

ACPCUG Newsletter

Cuyahoga Falls Public Library

April 12, 2003

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April Program:

Starts at 6:00 PM

Inside Google by Rick
Lubinski +
Q&A + TBA

April 2004

Akron-Canton PC Users Group

**From The DealsGuy for
May, 2004, by Bob (the
cheapskate) Click, Greater
Orlando Computer Users
Group**

***Getting My Money's Worth**

I decided to give the free AARP tax service another try this year and again my experience was not as expected. They didn't exactly do as promised. After processing our income tax return they said someone would file it electronically in three days at no cost, my purpose for using them. However, three weeks later, it still hadn't been uploaded according to the IRS. When I went back to inquire, they would not give me a phone number for the person who uploads them, but promised to check on it. Later I was told it had been returned (no reason given), but they didn't know it for several days. They had uploaded it a second time two days before I inquired and I should check with the IRS again in two days. That evening I called the IRS again and sure enough, it had been received and I should

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expect to receive my refund eleven days later. I was relieved. After giving it some thought, I decided that since this is the first year of e-filing for this group, they just need to get better organized. I'll give those hard working volunteers the benefit of the doubt.

Again this year, I used Tax Act software to do a comparison and found a difference, although the numbers were the same for my tax and refund. The tax loss carry over was much different. After talking to the AARP volunteer about the variation, I rechecked my entries and found I had made a duplicate entry where it should have been zero, so I'm not perfect either. I am not all that pleased with Tax Act, but the price is right. Tax Act Deluxe (\$9.95) would import the basic data from my last year's return to save a lot of retyping. I did not find the product very intuitive when I used it and was often unsure if I was doing the right thing. In fact, I had to call tech support just to find out how to reopen the file to work on it. Nothing I tried would open it.

***Lots Of Interest In Trade Shows**

I was surprised at how much feedback I received about working trade shows. Many people are interested and wanted to know more. My wife and I have worked as licensed security guards in trade shows for over six years now (we keep it part time) and enjoy it immensely. We live in a hotbed of trade show activity. The best part is that we get paid while enjoying them. Other security work is available, but we mostly stick to trade shows. We don't get rich, but it helps improve our lifestyle while living on our pensions.

In February we were asked to work the World Of Concrete (WOC) show [<http://www.worldofconcrete.com>], one of our favorites. It is one of the largest shows to be held here and took the entire 1.1 million square ft. of the building's exhibit area as well as about a third of the parking area where many active displays were set up, and all their mega-demos were held. Actually, WOC was combined with the World of Masonry show a few years ago. Those demos included concrete pours and finishing, brick laying contests and decorative work on concrete slabs, among other things. An artist put a beautiful picture of a Mac truck tractor on a concrete slab using acrylics. I was told I could have it, but can you imagine trying to move an 8' x 10' concrete slab home? However, we did get to take home a pickup load of unused bricks that came in handy. There was not much about computers in this show, but it was fascinating to see all the laser electronics involved in finishing a concrete slab and getting it close to perfect. The art of finishing concrete has sure changed. I loved seeing the riding trowel ma-

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chines working.

World Of Concrete is usually held in Las Vegas. They say it will never be here again because show management doesn't like it here. Not enough bars, according to our newspaper, and they don't like the building either. It was for the trade only and had over 60,000 attendees. With my family's background in the gravel quarry business, it was especially fun seeing all that large equipment, such as the concrete pumping trucks with their 210' unfolding booms arching over, and other equipment that was demonstrated. Our work was crowd control for the parking area mega-demos.

Also in February we worked one day of the International Call Center Management (ICCM) Show at [<http://www.iccm.com>] at the Gaylord Palms Resort Hotel. Unfortunately I had to attend classes in Tampa so my time with ICCM was limited. My only work day at the ICCM was the setup day so I had little chance to talk to vendors. However it is plain that when you make a call for many business purposes, it just might be handled by a National Call Center that might then redirect it, without your knowledge, to wherever it must be handled. Your call just might be redirected to anyplace on the globe or it might be redirected to an adjacent office.

This show had mostly smaller booths and I counted over fifty exhibitors in about 80,000 square feet of exhibit space. Only a few were names you might know. While much if it was about redirecting calls, there were other functions as well. This show had a keynote speaker and attendees could tour three on-site Call Centers in the area, one of which was the Sprint PCS offices. I was extremely busy during the day and when things slowed down that night, there were few vendors to talk to for information.

Next month, I'll write a little about a show that my readers would drool about being able to walk through. Of course I found some interesting things there too.

***Still Good**

The MediaFour deal is still good, but expires June 1st so you must be fast if you didn't take advantage of it. Check last months column for info, but the phone is Phone 605-235-1991 <suenail@cableone.net> [www.mediafour.com]. Also, I believe Aladdin Software's special is for SpamCatcher is still good so check last month's column for all the ordering details. [<http://www.aladdinsys.com/store>] I was unable to get any new deals to come together for this month because of my work schedule and a

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bad cold.

***Last Chance, But Act Now**

I attended a user group meeting in Orlando where Gene Barlow was doing a presentation, accompanied by his wife, Linda. He announced to the group that his agreement with Power Quest, now owned by Symantec, expires May 1, 2004. That doesn't mean there won't be a new agreement (Gene is trying for a new contract), but the present pricing structure will go by the wayside. I suggest that if you are interested in any Power Quest products, you should not waste any time getting your order placed as his inventory will go fast.

Here is a list of the Power Quest product lineup:

Partition Magic V8 – MSRP, \$70 – UG price, \$39.00

Discover Your HD, Educational CD – UG price, \$19.00

Drive Image V7 – MSRP, \$70 – UG price, \$39.00

V2I Protector V2 – MSRP, \$79 – UG price, \$39.00

Backing up Your HD (Educational CD) – UG price, \$19.00

He also represents another company that produces SecureClean V4 and Wipe Drive V3. They make sure your deleted files are completely obliterated. They are \$24.00 each or \$39.00 bundled. Since these two are from a different company, I think these prices are good for a while. He demonstrated by doing a search for deleted files on his laptop and found some that had been deleted over a year ago, but had never been overwritten including old e-mail. Few realize that a deleted file could possibly still be found on your hard drive for even a few years without being overwritten by new data.

An attendee asked why she needed such a product when she is the only person using the computer. Gene suggested that you never know what might happen, such as a robbery. Then even your deleted data files are the property of the robber. Gene also offered other possibilities, such as no firewall, thus allowing intruders from the Internet. Another reason is if you want to discard your computer or hard drive. All prices are plus shipping. When ordering products, it's important you know which ones work with your operating system, and I am speaking from experience.

Order by accessing Gene's secure Web site at [<http://www.ugr.com/>

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[order](#)] using the code UGDEALS when ordering. These also make good gifts to family members with computers so don't delay for these prices.

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 or freebies 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]. Visit my Web site at [<http://www.dealsguy.com>] for past columns and some interesting articles.

Important Backup Information **by Art McRowe, ACPCUG Newsletter Editor**

This is not a big article. It is simply to inform our membership of a nifty article and link: <http://www6.tomshardware.com/howto/20040329/index.html>

written by Humphrey Cheung recently.

Cheung's article is really about preparing to shift over to Linux – interesting in its own right. But more importantly, it is also a very good primer on backing up our **Windows Files!**

This is backing up proprietary formats or having proper utilities to extract all our important information from various Windows and Office programs. OK, we're creamed when it comes to Office Access database files!

This article also gives tips on searching out drivers for all your devices, and how to put them in one place for using when setting up your system. This is obviously important for going to Linux, but also smart for those of us staying in Windows. For example, if your hard drive went south and you didn't have a complete disk image, what you do to get up to speed? I have been keeping backups of My Documents files, but I don't yet have an independent folder for all my device drivers. That's closing the barn doors after ...

Otherwise, please read this article by Cheung and make yourself more safe. Even if you're not planning to migrate to Linux!

Computers --- From the Very Beginning for New Users

By Charlie Paschal

**Editor/Publisher, Palmetto Personal Computer Club, Columbia, SC
Columnist, The (Columbia) State newspaper, SC**

One of the biggest "panes" about Windows is that just about anything can break it -- such as installing a new program or getting rid of an old one.

There's a right way and a wrong way to do both -- but even if you do things the right way, you still can have problems. Windows 2000 and XP have better ways to recover than 98 but it's still not a perfect world. That's where the knowledge of one keystroke might be able to save your skin.

One hidden setting in Windows 2000 and XP (not in 98) also could help you, or someone from technical support, right the Windows ship. This one is turned off by default in those two versions of Windows but I'm going to tell you how to fix it.

Here are the steps:

- * Right click on My Computer, then left click on Properties.
- * Click on the Advanced tab at the top of the next dialog box
- * Click on Settings in the startup and recovery section of the next dialog box.
- * Uncheck the box next to Automatically restart under the System failure section.
- * Click OK twice.

What does this do? Let me set up a scenero for you. You install an application that corrupts (or changes) a file the system needs to run correctly. If the box above is checked, the system will automatically restart, showing a brief "blue screen" that doesn't give you (or anyone else) a chance to see what the error is before Windows restarts again. It's a vicious circle.

With the above box unchecked, although Windows still might not run, at least it will stop on the above blue screen, meaning you might be able to trace down the problem, perhaps replacing the needed file or get help

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from a more experienced technical support person who can identify the problem and talk you through fixing it.

This is not a total solution but it gives you a fighting chance. With the above box checked, you don't have a chance at all since you have no way of identifying the problem. If you're using Windows XP or 2000, before you go to bed tonight, uncheck that box. By the way, Windows 2000 will make you restart your computer after hitting OK twice -- XP won't.

The other keystroke might get you out of an install mess. Sometimes with this one you have to be really quick because you have to hit it while Windows is starting up. With computers getting faster and faster, you don't have much time to hit this key because once Windows starts loading the desktop, hitting this key won't help.

One of the ways to make sure you have time to hit the keys is to turn the computer off completely, then get poised to hit the F8 key. It's along the top row of keys of your keyboard and you **MUST** strike it before Windows starts loading the desktop.

(With some computers this is made even harder by a flashy screen they display while in the background, Windows is busy trying to load everything. Even if you get this type of screen once you hit the power button, hit F8 anyway.)

Sometimes you'll get a message that you have a keyboard error and be asked to hit F1 to continue. If that happens, press F1, then F8 again. You should then get a menu in a DOS-like black screen.

Let's say that you install a program in Windows (any of the above three versions) and then you start getting error messages or, even worse, Windows won't run at all. The one you want to choose is "Safe Mode." This is Windows with all the good stuff removed. The operating system uses a minimum set of drivers and, to tell you the truth, it looks grimy because the display is using only 16 colors. I remember the days of 16 colors on monitors and they looked pretty good back then; now I'm spoiled with millions of colors.

Once Windows loads, Windows 2000 and 98 will look pretty much the same, except for the few colors. This is the time to go to the Control Panel, click on Add/Remove Programs and remove the program that

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started giving you the trouble in the first place.

You also can go into Device Manager (right click on My Computer, then left click on Properties) to disable drives of devices you suspect are creating the problem. By clicking on the + sign next to a category, you can see the all the devices listed. Right clicking on the device will give you a context menu. On that menu is a "disable" device. That's what you might want to do if that's the one with the problem.

While in this cocoon of safety, you can do such stuff as change video drivers, adjust video drivers or uninstall a program that is creating problems.

How to uninstall a program:

- * Open the Control Panel.
- * Double click on Add/Remove Programs.
- * Select the program you want to uninstall and follow the directions from the Wizard.

In many cases, this will fix your computer. If it doesn't, at least you have a fighting chance by unchecking the automatic boot and learning how to use the startup menu that contains a goody that can help you rescue your system.

Questions, comments: Charlie@askcharlie.com.

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E-mail is 32 years old

By Jim Smith,

**President, Business and Professional Microcomputer Users Group,
Inc. (BPMUG), Connecticut**

Spring has finally arrived and the winter weather is starting to give way to warm, sunny days. March was the anniversary of Email. Yes, in March of 1972 the very first basic e-mail program was written and the "@" sign was chosen for its "at" meaning. Here it is 32 years later and email is a mainstream means of communication and an normal tool for most businesses and for personal use.

Naturally with this handy mainstream concept comes those wanting to abuse it. I would hope that most of you are aware of some of the tricks and hoaxes that can be offered via email. For the others, I'd like to review some of the more common ones so you won't be tricked.

First, there are the obvious scams trying to get you to buy endless supplies of gimmicks that promise to make many of your body parts larger or somehow enhanced. Less obvious are sites that promise prescription drugs for bargain rates and ones with Hormone Growth solutions, or great mortgages on-line or credit repairs and many others. Much like the snake oil sales team of yesteryear, most of these are scams. The occasional one that is legit should also be considered suspect since anyone desperate enough to jump on the wagon with the snake oil sales team is not likely to be around for long enough to deliver anyway. Businesses that use unsolicited commercial email (spam) to sell their products should be viewed with great caution.

Then there are hoaxes that alert you to something that request that you spread it to everyone in your email address book. Any time you get an email that tells you to spread it around, think about it first! Most likely it is a hoax. The most recent one I've seen is the one that asks everyone to not buy gasoline from the big producers in order to prove a point. Searching on-line will give plenty of reasons why this is a farce but it still doesn't

stop people from continuing to send it around. Of course there are plenty of hoaxes around about viruses that will eat your computer unless you send it along to everyone else you know. There are jokes that beg to be sent to everyone and there are emailed chain letters that promise doom and gloom for breaking the cycle. Don't continue to clutter up the email

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system with these.

Here's something to consider -- if you do what you are told and send these to everyone in your address book, and they turn around and add the addresses from their list, and it goes through that for a while, eventually it will likely land in the hands of someone that will sell all of those email addresses to junk emailers who will delight in sending a huge assortment of get-rich-quick and body enhancing scams to everyone listed. I get enough of those spams without friends adding my email address to those lists.

The other popular email hoax is the endless variation on the Nigerian widow with too much money from her late husband and looking for a trusting American with a bank account ready to enter into a business deal in exchange for a percentage. These scams have been around for longer than email has but, rather than using US Postal Service and phones to deliver the pitch, email is a much cheaper way to fish for unsuspecting victims.

Speaking of fishing, there is another hoax that is know by its variation, "Phishing". Phishing is when someone tries to get you to divulge credit card or passwords by pretending to be legit. If you get an email from PayPal asking you to "Click Here" and confirm your account info or from Citibank asking you to verify your credit card number, or from EBay asking you to type in your password so they can keep your account active, these phishing trips are hoaxes! Do not fall for them no matter how legit they appear to be. If you are not sure of something like that, be suspicious. Assume first that it is a phishing expedition rather than assuming it is legit. With a keen sense of skepticism, many of these hoaxes will become obvious. They prey on our not thinking too much but just doing as we are asked. Most people that fall for them are thoroughly embarrassed after it is over because they realized that if they had stopped to think about it they would have realized the absurdity of it. Don't be hooked in a phishing expedition!

So with 32 years of emailing behind us, there are many wonderful things about email and some things to watch out for. I've given you a few of them... it is up to you to stay alert to many of the other ones that are out there. BPMUG is a great resource for those wanting to find out whether something that sounds too good to be true, is true or not. Don't be taken

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in. Stop to ponder it first and then verify it. Then if you find an amazing deal to get rich quick that you just know will work... don't share it with me. I probably won't believe it anyway.

Now get out from behind your computers for a few minutes and have a wonderful Spring!

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How to safely troubleshoot your system

By Siles Bazerman, User Group Columnist, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, California

As long-term readers of this column are aware, I belong to a number of special interest Yahoo groups. Over the past few months I have been having a problem on several of them opening files. It finally dawned on me that it was with one particular file "server" (for lack of a better word, as I really do not know if it is a real server, a virtual server or a file folder at Yahoo). As Yahoo groups have grown they have been adding areas for storage. They now have f1 to f6. My problem was with f4 files.

Questions submitted to Yahoo Group Help were of no help at all as usual. This area is preprogrammed and will answer questions regardless of whether or not the answer is related to the question you asked. Apparently you are only supposed to have problems that fit in their preconceived program. This was not one of them.

By the way, this is being written not to show how clever I am at problem solving, but to show an example of how to problem solve. The most important utility to use is the one behind your eyes and between your ears. Before you take any action think carefully, back up, and think again. Then take one step at a time. If you do several at once and it fixes the problem which one was the fix? What can be restored to before the fix?

Back to the task at hand. I did try to view the files using both HAL and Barbie. I received the same error on both; page cannot be displayed at this time. This occurred also in safe mode with networking where no drivers are loaded and most programs are not started. Even turning off all startup items was no help. Accessing the files from my son's computer was successful. This indicated the problem was at my end and not a glitch at Yahoo.

Now it was time to think. Even though both HAL and Barbie are both running Windows XP Pro, they have totally different programs loaded. This included the anti virus programs. So, why the similar results? Then I realized they both use the same router to access the DSL line. The next logical step would be to disconnect the router. Before we do, let us take a look at the rule of unintended consequences. What will happen if we connect to the Internet without the router?

First, my network would go down. No big deal as that is a temporary con-

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dition restored with the router reconnected. But, the router also serves as a hardware firewall. This function would be lost, and in today's atmosphere I would never run on the Internet without a firewall, even for a short test. There are just too many flakes out there trying to cause as much damage as possible. So, I made sure my anti virus program had the latest updates. I also updated Ad-aware, and Spybot – Search and Destroy. I also enabled the built-in Windows XP software firewall. Then I created a new restore point and also backed up my C drive with V2i Protector. If I did somehow become infected with a worm or Trojan I had a way out. Since there were no other problems that I could see I removed the router and tried to view the files again. Success!

In order to protect the system while continuing to troubleshoot the problem I reinstalled the router. I also disabled the Windows XP firewall, as I really do not like it. It does have its functions however. The next step was to go to the web site of the router manufacturer, D-link, and see what information was available. Although there were no FAQs covering this problem, there was a firmware update. I downloaded the instructions for performing the update.

I printed out the instructions, as the upgrade cannot be accomplished with much else running. This is an online update that requires a reset of the router and a reconfiguration of it. I then reconnected with the web site and updated the firmware. Reset and reconfiguration followed. Now for the moment of truth. I again tried to access the problem files, and could now view them perfectly. I still do not really know why only some files were inaccessible before, but I had the cure. I can only assume that there was something in the address of the section that the router did not like.

I hope I have shown you something about how to proceed with troubleshooting and about the hidden traps to look out for.

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Do you use one space or two spaces at the end of a sentence?

By June Hall, Editor, Windows on the Rockies User Group, Colorado

Like most people I was taught to use two spaces at the end of a sentence when using a typewriter. But when I started editing the company newsletter in the 1980s, was taught to use one space at the end of a sentence in published material.

If you type the question at www.google.com, the websites are numerous and contain contradictory answers, replies, and opinions.

Original typewriters had monospaced fonts. Monospaced type is text produced by characters that are evenly spaced. A "W" takes up just as much room as an "I." Thus, around skinny letters there was more space than around wide letters. To clear everything up, it was decided that an extra space should be added after a sentence to make it easier to see where one sentence ended and the next began.

In the very early days two spaces were also used in published material, but then along came the lead-casting Linotype machine. The linotype used wedges for spaces, rectangles for letters. After filling the line as close as possible, the operator would pull a handle, and the wedges would be forced upward, expanding (and thereby justifying) the line of type, which would then be cast in lead. If the operator typed two spaces in a row, you had two wedges next to each other, and that tended to gum up the operation. So only one space was used.

On Woodys Watch (www.woodyswatch.com), Woody told us about all the mail—friendly mail, angry mail, congratulatory mail, why-don't-you-check-your-facts mail, my-teacher-taught-me-this-and-my-teacher-ain't-stupid mail—he received after making a somewhat tongue-in-cheek remark about "cleaning up after people who inevitably type two spaces after every period." Woody ended by stating if you want to sell what you write, use one period because that's the way the industry works nowadays.

A copyeditor at The University of Chicago (Chicago Manual of Style) thinks, "In our efficient, modern world, there is not room for two spaces at the end of a sentence."

Publishers want single spaces after periods. Most desktop publishers be-

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lieve desktop publishing (electronic type-setting) should follow the commercial publishers rule, "One space at the end of a sentence."

Two spaces can cause problems with line breaks in certain programs. Web pages use only one space between sentences. HTML is set up to only display one space no matter how many are typed. A browser, like Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer, will only display one.

Some people using word processing state, "those of us who use word processing software are no longer typists but typographers. While our typewriter keyboards limited our capabilities in creating text, our word processors allow us to do what professional typesetters have been doing for centuries. Consequently, many of the rules we learned as typists do not apply in the world of word processing."

The majority of people who never do desktop publishing have no reason to change from using two spaces. Even some publishers prefer using two spaces in their personal correspondence and notes.

After getting used to using only one space at the end of a sentence in writing for published material, I use one space for everything—most everything. I have to watch myself if I type a letter for my husband as he wants two spaces. One of the first things I do when I receive an article for a newsletter is to go to Edit/Replace and put in two spaces to be replaced by one space.

I liked the website with the info below:

Should sentences be separated by one space or two spaces?

Yes.

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Reflections on the Mac at 20

By Lowell J. Erickson

Mountain View Users Group, Arizona

Twenty years ago, in January 1984, two momentous events occurred. The first was an ad that appeared during the TV broadcast of the Super Bowl. The other, two days later, was the introduction of a new kind of personal computer.

That ad for the fledgling Macintosh computer is one of the most renowned in advertising history. An athletic young woman sprints through a zombie-like audience and hurls a hammer that smashes the giant screen image of Big Brother, a barely disguised symbol for IBM's "Big Blue" and its kludgy personal computer.

What then went on sale was a revolutionary product: a computer with a graphic interface of icons and windows, all manipulated by what was whimsically referred to as the "mouse," in addition to the keyboard. The display was nestled atop the workings of the computer, all in one enclosure. None of the elements pulled together by Steve Jobs' team at Apple computer was completely original, but it was combined, along with easy-to-use software, into a unique package.

Those of us who were early acolytes of this new "computer for the rest of us" have our own recollections of the Macintosh's eventful history. I no doubt qualify as an early adopter, having acquired a 512 Mac barely a year after its debut. I needed a computer to write my dissertation at UCLA, and even then my mind was inadequate and unwilling to memorize the arcane code that was required to coax productive work out of the IBM PC and its MS-DOS software.

Over the last 19 years I have had the opportunity to get to know and mostly to enjoy nine different Macs. Seven of those were my own and the other two were provided by my employer. All were desktop models; except for a clamshell iBook my wife and I still use. Generally, as I have moved up in speed, power and features, I have passed my older Macs on to family members to encourage their participation in the clan.

So, what do I think of the Mac now that it has reached the ripe old age of 20 years? From a strictly personal perspective, I have no doubt that my 17-inch flat panel iMac, ripping along with OS X, is by far the greatest

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version of the venerable Mac I have ever used. But from a broader perspective, I think that CEO Steve Jobs and Apple are engaged in the most exciting ventures ever.

The top-of-the-line iMac has moved up to a 20-inch display and continues to be improved in speed and power. The eMac, originally for the education market, now gives consumers an entry-level model at less than \$800, and for \$300 more the hard drive's capacity is doubled and the optical drive can burn DVDs, as well as CDs.

The iBook is now equipped with the more powerful G4 processor and starts, with a 12.1" display, at less than \$1100. The top model, with a 14.1" display and twice the hard drive capacity is \$300 more. The PowerBook offers two 12.1" models, starting at under \$1300, two at 15", starting at under \$2000, and one with a 17" screen for less than \$3000.

No doubt the greatest improvement in the last year was made in the professional G5 Power Macs. Regardless of whether this new version is literally, as Jobs claims, "the fastest desktop computer in the world," it is certainly much faster than its predecessors and is in the very top rank for speed among all personal computers.

One of the most fascinating uses of the new G5s was to connect 1100 of them at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, producing the world's third fastest super computer. The Institute's staff accomplished this with student volunteers in just seven weeks for \$7 million. The world's fastest machine, in Japan, cost at least \$250 million and the next fastest, at Los Alamos National Laboratory, was built for \$215 million. The VPI super computer is already being upgraded, using Apple's new Xserve, which will reduce the space it requires by two-thirds.

Apple has expanded into the consumer market with its iPod, a portable jukebox introduced in 2001. The iPod starts at \$299 and now can store as many as 10,000 songs. Apple sold more than 700,000 units over the 2003 holiday season and last month introduced the mini iPod for \$250.

Introduced to store and play music on the Mac, iTunes is now the gateway to the Apple Music Store. This new venture takes Apple into the Windows realm, and more than 30 million songs have been downloaded at 99 cents each, or \$9.99 for most albums.

iTunes is part of iLife, a suite of creative programs for doing what is fun on

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the computer, which also includes iPhoto, iMovie, and iDVD. Last month a new member of the suite, GarageBand, was introduced. This program enables even those of us who can't play a note to create our own music on the Mac.

At 20 years of age, the Macintosh may not have achieved what it should have; that is, to be the primary operating system on the world's computers. In fact, it now holds less than a five percent market share. But what it has done consistently is to be creative and to introduce innovations that are often copied by other computer and software producers. It is the computer of choice for many of the most creative professionals. As Roger Ebert, the movie reviewer, recently observed, if an anthropologist of the future had as his only evidence the frequent appearances of Macs in films, he would conclude that the Macintosh was by far the dominant computer of our era.

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Computer Rage

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I have heard about road rage for years and have even seen instances of it. For some people just putting them behind a steering wheel gives them an angry feeling toward all other drivers on the road.

I am seeing a similar reaction with some people as soon as they are in front of a computer keyboard. Suddenly they are no longer reasonable, rational people using the computer to make their life better. They react as put-upon individuals that are using a tool, which they would rather not use, can't really see the benefit in using it, would rather be doing anything else other than sitting there in front of their computer, and they do not want to learn anything about their computer other than how to use the applications that they have been forced to use because of outside pressure. They act as if it is an imposition to have to learn anything more about their computer than how to turn it on. They see no useful value in understanding any of the workings of the computer. They have much more valuable use for their time than to spend any of it learning useless (in their estimation) information.

Unfortunately, not only do we have the "Computer Rage" group that think it is chic to hide behind their rage with an "I would rather work harder, than smarter" attitude, there are others. Some groups that come to mind are the "I am too old to learn this computer stuff" the "I am too dumb to learn this computer stuff," the "I am so computer illiterate that I don't even know how to turn one on, and proud of it," and the "I would probably do something wrong and break it" group.

What could be some of the reasons for these attitudes, reactions or myths to using a computer?

One reason is that computer software and hardware companies have fostered the idea that in today's world computers are so sophisticated that they can be run without any necessity for the user to learn the basics. As an example, the Windows operating system installs with many of its defaults set to "protect" the user from much of the really useful information that is needed for intelligent operation of the computer. The problem with that is, if the information is hidden, the user may be unaware of

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needed information.

So why should you make the effort to learn more about your computer? Even if you are using a computer under duress (real or perceived). once a computer is an integral part of your personal or business life it is very upsetting for the computer to be unavailable to perform the tasks that you've come to depend on.

When a problem occurs with your program or with your hardware, instead of just feeling abused, put upon, frustrated, helpless, or mad, you will have some options if you learn some of the basics. You will be able to take care of some of the simple and common problems yourself. When you get the "Disk A: is write-protected" error message while trying to save a file to the floppy disk, you will know that all you have to do is take the floppy out of the drive, slide over the write-protect tab to cover the hole, and re-insert it in the drive. The problem was solved in ten seconds, no rage, no anger, no anxiety, actually, no real problem. It was just one of those things that happen and have to be dealt with.

Even if you can't solve the situation on your own, you will be able to communicate the problem in understandable terms. This makes it possible for you to ask for help over the telephone, or even on the Internet. You'll also need to know when you really need help and to know if the "help" you are getting is valid. Last, and far from least, most windows have a 'Help" menu, and there is always the "START" button and general "HELP" option. But once again, if, for whatever reason, you have not bothered to learn some of the basic concepts and terminology, you won't be able to ask the right question, or understand the answer if you stumble across it.

I have also heard people say. "I watch TV but I don't have to learn how it works, why should I have to learn how to use my computer?" My response is that today's computers place an unbelievable amount of access to information, knowledge, and creative programs at your fingertips. For chump change (don't know what that means-- look it up on Google.com) you can buy a nice computer and access to the Internet. As soon as you buy that combination you have an almost unimaginable power sitting on your desk. Power that just a few years ago only governments and large corporations could afford. Once you are on the Internet, most of the information, a lot of the knowledge, and quite a few of the applications are free! You may have seen the TV ad showing a one man garage shop company that looks like a large company because of what the computer can do. This is a true story, not an advertiser's pipe dream. Information is power and the Internet

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makes information available on about any subject. Aside from the "chump change" what does all this power cost? The willingness to spend the time to learn how to use it! I am no longer envious of people who live near a large library. I use the Internet to answer many of the questions which I think about but forget before I get to a dictionary, encyclopedia, or other paper research material. Now I can get an almost instantaneous answer and can ask to be notified by e-mail when a certain topic comes up in the news. For example I used this recently after I read a murder mystery based on a deadly chemical named sodium azide. I had never heard of it before. I searched the Internet using Google and found many articles about it and its deadly properties. This chemical is readily available and widely used. I was concerned enough to use a feature of Google to send me an e-mail when sodium azide is in a news story.

Wouldn't you be willing to invest some of your time to be able to really use this type of power? What about really learning some of the abilities of the software that is probably sitting on your computer? Have you ever really looked at the features of WordPad in Windows XP? Have you ever clicked on help in WordPad? Did you know that the "Help Menu" in WordPad contains a "Help on how to use Help" section? Are you taking digital photos? Are you in sales? Do you have a disability? Of course you can find use for some of the more advanced features of your software. The problem is you won't ever know what these may be, unless you expend some effort to learn what is possible.

Once you decide that learning more about the potential of your computer is a benefit to you, it makes it a lot easier to find the time and energy to accomplish this.

Understanding goes a long way toward the feeling of being in control. When you feel in control of your computing experience, the irrational feelings of rage will probably go away or at least be minimized. This doesn't mean that you will no longer get mad or upset with your computer, far from it, just that you will be more likely do it for a real cause.

How do you acquire the information and skills you need to feel in control of your computer? One good way is to go to a computer user's group. Unfortunately, if you are the person this article is about you are probably not getting this newsletter. My suggestion is that those of you who are getting this newsletter give a copy of this article to your friends that have computer rage.

ACPCUG Club News

April Meeting at Cuyahoga Falls Public Library on April 12th!
Starting time is the usual 6:00 PM, sharp. This is the same ol' place formerly known as Taylor Memorial Library.

Feel free to e-mail **Q&A** questions to your officers (addresses below). If you have several, fine. But don't expect all of a series of questions will be entertained at one time. Your officers have decided to mix them up with the questions from others to more fairly give everyone a chance.

Upcoming Computer Shows:

Peter Trapp at Tadmor Temple, Sunday, April 25, 2004
3000 Krebs Drive, Akron, OH.
Exit 120 off I-77 (Arlington Rd.)
Right on Jarvis. Right on Krebs to top of hill. 10am-3pm

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