

At one time you could find some fairly good clip art online... not any more.

Requiem for Online Clip Art

by Fred Showker

The other day one of the designers on the Design Cafe list requested links to good clip art sites. I dialed up my favorite search engine, Google.com, and did a quick search for clip art. You know what happens next -- up pops 40,000 links to clip art sites! Oh, baby! I started clicking.

Whenever I go on a crusade that can potentially lead me into dangerous waters I first turn on my Cookies permissions (just to see what kind of screen spam they're throwing at me), and open each link into a new browser window. (Opening in a 'new' browser window allows me to quickly click it closed if it is dangerous or undesirable, and leave me back where I came from.)

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The Deals Guy by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Horst Gorgas, editor for Charlotte County Personal Computer User Group, asked about using my column in their newsletter and he provided information to post on my Web site's distribution page. I hope their members enjoy the column.

What a Deal!!

I drove a neighbor to a Best Buy store today to pick up his new TV. Best Buy is a place I rarely frequent, but while waiting for my friend, I looked at a package of 5 Memorex CD-RW disks for \$5.99. I also checked the price on a package of 10, which was \$15.99. This Best Buy deal left me wondering what I may have missed in the interpretation. I've heard about "modern math." Maybe I should take that class.

Have you noticed in many weekend sale flyers that sale items often show no regular price besides the sale price? In reality there's no sale at all, just a featured item with a large price that "appears" to be on sale. I've noticed one store's flyers doing that for several years now. Guess the others are learning from them.

To Linux, Or Not To Linux

It was not a good time for the Intel Pentium 4 in early January 2001. Some distributors installing Linux found that the install was less than clean since the operating system's installation procedure could not properly identify the chip. Apparently it had to do with Intel changing its CPU identification model numbering. Intel says they informed distributors of the chip update, but some distributors didn't attend the briefing

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March 5, 2001

Stark Technical College,
North Canton, Ohio

6 pm - Analogx.com - Frank Ramsey, 7:00PM Q&A,
7:30 pm - On Line Tax Programs - Murray Davis

Deals Guy, Bob Click

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so they didn't update their operating systems.

From what I read, the best bet is Red Hat's Linux, which is said to install correctly. Caldera and Turbo Linux have a work-around to sidestep the problem. Others do not have any information to help, but do know about it. Perhaps this won't matter that much, since Pentium 4 sales are sagging anyway.

Updates

1. Ken Winograd e-mailed me to alert you that both of his Hang2000 games (for Windows and Macintosh) have been updated. The info in the Presidents and Vice Presidents categories is modified. (Guess why?) He didn't say if there was anything about "Florida" or "pregnant chads" in it. Info: [<http://www.winograd.com>] Windows download: [<http://www.winograd.com/Hang2000-Setup.exe>] Mac download: [<http://www.winograd.com/Hang2000.sit.hqx>] The .exe on the file means it is self-extracting. According to Ken it will ask you before it installs anything.

2. The DesignCAD offer is still good so I suggest you order it now if you are interested. It's a nice saving. Phone: 800-233-3223 or 918-825-4844.

3. I don't know if they'll still honor the Caligari iSpace offer or not, but if you want iSpace, give it a try. Go to [<http://www.caligari.com/ispaces/is1dg/>] to order iSpace. Caligari has also introduced version 5 of TrueSpace. There was an incredible offer for just a few days, but it has expired and a new one is now in effect for upgrades. Check their Web site.

Now For This Month's Items

How Clean is Clean

A few months ago I wrote about Steve Gibson's Web site and his "Optout" program to search your hard drive for "spy" software that might report on you. David Walters of Greater Orlando UG suggested that you should go to <http://www.lavasoft.de/aaw/index.html> and download a more comprehensive program (freeware called AD-aware) that also searches your hard drive for "spy"

programs. You have the choice of removing what it finds. David says a clue that spyware might be on your computer could be sluggish performance caused by the spyware working in the background, and it could even lead to crashes

I also received an e-mail newsletter from Steve Gibson offering "LeakTest" as freeware to test your firewall at [<http://grc.com/lt/leaktest.htm>]. I suggest you read all the important information on Steve Gibson's Web site [<http://www.grc.com/>]. I was told that Steve had a new opinion of Symantec's Internet Security, but didn't find it.

Oh No, Taxes Again!!

This may be a bit late (not for procrastinators like me), but I'll remind you that you can download a free tax program (Tax Act) for doing your federal taxes at [<http://www.2ndstorysoftware.com>] for absolutely no cost. They do have "Tax Act Pro" that is not free, but many will get along nicely with the FREE version. Take a look.

Server Software

Here's a chance to test "X-Win32" to connect to a Linux or Unix server. X-Win32 provides intuitive point-and-click access from Windows-based client desktops to Linux and Unix servers, and was ranked first in four of seven test areas by "CMP Media's" real-world labs. With X-Win32 PC, users can run even the most memory-intensive, graphics-rich Linux applications on their Windows desktops.

Go to [<http://www.starnet.com/x4u/ssh.htm>] to download an evaluation copy. Use the license key VN: 1714552-12727 for the download. You have 90 days to see what you think. If you like it and want to purchase the software, e-mail Paul Swart, vice-president sales and marketing, at [Paul@StarNet.com] to get the special price of \$175.00 (\$75.00 off the retail price). I know nothing about server software so check their product description at the Web site [<http://www.starnet.com>].

Clean Your Computer --- FREE

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Requiem for Online Clipart

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As I surfed into the din of clip art sites I began noticing they all seemed to be somehow related. I discovered a suspicious little oddity called "AutoRank" (a CGI link) built into the links of the majority of the sites. What could this be? All of these were enticing enough to read about, but they all turned out to be stalker sites.

Absolutely-Free-Clipart uses: cgi-bin/rankem.cgi in the link, as did www.1-clipart-graphics.com. www.allfree-clipart.com uses cgi-bin/clicks3/ as does www.allfree-clipart.com, and www.bestclipart.com. I saw an obvious pattern, so I began capturing the source of the search engine result pages.

A quick paste into BBEdit (trusty text editor) proved my suspicions. Same story across the board. Dozens and dozens all utilizing the same CGI, and linking either to each other, or to yet other clip art sites apparently owned by, or administrated by the same people. I was being bounced back and forth between stalker sites, being counted. Why? Probably to either sell advertising space based on each new visitor -- each time I get slammed into another site, I'm being counted as a "new" visitor, raising their rankings, and billings to advertisers. Mysteriously a number of the links lead back to ArtToday.com, or an ArtToday mirror.

All of the sites visited wanted to drop at least one cookie on me. Most dropped multiple cookies on me. Many refused to let me go, popping up new windows as fast as I could close them. ALL of the websites we visited (78 to be exact) carried links which utilize the Rankem CGI code, or some other kind of tracking code. They all wanted to stalk me, and none of them had any clip art. Well at least none that was worth all the headache.

You can try this yourself. When visiting one of "those" clip art sites, watch the location bar at the bottom of your browser, and note WHERE the links actually go. If a link has "AutoRankPro/rankem.cgi" or "cgi-bin/rank/rankem.cgi" in the name, you'll know you're now captured into their loop.

Since I do not want to point any fingers,

and perchance accuse any of the sites for any wrong doing, I won't go into the definition of stalker sites, and why they're evil. I can't even be sure that any of the sites are up to any wrongs. I will say however, that the unique email address which I set up (Unique, never used -- just as a spam catcher) to "register" on one of the sites brought me spam, including porno spam within hours of registering at the site.

Folks, be very careful. These days many web sites don't give a flying hoot about you or why you came there. All they want is your email address. They stalk you, and they don't turn loose until they can add you to their lists.

If you're smart, you won't even waste your time on search engine clip art results. You'll contact a known reputable and honest vendor like Artville or Dynamic Graphics.

Three years ago, the web wasn't like this at all. You could go to an honest search engine, get honest results and click to an honest web site. Those clip art sites were unique, and some even had some decent art. But that was before Madison Avenue and the Dot-Coms took over.

Yesterday, I wanted badly to report back to the CAFE that I had, indeed, found some clip art sites to recommend. However, to my disappointment, I didn't see a single solitary image through the entire ordeal... especially none I'd want to report to my friends. Sorry.

Fred

*** Note:** for those of you who would like to experience the same nauseating escapade, just click on into my diary of the clip art surf I did today just for this article: "[Let's go surfing for Clip Art](#)"

Fred Showker is director of The Design & Publishing Center on the web at <http://www.graphic-design.com/>, and is a co-founder of both The User Group Forum on America Online, and The User Group Network at <http://www.user-groups.net/>. He has been a user group activist and supporter since 1984.

This article is reprinted from the online newsletter at the above User Group Network ad-

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Susan Ives of Alamo PC Users Group passed this on to me through their editor, Clarke Bird. "If you are running a current virus scan program, ignore this, but if you are not, you can check your computer and clean it here [<http://housecall.antivirus.com/>]. Keep your computer checked (for free) often. You install a small program and can virus scan your computer on the Web. The site is run by Trend Micro, the creators of PC-cillin."

How About a Deal, And a UG Fund Raiser

Several editors forwarded this one to me. It was e-mailed by Boomerang Software to all user groups belonging to APCUG. Here is an abbreviated description and statement by Boomerang.

"Now you can use FrontPage 2000 and Total E-Commerce for FrontPage 2000 together to build complete E-commerce sites. However, for a limited time only, we are offering Total E-Commerce for FrontPage 2000 for the Special Introductory Price of \$119.95.

"Limited time special introductory offers on Boomerang products and services: *Total E-Commerce for FrontPage2000 - sale price \$119.95 (retail \$149.95) *WebShop Designer 2000 - sale price \$69.95 (retail \$79.95) *Internet/Intranet Design Shop Gold 2000 - sale price \$49.95 (retail \$59.95) *Photo.Web Deluxe - sale price \$29.95 (retail \$39.95) *Web-Hosting - General and E-commerce - sale price \$14.95/mo - one month free *Dedicated E-commerce Web-Hosting - sale price \$39.95/mo - one month free

"Prices in effect until February 1, 2001, but check with your user group since the time period may be extended due to newsletter delivery schedules. Prices do not include shipping and handling.

To help support your user group, Boomerang will contribute to your user group an amount equal to 10% of the sales of the listed products generated by your group's members during this period. Your group's officers must contact Boomerang to make appropriate arrangements. If the group does not take advantage of this offer of support, individual members can still take advantage of the limited time special introductory offers (check with

your user group special offer coordinator who should have details).

"To purchase these products and services and receive credit toward our contribution to your user group, please call 617-489-3000 ext. 114, or e-mail [ricrds@boomerangsoftware.com] with ordering information. Please be sure to state the name of your user group and where you can be contacted. This offer applies only to the listed products purchased via the above telephone number or e-mail address, and is available for a limited time only. It does not apply to any sales of Boomerang Software Inc. products or services purchased in stores or elsewhere. For further information regarding Boomerang Software products, please visit us at [www.Boomerangsoftware.com]."

Free Software, Anyone??

I've never even heard of this product until I read of it, but since it's FREE, you might like to take a look. "Snippets version 2.0" (a major upgrade) is available at [<http://www.snippets.com>]. The review I read called it a browser, but their Web site says "The Ultimate Desktop Dashboard." Whatever --- new features improve how users access the Internet. It automatically retrieves information daily, hourly, or minute-by-minute, and delivers information from several Web sites to alert the user. I've not tried it, just thought I'd pass it on.

Microsoft Mindshare Newsletter, Check It Out

Many user group members subscribe to the Microsoft Mindshare newsletter, which contains good information for all kinds of interests, including developers. For people who want to learn, you could have taken the on-line multimedia tutorials FREE for the month of January. Each newsletter has a URL for "tips & tricks." To subscribe, go to [<http://www.microsoft.com/mindshare/monthly.asp>].

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers I have

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found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [dealsguy@mindspring.com]. Visit my Web site at [http://www.dealsguy.com] to see past columns, and some other articles of interest.

Matrox G450

32MB Dualhead Video Card

by Joyce Evans

If you are tired of moving your panels and palettes around your screen all the time, you've got to try dual monitors, it's great. I have Fireworks, Photoshop, Dreamweaver and many other programs which I run on one monitor and put the panels on another.

_ I have recently written my first book on Fireworks 4 and found dual monitors to be particularly helpful for writing step-by-step instructions. I have the program open on one monitor and Word on the other. I could perform the tutorials on one monitor and write on the other.

_Some of the highlights of the Matrox G450 as I see them are that you can use monitors with separate resolutions, or a monitor and a TV. The Matrox G450 is also compatible with Flat Screens. It was extremely easy to install right from the included CD. I am running Windows 2000 and didn't have to get additional drivers, I simply installed and went to work.

_According to Matrox: "the switch to a 0.18 micron fabrication process has meant the ability to integrate all of the MGA G400's external supporting hardware (MGA TVO chip, secondary RAMDAC, TMDS transmitter) onto the G450 chip itself. This lowers the overall cost of the product while simultaneously providing enhanced features at a fiercely competitive price: performance ratio". See the link below to read about the benefits of this new chip.

http://www.matrox.com/mga/archive_story/dec2000/work_g450vsg400.cfm

Key Features:

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dress, which is highly recommended for your information, especially about graphics and graphic design. **ED.**

0.18 micron technology
AGP 1X, 2X, 4X
360 MHz RAMDAC
32 MB DDR** memory
Support for OpenGL and DirectX
256-bit DualBus
DualHead Display
Vibrant Color Quality2 rendering
Environment-Mapped Bump Map-

ping

UltraSharp DAC
Integrated TV encoder
High-quality DVD playback

Bundled Software:
Simply 3D
Picture Publisher 8
Matrox Software DVD Player
www.matrox.com/mga

Price: I found 16 mg DualHead G450 for as low as \$71.00 and the 32 mg for as low as \$121.00. The retail price from Matrox is \$145.00. You can check <http://www.pricewatch.com> for OEM and retail versions.

This review was also previously published at the [Users Group web site](#). **ED.**

Please note that this review is instructive as to the value of having two screens to work on. Now, I need a desktop able to hold two screens and my cup of coffer besides the keyboard! Seriously, this Matrox card *is not* the gamers delight! Why, because the 3D acceleration is only about half as powerful as newer 3D video cards, especially the Nvidia chips. I suggest you visit www.tomshardware.com to view the latest evaluation of these new cards if games is your game (pun intended!). Also, as Tomshardware pointed out, the Matrox card is just fine at 16 Meg. It also outputs to one video screen and one TV screen. Or it can output the desktop to two screens—useful for presentations and instructional sites! **ED.**

Akron-Canton PC Users Group
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Next Meeting - March 5th
 Stark State Technical
 College
 Main Auditorium

First Class Mail

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Mailing Label Address Goes Here

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Contact Gerry at 330-499-5623 for SIG availability

April 2, 2001 Meeting,
Taylor Memorial Library, Cuyahoga Falls

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Future Events	
Sun. March 24th, 2001	Peter Trapp Computer Show Tadmor Shrine Temple Off Arlington Rd. South at I-77