the Saturday following our general meetings. **However, in February we will meet on the 18th. Call me for details on meeting place.**

This past meeting we gathered at member Dick Marx's home. We send our thanks to him and his lovely wife for hosting our group. Their family room was spacious and we all spread out. Several of the members even had space to turn on their laptops to follow along with the meeting. It was an excellent meeting place. Thanks Dick.

How to Create and Burn DVD movies were the main topics. I led the group while we worked together to detail how to create a Menu Driven DVD movie. We touched on all the basic features of making a movie. I gave everyone a 12-item step-by-step handout, from which we will build on as we progress through all the features of making movies. We discussed terms such as *Collecting* (importing digital images or mpegs already on your computer) versus *Capturing* (importing footage from your camcorder to your PC). The guide walked us through adding music to the movie from our MY Music Folder, adding special affects and fancy transitions, and lastly, saving the movie project and actually *burning* the movie to a DVD disc.

We also reviewed Microsoft's Photo Story, version 3 . This free download product creates a slideshow of your digital photos, adding motion, music, voice narration, and text and much more. The wizard that starts the story line is easy to follow. And the great thing is the completed file can be used in most DVD authoring programs to burn the show to disc for viewing on the family room DVD player. Microsoft even has a \$20 Sonic DVD for the PhotoStory program if your DVD authoring software won't recognize the Photostory file. That website is, <http://www.estore.sonic.com/enu/photostory/default.asp>

I also demonstrated how Microsoft's Movie Maker ver 2 (wmv )files, and their Photostory 3 (wmv) files, plus digital images (.jpegs) from My Picture folder could all be used by Roxio's DVD Builder program to create a movie.

Lastly, thanks to Ken Downs who came up with a work around solution to a PowerPoint problem for one of the attendees. We had a great group! Hope to see you all next time, and we welcome all CUG members.

## TIPS: HELPFUL WEBSITE RESOURCES

Basic tips on photography as well as all the MS products that support this hobby.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/default.mspx>

Resize images on the fly; Image Resizer, recommend by Dick Marx.

Microsoft's PowerToy enables you to resize one or many image files with a right-click.

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx>

**Computer Scrapbooking** is the hottest new way to capture moments, create layouts, and **art** that transforms your moments in memories, and gives you the scrapbooks to captivate your family and loved ones for generations to come. Click on **The University column** to get great instructions on all digital image software for Microsoft, Adobe, and others. Digital Scrapping 101, <http://www.digitalscrapbookplace.com/> SIG Leader, Jane Quinn

## Be Aware Of WinFixer 2005

by Judi Ball

WinFixer 2005 advertises that it fixes many small problems in Windows. But there are many online sites, Symantec's security firm being one, telling that WinFixer uses "social engineering" to entice people to buy their product for \$40.

Once it is installed, it has continuous pop-ups that warn you of bogus problems on your computer.

One ad in a Google Search reads, "WinFixer 2005 is a useful utility to scan and fix any system, registry and hard drive errors. It ensures system stability and performance, frees wasted hard drive space." In reality it gets into your registry and makes uninstalling difficult. Read more about it online. Symantec gives a complete description about it.

## Smart Computing

### Magazine Offer for User Groups

**YOU CAN HELP THE CLUB WITH YOUR EXISTING SUBSCRIPTION TO THE SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE**

Place new subscription orders or renewal orders (existing orders count also) for *Smart Computing*, *PC Today*, or *Computer Power User* by using personalized subscription forms, phoning Customer Service at **(800) 733-3809, or 1-800-424-7900** for renewals, or

1. Go to [www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com)
2. Click on User Groups
3. Click on Subscribe or Renew Today
4. Fill in your information and choose your user group from the drop down menu!

Your group name is, **IBMPCUG OF REDDING** and group number is, **12599**

For each paid subscription from your group, we will give one credit to your group's account. Results are calculated each quarter. Credits will accumulate until your group reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time we will contact you regarding your FREE subscription to one of the following three:

***Smart Computing, PC Today, or Computer Power User***

## Microsoft is Helping...

by Bob Elgines, Colorado Computer, Club of Lake Havasu, AZ, [elginesz@rraz.net](mailto:elginesz@rraz.net)

You may have noticed in your Windows XP/2000 updates that you have updated the MS Malicious Software Tool (MSRT). Don't bother to look for it on your computer, you won't find it. You will only see a window if you have or had a problem.

What is malicious software? Malicious software (also called "malware") is software that was developed with the intention to cause harm. Malware can include viruses, worms, spyware, and other destructive programs that can hide on your computer and can slow its performance to a crawl. Even more alarming, malware can be used to monitor your browsing habits, steal passwords, and even allow an attacker to gain control of your system. Malicious software either installs on your computer without your knowledge or can be installed with a program you intended to download.

The MSRT checks for and helps to remove specific, prevalent malicious software infections. If detection and removal has accrued, a display window indicates which malicious software was picked up.

Each month, after the second Tuesday, Microsoft will provide an updated version of this tool that removes malicious software that is found to be prevalent for that month.

### GETTING THE MALICIOUS SOFTWARE REMOVAL TOOL

There are two ways you can get the Malicious Software Removal Tool. Microsoft recommends that home users either turn on the Automatic Updates feature in Windows XP, or run the tool online.

1. If your computer is running Windows XP, you can get the latest version of the tool online from Microsoft Update.

To have the tool automatically delivered and installed each month on your computer without having to take further action, simply turn on Automatic Updates.

2. If your computer is running either Windows XP, or Windows 2000, you can run the tool directly from an easy-to-use online wizard available at:

[www.microsoft.com/malwareremove](http://www.microsoft.com/malwareremove)

How do I verify whether the removal tool has run on a client computer? There are two ways to check:

## MS Trouble Shooting Outlook Error

Online request to Microsoft Support by Jane Quinn

I understand that when you send/receive in Outlook, you had an error message reported saying "mail.charter.net receiving report error 0x80042108 unable to connect to your incoming email server" as well and sending error 0x80042108"

There are various causes for this type of issue. The most frequent causes are:

1. Anti-virus or firewall programs.
2. The e-mail account is damaged.
3. The original profile is corrupted.

Note: Please first check your e-mail Charter account configuration in Outlook.

### Step 1: Uninstall or disable anti-virus or firewall programs

If you use Norton on your computer, we found a known issue that this behavior can occur because a file that is part of the Norton Personal Firewall was corrupted. Please refer to the following Microsoft Knowledge Base article to temporarily remove all anti-virus or firewall programs and any other e-mail monitors. Restart.

Outlook and test the issue again. Q318790 OL2002: ErrMsg: 0x80042108 Outlook Is Unable to Connect...

<http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q318/7/90.asp>

Note: This issue is also suitable for OL2003.

=====

### Step 2: Start Outlook in Safe Mode

Safe Mode will disable all add-ins and extensions that will not start, as well as any corrupted resources, files, registries and templates.

1. Close Outlook.
2. Go the Start menu of the Windows. Click Start menu-Run, type "Outlook /Safe" (without the quotation marks and there is a space between Outlook and /Safe) in the Open box and press Enter.

If the issue does not reappear in Safe Mode, please stop here and I will provide you the detailed steps about how to cure the problem in my next response. Otherwise, please continue the following steps to create a new profile.

=====

### Step 3: Create a New E-mail Profile in Outlook

1. Close Outlook.
2. Click Start menu-Control Panel. If Control Panel is not in Classic View, click Switch to Classic View, and then double-click the Mail icon.
3. Click Show Profiles and then click Add. In the New Profile dialog box, type a descriptive name for the new profile in the Profile Name box, and then click OK.
4. On the pop-up "E-mail Accounts," choose "add a new e-mail account," click next.
5. Choose the type of your account, click next.
6. Input the corresponding info of the Comcast mail account, click Next, click Finish.
7. On the "Mail" box, click the "Prompt for a profile to be used" option and click OK.

This way, you will be prompted for a profile when starting Outlook.

For more information, please refer to the article: OL2002: *How to Create a New E-mail Profile for Outlook*

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;EN-US;Q287072>

Note: This article is also suitable for OL2003.

Restart Outlook and select the new profile.

Best Regards, Cindy Zhao, Online Support Professional, Microsoft Office Online Support, Microsoft Global Technical Support Center [mailto, y-cindyz@microsoft.com](mailto:y-cindyz@microsoft.com)

1. You can examine the value data for following registry entry to verify the execution of the tool. You can implement such a check as part of a startup script or a logon script. This will prevent the tool from running multiple times.  
Subkey: HKEY\_LOCAL\_MACHINE\

SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Removal Tools\MRT

Every time the tool is run, independent of the results of the execution, the tool will record a GUID to the registry to indicate that it has been executed. The

*Continued on Page 8, Lower Column 3*

# Online "My Family Health Portrait"

by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; radio & TV show host

## WEBSITES

<http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory>  
<https://familyhistory.hhs.gov>  
<http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/download.html>

Recently, a relative in another state was hospitalized via an emergency room admission. His new wife of just a year did not have much information on the family health history, so urgently needed by the physicians in order to diagnose and treat my relative. Urgent phone calls followed, gathering the requisite family medical history to enable the appropriate diagnosis and treatment. Philosophically, what if a comprehensive family medical history could have been immediately available? This circumstance is not unique, but a reasonable solution has been available for free for over a year at [www.hhs.gov/familyhistory](http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory), courtesy of the U. S. Surgeon General's Office.

This site explains the necessity of such data with the statement, "Health care professionals have known for a long time that common diseases — heart disease, cancer, and diabetes — and even rare diseases — like hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell anemia — can run in families. If one generation of a family has high blood pressure, it is not unusual for the next generation to have similarly high blood pressure. Tracing the illnesses suffered by your parents, grandparents, and other blood relatives can help your doctor predict the disorders to which you may be at risk and take action to keep you and your family healthy." In order to accomplish this task, the Surgeon general offers two simple options; one an online web maintained version hosted on a secure server (that is what the "https" means in the internet address) at <https://familyhistory.hhs.gov>, the other a 1.6mb downloadable "Zip" file which may be stored on a home computer, and utilized in the privacy of the home. The files created in either version can easily be exchanged among family members via e-mail or disc.

In the online version, a family history can be newly created, or an existing version can be uploaded from the home

computer to the secure Surgeon General website where the data can be managed, and then saved back on the home computer; no personal information is saved or captured by the government computer, protecting the privacy of the user. It should be noted that much effort has gone into the creation of this web based service, in that it explicitly works equally well with almost all known browsers, including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Mac Safari, Netscape, and many other browsers.

The first step in using the online version is to "Create a Family History", or to "Load a Saved Family History" if a file had been previously created. The preliminary step is to create a personal profile, where basic information such as name, gender, height, and weight are entered. The personal profile continues with a simple checklist of major common diseases (such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes), and age of onset, followed by a fill in the blank chart of other diseases. After the personal health history is created, there is then an opportunity to create a family profile. The family profile states "Only add family members that are biological (blood) relatives (not adopted or step-relatives)." Similar fill in charts are presented to complete the information for the other family members. Data can be modified, added, or deleted at any time. Once the user has completed entering the basic family information, a button "Go to My Family" takes the user to the basic "Family Health Portrait" where a family health tree can be displayed or printed; this family tree contains symbols and abbreviations immediately recognizable by a health care practitioner as a basic family health history. Other family members, such as aunts, uncles, and other blood relatives can be added to the list as well. Other family members listed on the family tree can have their own personalized family tree created at this point, and the entire file can be downloaded to the user's computer, leaving no personal data on the HHS computer.

If for privacy or other reasons, the user does not wish to enter personal family health data to the secured website, the downloadable version is a self-contained

version of what is available on the website. Once uncompressed with any zip utility (built in to Windows XP), the file is easily and quickly installed. The software does require the Microsoft ".Net" utility, version 1.1 or later, available for free at [windowsupdate.microsoft.com](http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com). Once installed, the entire process is completed in the privacy of the home, with no personal data leaving the computer, unless the user desires to send the data files to other family members to complete or use as a basis for their own family health history.

With this information readily available both within a family unit, and shared with other blood relatives as appropriate, family health histories can be easily maintained, and distributed or printed as needed.

Many times we cannot recall family health problems that family members may have had which may give us a predisposition, or otherwise genetically affect us. With this free service and software from the Surgeon General, we may all be better able to provide our health care professionals with the information that may prove so vital to our health care and treatment.

*The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.*

## MICROSOFT IS HELPING...

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following table lists the GUID that corresponds to each release.

2. Using Windows Explorer look for the log entitled "mrt.log" located under your "Document" files or in the following folder: C:\Windows\Debug\mrt.log

Another similar tool is written by McAfee called Stinger. It is updated approximately every three months and can be downloaded at: <http://vil.nai.com/vil/stinger/>

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# A USB Primer

by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Sarasota PCUG, Florida



By now most computer users are familiar with the term USB or Universal Serial Bus. This connection port on your computer is designed to replace the older serial, parallel and PS2 ports. Probably within a year you won't find any new computers with these older ports. They will have only USB. There are some things you might find useful about USB ports and hubs which could reduce or eliminate problems in dealing with them.

USB ports have a number of advantages over the old system of parallel/serial ports. They do not require I/O memory space or individual IRQ lines. Anyone who has had to work with older computers and operating systems will remember the problems of trying to prevent IRQ conflicts when connecting external devices such as scanners or modems. How many times did the sound card manage to steal IRQ's that you had to have for another device? USB also allows for automatic device configuration and hot-plug capability. The hot-plug or hot-swap function means that you don't have to power down the computer and go through a restart when you want to connect a new device. Instead you simply connect or disconnect the USB cable. The computer will recognize the device and connect to the proper driver. That is assuming this isn't the first time you have used the device and that the driver has already been installed. You commonly have to install drivers for external hard drives, printers, scanners, card readers, etc. You generally don't have to install drivers for mice and keyboards that connect to the USB ports.

Next, consider that USB operates at three possible speeds: low speed or 1.4 megabits/second, full speed or 12 megabits/second, and high speed or 480 megabits/second (mbps). Low speed and high speed can be used with either USB 1.x or USB 2.0 hosts. The high speed can be used only with USB 2.0. The host is the computer that provides the USB connections. For USB 2.0 operation the host computers "root port hubs" must support USB 2.0. That means the computer must have USB 2.0 drivers that are supported by the operating system. Windows XP (service pack 1.0) and Windows 2000 both support USB 2.0. The root port hubs are

the USB connectors on your computer and are usually connected to the motherboard. You can also identify them in the Device Manager where they will show under the USB Host Controller.

Although the USB specifications indicate you can daisy-chain up to 127 devices from one port, this is not likely to happen because of the power drop that occurs over long connections. You can get external hubs that allow you to connect 4 – 7 devices to a single root port hub. The external hubs are repeaters that relay transaction information from the computer to a device connected to the hub's port. There is a catch to this as well. Some USB 2.0 hubs will decrease their maximum output if you have a USB 1.x device attached to a port. This means that any USB 2.0 device attached to the hub may not function or will function at a lower speed. I learned this the hard way with an external USB 2.0 hard drive. I thought the problem was the drive, but it was the hub. I had a USB 1.0 card reader attached to the hub and as a result the current output to each port was reduced to the point that it was not sufficient to run the drive. This occurred even though the hub and the drive had external power supplies.

An ample power supply is necessary to operate USB devices. Root hub ports can provide 5 volts and up to 500 milli-Amps (mA) of current. The USB power specifications state the USB ports should provide between 100 mA and 500 mA. Devices connected directly to the computer are able to obtain the maximum current. So let's take a situation where we have a hub connected to the computer's root port hub. The hub is receiving 500 mA of current at about 5 volts. If only the current received through the connecting cable powers the hub, the output from each of its four hubs will be only 100 mA. This is referred to as a "bus-powered" hub because it receives its current solely from the USB bus in the host computer. However, if the hub has its own power supply and is receiving at least 1.6 Amps from this supply, then it can provide a 500 mA output at each port. In this case, the hub should be able to support high-speed USB 2.0 devices.

On some computers you will find an icon in the system tray that is a "hardware disconnect". In this instance, you need to double click the icon and wait for it to permit you to disconnect the hardware device. This icon does not appear with all USB devices. Since installing SP2, I haven't seen this icon in my system tray. There are some reports of computers with SATA drives showing this icon. Since the SATA drive is supposed to be hot-swappable like USB devices, I'm not surprised that the icon shows up. However, with my Seagate SATA drive, I still don't see this icon. That may be because my motherboard doesn't support the hot-swap function even though it supports SATA drives.

When you plug in a USB device to either a hub or a computer port, there is an initial identification process referred to as the "configuration" step that occurs. During this configuration process the device can not draw more than 100 mA. If it does, the process will fail and it will appear that the device failed to work. The configuration process identifies the device, its drivers, and its power requirements. Only after this process is complete will the device be able to draw more than 100 mA current. Since this process is not instantaneous, some time must be allowed by the user before attempting to use the device. In addition, this configuration may not occur if the device is plugged into the computer before the computer is turned on and booted. In these cases, it may be better to connect the USB device after the computer is fully operational. Most of the time, the computer will identify and configure the device during the bootup.

Microsoft has a knowledge base article on trouble-shooting USB problems (#310575). Typically the problems relate to drivers or power problems. However, they also point out that high-speed devices should be connected with high-speed cables only. The low speed cables may distort the signal as a result of their

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## A USB PRIMER

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reduced amount of shielding. Another really complete source of trouble-shooting information can be found at: <http://www.usbman.com/winxpusbguide.htm>. This has references for Windows ME as well as XP and Windows 2000. However, anyone who hasn't dumped Windows ME should seriously consider doing so as soon as possible. WinXP is such a tremendous improvement over ME and will really make your computing experience much more enjoyable. My computer hasn't locked up or crashed in more than six months, probably longer. I really don't keep track anymore.

So what devices are typically high speed and require USB 2.0? Let's start with external USB hard drives. Seagate has a very interesting technical paper on external hard drives. In this paper they state that most 2½" external drives require 1000 – 1100 mA during the start-up cycle and then can function at the 500 mA maximum current available from the USB port. They also state that most USB ports can support up to 700 mA on a continuous basis. This is something I have not found elsewhere. Consequently, my recommendation is that when looking for an external drive, pick one with its own power supply. I wouldn't want to depend on one that drew all its power from the USB bus.

Other high-speed devices include laser printers, scanners, and multi-function printers. All of these should have their own power supply. Other devices that operate at full-speed and don't need external power are blue-tooth adapters and card readers. This is only a partial list of what is available in USB devices. Just remember when you are looking at them that the term full-speed does not mean 480 mbps, instead it is the slower 12 mbps.

Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail: [bwsail@yahoo.com](mailto:bwsail@yahoo.com).

*The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.*

## Reading Product Manuals Online

*by Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, AARP Computers & Technology Website*

I'm reasonably well-organized; my wife thinks I'm a packrat (she keeps trying to sneak my '70s shirts to the thrift shop). You'd think this would mean that I can find product manuals for every appliance, gadget, PC component and software, etc., I've ever bought. That's mostly true.

But sometimes my filing system fails me. Or I've forgotten to whom I loaned something. Or someone else in the house (but I'm not naming names) has moved it. What then?

Fortunately, manufacturers are increasingly making product literature and documentation available online. While this isn't entirely out of generosity — it reduces their customer-support workload — it's great for consumers who can find and read the material.

A good starting place is the manufacturer's Web site. For example, I'm writing this article using a Samsung SyncMaster 912n LCD video monitor. Suppose I need to know what its control buttons do but can't find its manual. Samsung's home page [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com) offers a button, "Download Center: Download Drivers, Manuals, Software, and Firmware". I can either enter a product model number or name, or search via product group (audio/video, computers, etc.), then product type, then product subtype, and model name.

Computers are very precise; searching took three tries, since it wanted only "912n," not "SyncMaster 912n." The manual was then available in any of 28 languages, from Bulgarian to Chinese. A PDF file (see below for explanation), it's just under three megabytes, dated about a month ago, complete, 83 pages including clickable Table of Contents. So a minute after deciding to look for it, I'm looking \*at\* it.

Another way to search is via Google [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) entering terms like 912n manual site:samsung.com which only searches the samsung.com Web site. This took me to the right neighborhood on the Web site but left me needing a few more clicks to hit the manual. Sometimes search engine results are better than navigating within a site, so consider both techniques.

Manufacturers often update online material as mistakes or shortcomings are

found in printed versions, so for important products it's worth checking Web sites occasionally. Sadly, they also sometimes package only abbreviated versions with products, suggesting or expecting consumers to download full versions.

Either way, online manuals are also useful when considering purchases or comparing choices, since they give — or should give! — more complete and useful information than is printed on the box. If you're evaluating something pre-purchase, evaluate the manual's organization and quality — Will you be able to find information you need? Will you understand it? If you're buying something used, online availability of a missing manual can make the acquisition much more pleasant.

Online manuals can be in many formats — HTML (normal Web pages), Microsoft Word documents, PDF (Portable Document Format), and others. Each format has advantages and disadvantages. HTML is nearly universal; if you can view Web pages you can read HTML documentation. But it may be harder to download and save/organize all pieces of a large document. You'll need Microsoft Word software (or free reader) to read MS Word files. Flexible PDF is becoming the most popular online document format, but it too requires software, Adobe's Acrobat Reader, for viewing. Fortunately, this is free and easy to download/install; visit Adobe <http://www.adobe.com/> and click Get Adobe Reader.

Some manufacturers take a different approach, offering search tools and links within their Web sites for different material, such as overviews, tutorials, problem solving tips, even video clips illustrating usage.

Finally, LiveManuals [www.livemanuals.com](http://www.livemanuals.com) takes an interesting/interactive approach, providing interactive product demonstrations. Though it doesn't include every product — office equipment and appliances aren't presently well-represented — the Wish List page accepts nominations for items to add.

This article originated on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, [www.aarp.org/computers](http://www.aarp.org/computers), and is copy-

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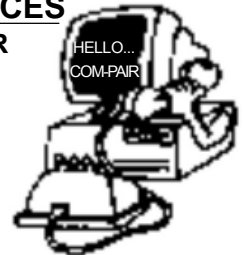
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### A USB PRIMER

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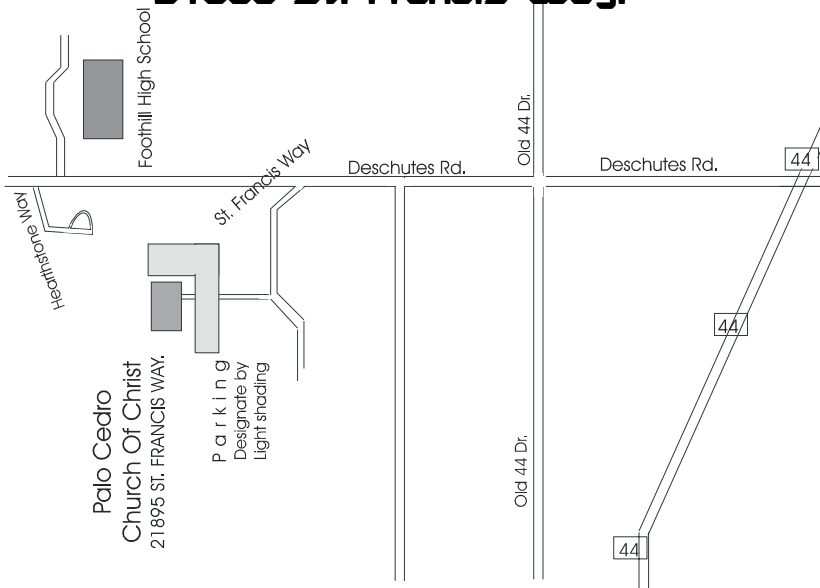
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