

# ACPCUG Newsletter

**Stark Technical  
College Auditorium  
North Canton, OH  
July 7th, 2003**

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## **July Program:**

**Q&A +**

***An All Frank Ramsey Show  
On 2 or 3 Topics (which the  
Editor has lost his notes for the  
subjects—but they will be of in-  
terest to all!)***

**July 2003**

**Akron-Canton PC Users Group**

**From The DealsGuy, by Bob  
Click of Greater Orlando Com-  
puter Users Group**

**\*Alas, Its Another Goodbye From a  
Great User Group Supporter**

I was about to release the August column to my editors when I received Bonnie's e-mail with the sad news that Casady & Greene is closing their doors after 19 years in business. Bonnie Mitchell, their users group coordinator, sent out her sad goodbye to all of us who are users group contacts. While we were only connected with C & G for eight years, many of you have met Bonnie at APCUG and regional events across the country. She was always ready to help with review products and prizes for drawings. C & G supported us when the expense of it might have been questionable, but they were there when we needed them. This recession is certainly taking its toll in the business community, and in the process, the user group community is losing some great friends along the way. Thanks for everything Bonnie, and good luck in any new endeavors.

**\*Eliminating The Competition**

I read that Palm has declared its intention to purchase Handspring and they will do business under a new name, but with two different units; one for handhelds, and the other  
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for “so called” smart phones. Since Palm is not an APCUG sponsor, it looks like Handspring will be gone too. According to Value Line, Handspring’s liquidity was deteriorating and revenues were significantly below last year’s levels. Sales for both have been declining so perhaps it’s time.

### **\*Ink Jet Deal Is Jetting Back Again**

I don’t often repeat a deal, but this one was very popular. Susie McLean of Inksell.com agreed to repeat the original deal offered last year and extend it until the end of this year (2003). The differences are; the expiration date, the coupon code, and free shipping on orders over \$49.00 (an improvement). I am repeating it below with the changes.

"InkSell.com is a discount printing Supply Company that specializes in cartridges for all makes of ink jet and laser printers, solid ink printers, copiers, and fax machines. We sell brand names, new compatible cartridges (for most brands), and remanufactured cartridges and refill kits. Our compatible cartridge quality is certified to match that of the manufacturer and our prices are up to 70 and 80% less. We would be happy to offer DealsGuy readers a 10% discount on purchases at our online store.

"A discount coupon code will be valid through December 31, 2003. To redeem the 10% discount, (not valid with any other discount or offer), simply visit our site, [ <http://www.inksell.com> ], place your order and continue to 'check out' where there will be a blank to enter the discount coupon code (DealsGuy2003). The discount will be automatically calculated. Should anyone have questions or need assistance, phone customer service at 1-800-255-0483, or send e-mail to [[help@inksell.com](mailto:help@inksell.com)]. Don’t forget the free shipping on orders over \$49.00."

### **\*Its Not Free This Time, But Its Still A Bargain**

Colleen Toumayan from Executive Software e-mailed me to let my readers know that they have a good price on Undelete and Diskeeper bundled together. The bundle is \$39.95 and would normally be \$59.90 if bought separately. About Diskeeper: “they say built-in defragmenters are slow, labor intensive and use too much system resources to keep up with the performance demands of today's computing needs. Ultimately, they don't get used. Running Diskeeper is like hiring an expert to constantly monitor and maintain your system's maximum performance.”

About Undelete: “you store a lot of data on your computer, and you need to protect it 24/7. Re-creating accidentally deleted files takes a lot of time, and using backups to restore deleted files is not always reliable—especially if you've created and deleted something between backups. New Undelete replaces your recycle bin with a Recovery Bin, which catches all the files you delete so file recovery is quick and easy.”

These products in the bundle are for home use and you can check them further at [ <http://consumer.execsoft.com/home.asp> ] to order them if you wish.

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## **\*What's Going On Your Web Site?**

If you have a Web site, it often helps if you know all the statistics about the visitors. One problem though, if you're using the free space given to you by your ISP, you probably have no access to the log for it (and can't use this product). On the other hand, if you have a paid Web space, usually you have access to the server log for your site. You should find out if your server log is accessible. You could analyze things the hard way and download the log file, then sift through it manually to see what you can determine. Sure it will work, but it's time consuming. I know in my case, I'd like to know which files were hit, and for how long.

I talked to Sane Solutions about offering a discount on their products and they agreed to do it. I have to say, their NetTracker Professional software is already much cheaper than another well known software for the same purpose, but Sane Solutions feels theirs does it better. They did not give me a product to review so you will have to do your own evaluation, but you can download a fully functional two-week trial version to evaluate. Check their Web site at [ <http://www.sane.com> ] and look at the product descriptions.

NetTracker Professional sells for \$495.00 and NetTracker Enterprise is \$995.00. Darryl Cunningham, sales manager of Sane Solutions, said that if you call him with your request, he'd personally handle the order giving you a 20% discount on their products and support. Wow! That's \$99 discount just on NetTracker, making it very competitive! The 20% discount is good on all orders through August 31, 2003. You can contact Darryl at 1-800-407-3570 ext. 122 to order. Don't forget to tell him you heard this from the DealsGuy.

## **\*Talk About Tweaking!**

Many of you have used TweakUI and loved it. It performs many very useful tasks for Windows. Lee Reynolds of Boca Raton Computer Society Inc. wrote some time ago in his monthly "Nibbling At The Net" column about another even more useful utility that he feels is much better than TweakUI. It is Xteq X-Setup and can be found at [ <http://www.xteq.com> ]. It's absolutely free for home users. However, they do take donations if you enjoy using it.

This product has an incredible number of features that you can hardly imagine. It is also updated constantly. To add to its value, it also offers to help other software such as Office 97 and 2000; not to mention hardware installed on your computer. Sounds like a great product. Thanks for letting us know Lee.

**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 found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [[Bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:Bobclick@mindspring.com)]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns. I have also been busy putting up some interesting new articles on my Web site, so take a look. My thanks to the authors I was able to reach. However, they don't all answer their e-mail so I miss posting many very good articles there.

## **To Linux or not to Linux.....**

**The Dayton Microcomputer Association, Inc.**

**Nancy J. Cristolear**

njc@dmaphub.dma.org

On July 13 the Linux SIG of The Dayton Microcomputer Assn. Inc. will be having another installfest. I've participated in quite a few and have seen many people leave either happy or disappointed. I thought by writing this article I could help you make your experience a positive one.

Should you or shouldn't you take the plunge? Well that depends on several things. We'll take a few minutes to go over some of the things you should consider.

First, what are your expectations? Are you a person who has been working with a Windows or a Macintosh and expect Linux to be the same thing? I can guarantee you will be disappointed.

Unlike Windows or Macintosh, the Linux distributions are not as refined. What do I mean? Well, if you are familiar with Windows, then you are also probably familiar with applications like WordPad, NotePad, Calculator, Paint to name a few. Many of the Linux applications have names like GIMP, an acronym that stands for Graphics Image Manipulation Program. It would not jump out at you that this is a Photoshop clone would it? So, you will have to invest time into exploring the applications to see what they do. The good news is there will be LOTS of them. Ultimately, you may have to tweak the menu system so that you can find what you want.

OK, the next thing we will consider is your skill level. If you are the kind of user that expects to be able to buy something off the shelf and have it work, then Linux is not for you. Linux often requires a number of tweaks to make it work properly. However, if you are the kind of user that would throw the manual away, click a link to see what it would do, or take your box apart to see what is in there, then Linux might just be for you.

It will help if you are comfortable working with a DOS prompt. Most of the things Linux can do are more easily done from a prompt. In fact, most of the people I know have XWindows installed just to get a terminal window. [Editor: XWindow is a windowing system developed at

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MIT, which runs under UNIX and all major operating systems. It lets users run applications on other computers in the network and view the output on their own screen. XWindow generates a rudimentary window that can be enhanced with GUIs-Graphical User Interfaces.]

Then there are the Unix commands. They are the kind of commands that only a geek would love. Consider some of the names: grep, ls, mv, cp, ps, vi.

Lastly, what is your goal for your Linux system? Do you want to replace your Windows system? Or perhaps you just want to play around a bit. This last is where we lose the folks who are more Windows oriented. If you do not have a commitment to Linux, you won't be inclined to wade through the setup and will just forget about it.

Are you ready to take the plunge? OK then, there are still a few things to consider. Do you buy one of the packaged distributions or do you take advantage of the free software available at the installfest. What kind of machine will you be using and what do you want it to do? How old is that machine? Do you have enough hardware? Memory? Processor?

Linux is famous for being "free", however, you may want to invest in one of the packaged distributions. They run around \$75. What is the difference? Well, often the commercial distributions will include tools and software that is not available for free. For instance, you might get StarOffice with all its templates and art as opposed to OpenOffice. It may come with special tools that will help with the installation and upgrade. Most important, the boxed distributions come with HELP! This help is in the form of a manual and on call technical support. This may be worth the money right here.

That doesn't mean you can't make things work with the available distributions at the installfest. They often come with a large amount of Open Source software. If you are willing to regularly attend SIG meetings, you can learn all you may need to know (or at least where to find it). In the long run though, you would probably be more motivated to work with something that you have money invested in. Either way, bring your software or not, it can all be installed at the installfest.

Next we will consider some of the choices you may want to make about what to install Linux on. Linux was originally written to run on a

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386 machine with 4 Meg of memory and you can still run it on that kind of machine, in theory. However, just like Windows, as ability has been added, so has the level of machine that Linux runs best on. Most of the package distributions require at least a Pentium level machine with 64 Meg of memory. If you want to be able to install and run with a minimum of tweaking, you should have standard hardware, known components, and as much memory as you can afford (Linux is a memory hog). You can get by with about 6Gig of disk space for everything that comes with your distribution.

Next, will you run Linux on a standalone machine or will it share a system with Windows. The ideal system will run Linux and only Linux. However, many cannot afford a whole system for Linux so they share the machine with Windows. OK, do you use removable hard disks and swap them (ideal), or must you have both Windows and Linux on the same hard disk? Windows just does not do well with other operating systems on the same machine. That doesn't mean you can't do it, it just means you may have to work harder. If your skill level is lower, you will probably do better at installing Linux on a standalone or swappable disk. If you must install everything on one disk, do your Windows install first, then install Linux. Linux comes with a couple of tools to manage and partition drives or you may want to invest in programs like System Commander or Partition Magic. People at the installfest can help you to get your system set up with either. OH, if this is your regular production machine, **BACK UP YOUR EXISTING DATA!** Some people have tried to install Linux and ended up wiping out the entire disk. **BACK UP EVERYTHING!!!!!!!**

What? You thought you could just use your 386 with a 40 Meg hard drive and 4 Megs of RAM that's sitting in the bottom of your closet? Well, don't throw it away. You can install a bare bones Linux OS with no bells and whistles. What you can't do is install XWindows and pretty graphics. You can still do a lot with it. Consider using it as a print server, mail server, or a firewall. (A 486 might be a better choice though.)

You just bought the latest and greatest thing? Well, it may be a good idea to wait a couple of months. Linux developers have to wait for hardware to be released for drivers to be written for it. So you may find that Linux is a little behind the state of the art.

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Want to make sure you can install Linux on your machine? Or maybe you are just not sure you want to take the plunge completely yet. Consider getting a KNOPPIX CD. KNOPPIX is a single CD distribution that runs on the CD drive and doesn't touch your hard drive. If your hardware is all detected by KNOPPIX, then you can be confident that the Linux installs will find your hardware. You will also know if you have the patience to deal with some of Linux's idiosyncrasies. You can download KNOPPIX at <http://www.knopper.net/knoppix/index-en.html>. Choose the Order/Download link. Download sites are at the bottom of the page.

Even if you're just curious, consider coming out to the installfest. It will be at the Russ Engineering Center at Wright State University, July 13, 2003 from 12-6. There will be plenty to do. Presentations will be given and members will have their systems set up. You will definitely get something out of it.

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**Note:** This July meeting is our last scheduled meeting at Stark Tech Auditorium. Non-school events will not be allowed next semester.

We are looking for a new venue in the Canton–North Canton area. Suggestions with names of contacts and phone numbers can be e-mailed to

**Upcoming Computer Shows:**

Peter Trapp at Tadmor Temple, Sunday, July 13th, 2003  
 3000 Krebs Drive, Akron, OH.  
 Exit 120 off I-77 (Arlington Rd.)  
 Right on Jarvis. Right on Krebs to top of hill. 10am-3pm

**Note: No show scheduled for August 2003**

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## Security Testing Online - Fraud or Not?

By Greg West

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Recently, while researching material I came across an article which discussed "Spring Cleanup" and computer maintenance. The first suggestion was to run your computer through an online test to see whether your system is secure or insecure. The current warnings of updating patches, Spam attacks, and overall computer safety, prompted me to say, "why not" as I clicked into "NanoProbe Technology Internet Security Testing for Windows Users" that uses a program called: Shields UP!! (<http://grc.com>). Suspecting a scam of some sort I figured I would attempt to trick this program. I would run the test twice, once with my firewall turned off and another test with it operating.

My curiosity peaked immediately after my first click when I received a message that I "was about to view pages over a secure connection", a more than familiar message indeed. So I continued on, yet still mostly skeptical that there was some sort of come-on to reach out and take my money. No sooner than I clicked the "ok" button, did I receive this strange message:

"Greetings Gregory! Without your knowledge or explicit permission, the Windows networking technology which connects your computer to the Internet may be offering some or all of your computer's data to the entire world at this very moment!

(For example . . . that's how I know your name!)"

Next I was given a choice of testing my "Shields" or "Ports"...I clicked on "Shields" became even more skeptical when I received this message:

"Preliminary Internet connection established! Your computer has accepted an anonymous connection from another machine it knows nothing about! (That's not good.) This ShieldsUP! web server has been permitted to connect to your computer's highly insecure NetBIOS File and Printer Sharing port (139). Subsequent tests conducted on this page, and elsewhere on this website, will probe more deeply to determine the extent of this system's vulnerability. But regardless of what more is deter-

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mined, the presence and availability of some form of Internet Server HAS BEEN CONFIRMED within this machine . . . and it is accepting anonymous connections!"

The message continued to give the full details of its findings, or non-findings:

"The rest of this website explains the implications and dangers of your present configuration and provides complete and thorough instruction for increasing the security of this system. At the moment, any passing high speed Internet scanner will quickly spot this computer as a target for attack. The phrase you must remember is: "My port 139 is wide OPEN!" Unable to connect with NetBIOS to your computer. The attempt to connect to your computer with NetBIOS protocol over the Internet (NetBIOS over TCP/IP) FAILED. But, as you can see below, significant personal information is still leaking out of your system and is readily available to curious intruders. Since you do not appear to be sharing files or printers over the TCP/IP protocol, this system is relatively secure. It is exposing its NetBIOS names (see below) over the Internet, but it is refusing to allow connections, so it is unlikely that anyone could gain casual entry into your system due to its connection to the Internet. Several of your private names are being served up to the Internet by the Windows networking system. (see below) While it's unlikely that this information can be exploited, you should know what anyone can learn about you and your system."

But the kicker was that my User Name, my Computer's Name, and my Workgroup was identified on screen...I knew I had to go to the next level and test my Ports. Here are the results of the Port testing:

It declared that my Port 80 (http) was open and that "having port 80 "open" as it is here causes intruders to wonder how much information you might be willing to give away."

The test program also found my Port 139 (Net BIOS) was open and I received this warning:

"As you probably know by now, the NetBIOS File Sharing port is the single largest security hole for networked Windows machines. The payoff from finding open Windows shares is so big that many scanners have been written just to find open ports like this one. Closing it should

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be a priority for you!"

Well, I must admit I was becoming a tad worried, but still I was skeptical towards the reality of these results. Next I wanted to run these test using my Zone Alarm Firewall operating. Here are the results of testing both my shields and ports:

On the Shield's test I got the same first "GREETINGS" message, only this time it did not contain my name. The results were amazingly secure. The Shield's UP test could not find my Port 139, nor was it able to connect with my NetBIOS to my computer. Here are the results of the Shield's test:

"Your Internet port 139 does not appear to exist! One or more ports on this system are operating in FULL STEALTH MODE! Standard Internet behavior requires port connection attempts to be answered with a success or refusal response. Therefore, only an attempt to connect to a nonexistent computer results in no response of either kind. But YOUR computer has DELIBERATELY CHOSEN NOT TO RESPOND (that's very cool!) which represents advanced computer and port stealthing capabilities. A machine configured in this fashion is well hardened to Internet NetBIOS attack and intrusion. Unable to connect with NetBIOS to your computer. All attempts to get any information from your computer have FAILED. (This is very uncommon for a Windows networking-based PC.) Relative to vulnerabilities from Windows networking, this computer appears to be VERY SECURE since it is NOT exposing ANY of its internal NetBIOS networking protocol over the Internet."

My firewall came through with shining colours and with full security. Next was the Port test with the firewall operating. This test reported my Port 80 was open (http), however this is my connection to the net and my firewall blocks the incoming attacks as they are produced...giving me the choice whether to accept or reject, but nothing comes through without my acceptance. So this warning is ok. The next warning I received was again concerning Port 139, this time I got the same message that it could not get through to this port and furthermore, "There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER that a port (or even any computer) exists at this IP address!"

Not a fraud, only success! My confidence in firewalls stands firm, sound and free of worry.

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## **Right Click Try It – You May Like It**

**Les J. Kizer**

**Greater Tampa Bay PC User Group**

**Mid-Hudson Computer User Group**

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My friends, there was a time long ago. It was way back in the early age as computer time is told. Even some of us old folks find it hard to recall; however, you know, for the children's sake we need to remember history. It was a time before the ascent of the rodent.

In those prehistoric PC days, when we copied text from one place to another, we blocked the beginning of the copy or move by pressing ctrl-b. Then we would use the up and down arrow keys to go to the end of the block. Again we would press ctrl-b to define the end of the block. Eventually someone, who is long forgotten, highlighted the area from the beginning to the end of the block and told us the text was now selected, not blocked.

Unblocking was done with ctrl-o, which today will help you open a file. Ctrl-b now causes selected text to become bold, which in those dark days before the rodent invaded, I can't remember having bold type at all.

Then while the text was blocked, or selected, we pressed ctrl-x for cut or ctrl-c for copy followed by using the up and down arrow keys to point to the place where we wanted the text inserted. Then press ctrl-v for paste. Ctrl-x, ctrl-c and ctrl-v still exist and are used by only the oldest among us.

When the rodent arrived and we plugged its tail into the PC, many advances came. The menu bar was enhanced buttons, and then the tool bar was added. Most application programs added rodent buttons for cut, copy and paste. With the index-finger pressing on the rodent's hind quarter, selecting text was easier, and highlighted also. Moving the rodent to the cut or copy button followed by a flick of the index finger gave the command to be. Then sliding the somewhat tamed rodent to the location of the insert, a quick flick and then back to the paste button for another flick of the index finger. Progress! Ease of Use! Fabulous! And rodents become famous, heralded throughout the land.

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That, though, is not the end of the rodent's march to fame. For all this fame was obtained by pressing the rodent with only the left or index finger. What about pressing the rodent's other hind quarter?

Silently, with great stealth, someone slipped in something new. It was done so quietly and without a fanfare, we are not even sure when it began to happen. It is called simply: right-click, as opposed to click.

Now we can select the text we want to cut or copy. Then without an arduous effort of guiding the rodent to the menu or tool bar, we simply right-click. Walla! A menu pops up on the spot giving us likely choices upon which to flick our index finger. Move the rodent to the insert point, and right-click again. The same or a modified menu pops up for us to flick our choice. Neat, and so effortless.

Today, we can right-click almost anything – desktop, icons, menu bars – or anywhere, and a small menu pops up containing the choices we are most likely to flick. Such is the added triumph of the rodent and right-click.

Is there any end to what we can accomplish simply by flicking a rodent's hind quarter—one side or the other. Long live the rodent!

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