

ACPCUG

June 2002

From The Dealsguy, Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer User Group

I receive infected e-mail attachments more often than you might think from unknowing people. Recently, I received one called PrettyPark.exe from a friend. What might have fooled me is that I know the sender has McAfee on her machine, and I have Norton Antivirus. No virus alert was issued by mine. I checked with that person later, and as I suspected, she didn't even know she had sent it, but by that time she found she had a virus. The problem --- neither of us had updated our virus protection that month, but my precaution of not opening a .exe file attachment saved me anyway.

A friend swears by F-Prot as his antivirus protection and it is free for home users. Since I hadn't deleted the suspected virus I downloaded F-Prot. After installing F-Prot, it found PrettyPark immediately and gave me the option to delete it. F-Prot can be found on various download sites. His favorite site is [ftp://ftp.telusplanet.net/pub/simtelnet/msdos/virus/].

Find the current F-Prot file start-

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Make Your Own PDF Files by "Paul With- eridge"

<ssuccess@ebtech.net>

I'm currently Shareware Librarian of the Sarnia Computer Users' Group and a Past President. I'm in my 14th year with SCUG and am a semi-retired computer consultant.

I'd appreciate a copy of any newsletter it appears in. (I think that's the normal APCUG practice, no?) It's always nice to see what kinds of newsletters think it's worthy of space. <G> A PDF copy would be appropriate, yes? <G> I can pass them along to our editor too (for ideas).

One of today's biggest computing irritations is competing standards! While there are standards out there for such things as e-mail, file transfer and Internet protocols, and HTML coding for web display, someone is always "pushing the envelope" (to be polite) or "ignoring them" (to be blunt). Document sharing is an example. Many think that Microsoft Word is the standard for documents but it is only one in a field of word processors. At one time, they simply pretended each other didn't exist and if you created a document using one word processor, you couldn't share it with others who were using a competitive product. Now, at least the major brands provide the ability to convert between formats but often at the expense of some of your painstaking efforts to create that Beautiful Format. Enter Adobe and the Portable Document Format (PDF). If you can create (or "export to") a PDF file with your word processor, you can produce a "stand-alone" document that anyone can see or print exactly as it was created fonts, pictures, whatever but without the program that created it! Catch? Of course there's a catch! First of all, you need the Acrobat Adobe Reader to see/print these.

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June 4, 2002

Taylor Memorial Library

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

6 PM– Linux Intro by Paul Ferris

7:30 PM Q&A

**8:00 PM Pocket PC Demo
by Frank Ramsey**

The Deals Guy

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ing with fp and ending with .zip. For updates, go to [<http://www.complex.is/f-prot/Download.html>].

I was hesitant to change, so I ran Norton's live-update, but my subscription had expired. Next morning Customer Service immediately updated me at a cost of only \$4.95 for the year and gave me a confirmation number. I signed on right away using that number to update my Norton Antivirus. I think that's cheap protection for a whole year, but granted, a free one is also very good.

Many people sending a virus don't know it happened because some viruses run in the background using the address book. Virus protection is so cheap, even free. Do your friends a favor and acquire the protection --- PLEASE. People don't realize that a virus does not always inform you that it's there. Some even initialize your modem unbeknownst to you and send to every address in your address book (one version of PrettyPark does so every half hour. Happy99 sends an extra email containing its virus, without your knowledge each time you e-mail someone. Be very cautious of ANY .exe attachments to incoming e-mail.

In last month's specials, I thanked PowerQuest for the deals that also listed "Open Linux." I'll bet some folks cringed a bit on that one. I was reminded that it's by Caldera. It didn't say Caldera on the price list. Sorry guys. By the way, the PowerQuest items and the Wizcom pen scanner in last month's column should both still be good.

I'm Featuring Some Reader's Feedback This Month.

I e-mailed Dave Teschner of Hilton Head Island Computing Club after reading his virus article in their newsletter. He acquired a tough version of PrettyPark.exe. He answered my questions and sent me a government site on viruses that you might find interesting --

[<http://www.nipc.gov/nipc/nipcaaw.htm>]. It has information on 40,000 different viruses. His version of PrettyPark (there are three) didn't yield to the normal virus cleaners and required special cleaning instruction acquired off the aforesaid site. Dave is experienced, but used a Microsoft certified technician this time.

Other Interesting Feedback

Bob Wexler of Western NY Computer Society tells me that PC Connection and Mac Connection (mail order catalogs) have a policy of offering free ground UPS shipping to all legitimate members of a user group if you mention that when you order. I checked and it's true. Phone 1-800-800-5555 for a catalog.

Murry Davis of the Akron/Canton Users Group sent me the following:

"[www.bargaindog.com] is featured in an article in the Circuits section of the NY Times on page D4 (4-20-00) as a source of hundreds of deals on many, many items."

I checked it out and there are all kinds of interesting items, not just computer stuff, and I assume things change all the time. It will even do comparison shopping for you.

Feedback In The ISP Dept.

Melvin Turetzky of the Boca PC Users Group e-mailed me a Web site that he says gives unbiased evaluations of ISPs -- [www.dogwolf.seagull.com]. Mel agreed with my good opinion of Mindspring until lately. Since the merger with Earthlink, his confidence faltered because of problems accessing his Web site, but their tech support came through again. Now I'm having similar problems they have yet to solve.

John Chmura of HAPCUG in Daytona Beach gave me this URL -- [<http://nzlist.org/user/freeisp/index.htm>] -- and tells me he has found no less than 48 free ISPs available in the Daytona Beach area with local access numbers. He tried the free Juno service, but says he gets disconnected a lot, which I've heard before.

And this detective work from John Hedinger of Manatee PC User Group:

Concerning K-Mart's "BlueLight.com;" by following and snooping behind the links, it appears that this service is part of [www.spinway.com] free ISP service. Besides [www.bluelight.com], Spinway seems to be providing the software, or engine (and perhaps the advertising) behind a number of free ISP's, including [www.collegeclub.com], [www.nettaxi.com], and [www.webland.org]. Try [www.alladvantage.com]; they actually pay you to be on the Net. And the beat goes on."

Mike Ungerman of Central Florida Computer Society in Orlando sent me this. "FINALLY, there is a FREE Internet access service with e-mail accounts without any banners, pop-up windows, floating bars -- you name it. It works nationwide (in US) with a great amount of local access numbers. How do they do that? Tell you the truth, I do not know.

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The Deals Guy

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But yes; no banners, no ads, no floating bars -- unlimited and stable connection. So, go grab it!! [<http://freewarehome.com/services/internet.html>]. And while you're at it, the link to the Freeware site which also has some great free downloads. Note I said 'free' and not 'shareware.' There are no registration fees required using the programs located at [<http://freewarehome.com/>]."

Mike also sent this URL for checking out virus alerts and hoaxes --

[<http://www.911virusalert.com/home1/home1.html>].

Want To Plan The Perfect Trip?

This is a subscription service by PlanetWare, but there is some free stuff here too. For the traveler, it can be a great help in planning your trip, especially overseas. The PlanetWare Travel Encyclopedia, the largest, searchable source of travel attraction data on the Web, is on-line at [<http://www.PlanetWare.com>]. The PlanetWare site helps travelers search for travel gems related to their special interests, provides visit decision details and serves as a one-stop source for making judgments about the relative merits of tourist attractions

The PlanetWare Travel Encyclopedia is probably the largest site of its kind on the Internet with over 110,000 pages of attraction data. While the bulk of data is available by monthly subscription at a cost comparable to that of a single paper tour guide book, about 10,000 pages are free. The free data includes all photos, complete details of a featured city of the month (currently 550 attractions of London, England with maps), lists of the top-rated sites, suggested walking and driving tour sequences, plus lists of the 8,000 towns currently featured on the PlanetWare site.

All PlanetWare maps are interactive. Cursoring over a map shows attraction names. Similarly, rolling over a list of attraction names pinpoints each site on the map. Clicking either the name or the pinpoint on the map brings up attraction details.

There's more, but my readers can get a two-month subscription for the price of one month (\$20.00 US). The minimum is two months, maximum is twelve months. If this catches your attention, e-mail [info@planetware.com] and provide:

1. The secret word 'dealsguy' in the subject

line to qualify,

2. An e-mail address where they can send the password,
3. The name on the credit card you are using,
4. Visa, MC or AmEx,
5. Card number,
6. Expiration date.

They'll then send you your secret password.

If you take a two-month

subscription to plan any trip, it should more than pay for itself. I think \$20.00 for two months is cheap for what they offer.

Does Your Computer IQ Fit This Category?

Below is a note from Marcia Laughry, author of the book "Active Directory for Dummies."

"Intimidated by Windows 2000's Active Directory?

"With all the media hype surrounding the release of Windows 2000 Server, you may already be a bit intimidated by the prospect of working with Active Directory. You've seen the presentations and articles discussing trees, forests, sites, and namespaces. Not only must you assimilate a new technology, but you must also pick up an entire new language just to understand what everyone's talking about. But Active Directory doesn't need to be difficult! In this book (Active Directory for Dummies), you find out in clear and simple language what Active Directory is, what it does and what benefits it brings to your organization - and to your job.

"To Order, simply type WIN2000NEWS in the referral field on the Shopping Basket Checkout page.

[<http://www.fatbrain.com/shop/info/0764506595?from=XUU975>]. This is good for 10% off the online price of \$19.95."

That's it for this month. Thanks for all your wonderful feedback. Looks like I've exceeded my word count again. Sorry Editors! 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 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>] for past columns.

Making PDF Files— for free!

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Yes, it's free; but it is a few megabytes in size and usually has to be downloaded and installed. But how to create the PDF in the first place? Are we still somewhat at the mercy of the Adobes, Micro-softs and Corels? Read on!

There are two freeware (free for non-commercial, home use) programs that can enable you to create (and read) standard PDF files (as well as postscript files):

MakePDF, (<http://www.lexacorp.com.pg/soft/makepdf22.zip>) a freeware utility for converting the postscript translations from GhostScript to a Portable Document Format file and

GhostScript, (<ftp://mirror.cs.wisc.edu/pub/mirrors/ghost/AFPL/gS703/gS703w32.exe>) a free postscript interpreter which translates postscript documents.

NOTE: If the version numbers change, the above links will become outdated.

If you visit the Lexacorp site first, there is a link there to GhostScript as well as to MakePDF. Stuart also offers several other MAKEPDF tips and tricks at <http://www.lexacorp.com.pg> After downloading both of these, install GhostScript by double-clicking the GS703W32.EXE file. Then simply unzip MAKEPDF21.ZIP into the folder of your choice (no installation needed). I must assume that the reader can do this using their favourite compressed file unpacker.

Then, you need to define a printer that can produce postscript output such as the HP Laserjet III PostScript+ in your selection of printers. You do not need to have this printer connected, you merely need to add/install it as if it were installed and configure it to send output to a .PRN file. Here's how.

In Windows, click Start|Settings|Printers and then double-click 'Add Printer'. Choose 'Local Printer' and click 'Next'. Now select the printer you'd like, making sure that it can produce postscript. The HP Laserjet III PostScript+ is an obvious choice but other manufacturers are available on the list you'll see. After selecting one, you'll be asked where to output your data and this is where you will choose 'FILE:' and then click 'Next'. Most likely you will not want this to be your default printer, but this option is always available later if your needs should change. Click 'Next' and then 'Finish' and you will most likely be prompted to insert your Windows installation CD in order to retrieve the necessary driver files. After the printer driver files have been

copied, you will be prompted for a PRN filename (in case you wanted to print a test page). You can click 'Cancel' to skip this step. Did you know that you could also rename this printer installation to something more helpful like PostScript Creation? Right click it and rename!

Once the process is complete to this point, you will have an additional printer option whenever you wish to "print" a document from any application you are using. When choosing this new option you have just installed, you will be asked for a filename and destination folder since the output will not be a "hard copy" on paper, but a .PRN file on your computer.

We now need to create a way to easily send these PRN files created by your newly installed postscript-capable (phantom) printer driver to MAKEPDF which will use GhostScript to finally create the PDF file.

One way to provide this "connection" is to add a shortcut in your SendTo links that will appear when you right-click a file in Windows Explorer (or other file manager) and select 'Send To'. Open your \Windows\SendTo folder and right-click a blank spot. Click New|Shortcut and insert a command line similar to the following, but insert the proper path for your installation of MAKEPDF in place of the square bracketed portion. [C:\Utils]\MAKEPDF.EXE

Click 'Next' and then name it MakePDF or whatever you like. Click 'Finish' and you're done.

Now you can right-click any PRN file created by your phantom printer and then choose SendTo|MakePDF to create your PDF file.

You could also create a shortcut on your desktop in the same way and just drag and drop PRN files onto the icon.

There are a few other clever tricks the more advanced user can perform either by defining a new filetype (see end of this article) or using macros in your word processor or creating a custom printer port or having your PDF sent directly to your e-mail client but you can read about those in Stuart McLachlan's (author of MAKEPDF) Readme text file that comes with MAKEPDF. Most of us will be quite happy with a shortcut in the SendTo folder!

Using MAKEPDF

The first time you send a PRN file to MakePDF, you will be asked if you want to locate the GhostScript program. Click 'Yes' and browse your way to the GSWIN32.EXE file which, if you used the default location will be in the C:\GS\GS7.03\BIN folder. [Note that there are two similarly named executable files at this location. The one with the 'C' is for

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command-line operation.] Single-click the GSWIN32.EXE file and click 'Open' and this path will be saved in a MAKEPDF.INI file for future reference and you won't have to repeat this step.

MakePDF will now open and you will see the path and filename of your (input) PRN file and the same path but different file extension for the output PDF file. Unless you want the PDF file to be put somewhere else or have a different name, you can accept the default offering.

There are options offered, most of which I usually ignore; but here is a brief explanation of them as I understand them:

Delete Input File - deletes the PRN file after it has been translated to save collecting large numbers of these intermediate files.

Lower Case Output - produces a PDF filename with all lower case letters for feeding to other applications which may require that.

Sticky Output Directory - use this if you want the folder you set in 'Output Filename/Directory' ALWAYS to be the destination of your PDF files.

View Output File - check this if you want Acrobat Reader to open your new PDF as soon as it's created.

Auto-Exit on success - check this to save having to click the 'Quit' button

No Messages - all message boxes are suppressed. I wouldn't recommend this for the beginner.

Choose the version of PDF file you wish to create and after a few seconds, you will see a confirmation dialogue box that the process has been successful. NOTE: In case your intended recipient has an older version of Acrobat Reader, it may be best to create an older version PDF. The resulting PDF file you have now created can be double-clicked to be opened in Acrobat Reader and it will appear exactly as you created it in your original application and anyone with Acrobat Reader can do the same. And print it! But the Reader does not allow editing, just reading and printing. This can be a very good thing when you don't want your document altered by others!

For The Advanced User

For the more adventurous, (once you are comfortable that you have everything working) you could even establish a new filetype (change PRN to something completely new that is not already registered on your computer) so that a simple double-click on files of that type will start MAKEPDF and open them. This involves first avoiding any of the extensions already listed in Start|Settings|Folder options|File Types and then in there creating a

'New Type' and specifying a command line similar to the following to open those files:
"[C:\Utils]\MAKEPDF.EXE" %1 /D /V1.2 /OC:\My Documents\PDFfile.PDF again, inserting the proper path for your installation in place of the bracketed portion.

NOTE: If you have difficulty with Acrobat Reader opening PDFs with a double-click, I've found that a reinstall of Acrobat Reader usually solves this.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using the article as long as it is kept in context, with proper credit given to the author. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.



Computer Chronicles and Net Café by Stewart Cheifet Managing editor

Dear Fellow Computer User:

Nineteen years ago, Computer Chronicles was launched as the first ever weekly network television show devoted to personal computers. It happened because bulletin board sysops found out about the show (which was airing locally in the San Francisco Bay Area) and called their local PBS stations to ask them to carry the program. As a result of the efforts of local users groups, Computer Chronicles was soon being broadcast in more than 200 cities around the country.

For some reason, many PBS station program directors now think computer technology is old hat and that the excitement over the Internet is passé.

So we need your help, once again, to remind these television gatekeepers that the personal technology revolution is alive and well and that users like you want a weekly television program that delivers useful information on new hardware, software, and the Web.

If your local PBS station is not carrying Computer Chronicles and/or Net Café (our show all about the Internet) I would appreciate your assistance in contacting the station and urging them to carry both shows. PBS stations are very sensitive to the opinions of their viewers (and contributors) and a few calls or emails can make a big difference.

Computer Chronicles and Net Café have been recognized repeatedly for their journalistic excellence with a long string of awards and honors. The programs are viewed by more than a million people each week and are seen in more than a hundred countries around the world. They should be on in your town!

We've set up special pages on our web sites just for you so you can get updated contact information for your local PBS station. Please go to either: <http://www.computerchronicles.org/forug.html> or <http://www.netcafe.org/forug.html> for program director email addresses and phone numbers.

Thanks so much for your help.

Stewart Cheifet
Managing Editor

Computer Chronicles / Net Café

Computing Factoids

There are unrelated things I pick up in e-mail that are terrific—but not long enough for an article. Here are two of them. Compiled by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Hard Drive Repair Conundrum

A PIBMUG member was struggling with a faulty hard drive. An Ontrack product manager provided an answer.

Question: I have a question about getting rid of data on a hard disk. I have read articles about reformatting and assorted software that gets rid of your data. However, I had a hard disk crash and must return the old disk to the system vendor in order to have my credit card credited for the cost of the new one they sent me (under warranty).

I do not want them or the OEM to be able to recover that data. With the disk not working, how do I get rid of the data? If I hold magnets around it, will that work? Should I drop it in a boiling pot of chicken soup? Your advice would be appreciated.

Smart-ass Answer: Chicken soup may work provided you remove all the fat, chicken feet, and carrots (strangely enough, celery and onions can stay).

More realistically, I have to admit I'm stumped. Lemme call in some experts from Ontrack, the hard drive recovery company. Mark? Any ideas? --Steve

Ontrack's Response:

The magnet idea isn't going to work unless you've got some incredibly strong magnets lying around. A degaussing unit strong enough to erase the platters of a hard drive would generate a field that would damage other magnetic media within several yards. Also it would erase the servo-patterns on the drive used to control the movement of the read/write head, so it would certainly ruin the drive.

We've requested ideas from the real experts, our clean room technicians.

They had a few solutions, but nothing simple. You could see if an authorized shop (like a

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Computing Factoids, cont.

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disk recovery shop who has authority to break a drive seal without voiding the warranty) would take on a special job (for a fee) to open the drive and degauss the platters.

You could request to review the warranty policy from your HDD manufacturer and see if they have a policy for protecting data that may be on a warranty returned drive.

Trust the HDD manufacturer to destroy the platters as part of the end-of-life of a returned drive. --Mark

Better Backups Better Backups

After using tapes and zip drives for backups, I finally decided to just back up to another hard drive. To simplify the process, I installed two mobile mounts and connected the IDE cables so that the upper mount or drawer is an IDE1 master and the lower drawer is an IDE2 Master. I purchased two drives of the same capacity. Both are jumpered as masters. The original is in the upper drawer, and the backup will be placed in the lower drawer.

I use "Drive Copy" which with installation generates a 3.5" floppy "Drive Copy" boot disk. The boot disk is used to start the copy process. Make certain that your 2 hard drives are labeled such that you will copy from the original to the backup, and not from the backup to the original.

Remove the backup and set it aside for that sad day when the original fails or is infected with a virus. The reason that I like this approach is that if the original drive fails, I can just power down and remove it from the drawer and insert and boot the backup, which is already jumpered as a master drive, and you are immediately up and running. Whereas if you were using a tape you have the problem of trying to salvage the original from the tape, hoping that it works. The same is true of Zip disks.

I will usually start the backup when I go to bed and it is done in the morning. The cost of a 2nd hard drive is probably cheaper than a tape drive or Zip drive and the cost of the tapes and zip disks just add even more cost. --Clifford Ford (kb6ia@earthlink.net)

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.

A Little Humor:

Quote the format, nevermore

with apologies to Edgar Allen Poe
Once upon a midnight dreary,
Upgrading to 98, and oh so weary,
Whence upon mine eyes that were so bleary,
Fell an image I am now fearing.

My disk is not optimized oh so well?
Fat 32 shall correct this so please don't dwell,
The fate of my data in it's hands fell,
My format did it sent straight to Hell.

It stores much better it did claim,
Something mistrustful in it's name,
Fat 32 convertor, was I insane?
Yet I guess I am to blame.

So onward forth did I care free tread,
Images of recombined data in my head,
Lack of sleep making my eyes go red,
So with the process I went ahead.

Ready to reboot it deftly quoted,
Dreams of extra space in my head floated,
More space at no cost it softly purported,
Lordship of my data it quietly gloated.

Waiting and waiting my confidence shrank,
Watching my screen slowly go blank,
Inward into itself my computer shrank,
And for this whom have I to thank?

What doth thou mean invalid partition?
All of my data consumed by this Gryphon,
If I only knew before I would be soon be wishing,
My allocation tables I was not risking.

I knew then that my OS crashed,
Within the disk, formats clashed,
Blinking lights on my computer flashed,
Thoroughly my data it had trashed.

After several minutes I did look,
Within the holy instructions book,
It said there was no chance in what I took,
I felt as though I had been rooked.

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Akron-Canton PC Users Group
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Akron Oh 44309-2151

Next Meeting - April 1st,
Taylor Memorial Library
Cuyahoga Falls, OH

First Class Mail

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Mailing Label Address Goes Here

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(Continued from page 7)
 The repair disk the book claimed to need,
 Was the one the computer refused to read,
 Would not repair the result of my greed,
 For hard drive space that I did not need.

In the wee hours of the morning,
 If you hear a soft little groaning,
 Know it is but I my hard drive moaning,
 For which my format I am mourning.

In my haste and wanton lust,
 For hard drive space it was a bust,
 Tools in which I did place my trust,
 Betrayed me only to leave me lost.

| Club Officers | | | | Future Events | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| President | Murray Davis (2003) | 440-248-0021 | murray5050@yahoo.com | Sun., June 16th, 2002 | Peter Trapp Computer Show at Tadmor Temple off I-77 to Ar- lington Road, Akron, OH (Exit 120) |
| Vice President | Frank Ramsey (2004) | 330-699-4711 | aframsey@yahoo.com | | |
| Club Outreach | Rick Lubinski (2002) | 330-928-7179 | lubinski@bright.net | | |
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