

ACPCUG Newsletter

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**May 1, 2006
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May 2006

Akron-Canton PC Users Group

**From The DealsGuy For
June 2006,
by Bob (The Cheapskate)
Click, Greater Orlando Com-
puter Users Group**

I worked the National Sign Association show and it was interesting. Most of the outdoor electronic signs were using very bright LEDs that are easily seen, even in bright sunlight. The LED's brightness can be adjusted either automatically or manually. The one I saw up close was composed of modules 19 inches square that can be easily changed to repair it. If a hurricane is approaching it is easy to dismantle the modules and safely store them (if your storage survives). It was a large show. There were also all kinds of giant printers, and other machines that would stamp out all kinds of parts for signs.

Memphis PC Users Group Inc. has a great newsletter thanks to the Editor Jin Yang. In the January issue were two great articles that you might be interested in; one about the Sony Rootkit, and another written about an American working in Shanghai, China. There are other good articles, but those

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two caught my eye so check them out. <<http://www.mpcug.org>>

I have developed other health problems (numbing toes), but I have a lot packed in the column for you this month so you don't need my health problems. I edited much of the wording out so I suggest you check for more product information on the Web sites. Remember I have not tried them and know nothing about these products but thought they were interesting. Be sure to check their privacy statements, if they have one.

***Games Anyone?**

TameStorm Games unveiled the newest version of 'Filler'. The inner structure of the game reveals features of puzzles and strategies combined, so they have a few games to put on the same list.

What you are to do here is to occupy half, or the majority of, the flowers on the field. The field is a meticulously crafted meadow picture, in which flowers are fresh and live and their petals still remember the touch of an artist's brush. You always start a game from the left side. The computer always starts from the right one. You always make the first move. The game field has flowers with coins, which you need to seize. The more coins you have, the more bonuses you can buy. If you have gathered enough money, you can repaint flowers in the color of your zone, randomize unoccupied space, and make your opponent miss one turn and more. Two modes of the game are available: classic puzzle and advanced puzzle. In advanced puzzle mode you will see black flowers that you can't seize.

Filler Features at a Glance (Full Version):

- Unlimited game play time;
- 100 layouts of the field and 100 levels in advanced game;
- 100 levels in classic game;
- 11 special bonuses;
- Interesting game for your children;
- Graphics designed by masters of Russian Khokhloma painting;
- Splendid relaxing game.

Pricing and Availability

Filler 1.2 runs under Windows98/ME/2000/XP and costs \$14.95 (USD). TameStorm Games offers user group members 15% discount. Use the coupon code TAME-HQBL-FILL on the order page. Additional information on Filler, as well as its evaluation version with 30 minutes of the game play and several locked levels is available as a free download at: <<http://>

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www.tamestorm.com/games/filler_puzzle_game/filler_demo_setup.exe>.

Product page link: <http://www.tamestorm.com/games/filler_puzzle_game>

Web: <<http://www.tamestorm.com>>

***Get Modern With eBook**

Smart eBook Maker for Richer Content and Stronger Copyright Protection

eBook Maestro released an update to its fully featured e-book compiler eBook Maestro 1.50. eBook Maestro is a robust compiler that makes rich standalone e-books out of HTML pages, multimedia files and scripts. The program now supports all popular multimedia formats and helps embed flash, shockwave, and other visual elements into a single executable. eBook Maestro offers various means of content protection from disabling cut-and-paste and printout to on-line registration and limited use for unregistered copies. In response to copyright concerns, we provide multi-level protection of e-book contents. Not only can you effectively limit the use of a publication, but also protect its content against changes. Besides making e-books, it provides rich features for multimedia presentations, ezines, offline web sites, training and educational courses, advertisement and promotion letters, and other kinds of publications.

Pricing and Availability

eBook Maestro v1.50 runs under Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP. A standard version of the product is available at \$35.95 USD for a single user license. A professional version with extended support for commercial e-publishing is priced at \$69.95 USD for the same single user license. eBook Maestro with core functionality is also available as a freeware. eBook Maestro STANDARD and eBook Maestro PRO are offered at a 40% discount. Discount coupon "C2044NN1449" is redeemable at <http://www.ebookmaestro.com/purchase_discount.html>. The trial versions of eBook Maestro STANDARD and eBook Maestro PRO, and the freeware version of eBook Maestro FREE are available for download at <<http://www.ebookmaestro.com/download.html>>.

Product page link: <<http://www.ebookmaestro.com/>>

***Get Rid of Those Duplicate Files**

We are the producer of NoClone, a file utility which uncovers true duplicate files and recovers valuable disk space. Reasonable Software House is offer-

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ing a 20% discount to user group members on NoClone, a file utility which uncovers true duplicate files and recovers valuable disk space. To get the discount, follow this link: <<http://noclone.net/mybuy.asp?promo=HF89AW>>. Don't buy a new hard drive, buy NoClone. Uncover duplicate files; recover valuable disk space. Information at <<http://noclone.net>>

Reasonable Software House (a Monthly Service)

An online permission-based newsletter management system called Reasonable Spread, also from Reasonable Software House, can help with your newsletter management. By using Reasonable Spread, you can communicate with your members by sending newsletter/latest news/announcements. Or it can be used as an electronic publishing tool by sending users news and articles written by group president or members. For the free trial: <<http://spread.reasonablesw.com/>> To order at 20% discount: <<http://spread.reasonablesw.com/mypages/discounts-20.aspx>> Phone: +852 35204490 Fax: +852 35204492 Mobile: +852 92276779. Address: Suite 332, InnoCentre, 72 Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong

***More Product Announcements**

Almeza Research has released MultiSet 2.0 and Captain Tray 6.0.

MultiSet is a solution to the problem of automatic program installation. MultiSet has been created to free you from routine work such as program installations. All you have to do is install the application only once on your PC and MultiSet will record all your actions. MultiSet will install all the applications you need automatically, either on your original computer or on a new one; it's ideal for rebuilding your systems quickly!

MultiSet automatically starts the installation procedure, takes care of all necessary buttons, like "Next", "I agree", and "Finish". This installation robot will specify the path for the installation and automatically configure all attending settings. All registration codes and license keys will also be entered in a self-acting mode. Once you have done it, you can playback the whole process and create your installation CD/DVD disc! Website and Info: <<http://www.almeza.com/>> Get 50% discount (MSRP \$44.95, although I am unsure about that MSRP) <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=13741-1&ss_coupon=ALME-XEHN>

Captain Tray Pro: Turn system tray into your PC central command center.

Captain Tray Pro is a tiny software application that makes a difference when

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it comes to organizing favorite programs, customizing the system tray and creating shortcuts for instantaneously minimizing windows, changing captions and doing a number of other tasks. Essentially, any user who invests an hour into investigating this tool is likely to completely abandon the traditional way of endless window browsing and using the Start menu to open documents and launch applications.

Many users need several applications running simultaneously. Some of those applications are used quite frequently, others only when they are needed. So the Windows taskbar can get fully packed and everything seems to be necessary, and you have no desire to close any programs. Some applications can be minimized to the system tray, but what shall we do about 'Notepad', 'Calculator', 'Microsoft Word', 'Microsoft Excel' and our other favorite programs? Captain Tray Pro is there to help you. Here are two other products with a discount.

Program: Captain Tray Pro

Website and Info: <<http://www.captaintray.com/>>

50% discount URL: <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=13741-2&ss_coupon=ALME-XEHN>

Product: Time Assist Pro (A project manager)

Web: <<http://www.mytimeassist.com>>

50% Discount link: <https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=13741-4&ss_coupon=ALME-XEHN>

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. Be sure to check for new announcement pages on my Web site. 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>>.

Google Earth

By Joe Schmitt, Member of the Tampa Bay Computer Society
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www.tampa-bay.org

One of the greatest tools of the internet has always been that of maps. From the early days of the Internet www.mapquest.com was a great source for online geography. Now a myriad of new tools is available to home internet users to navigate through the world.

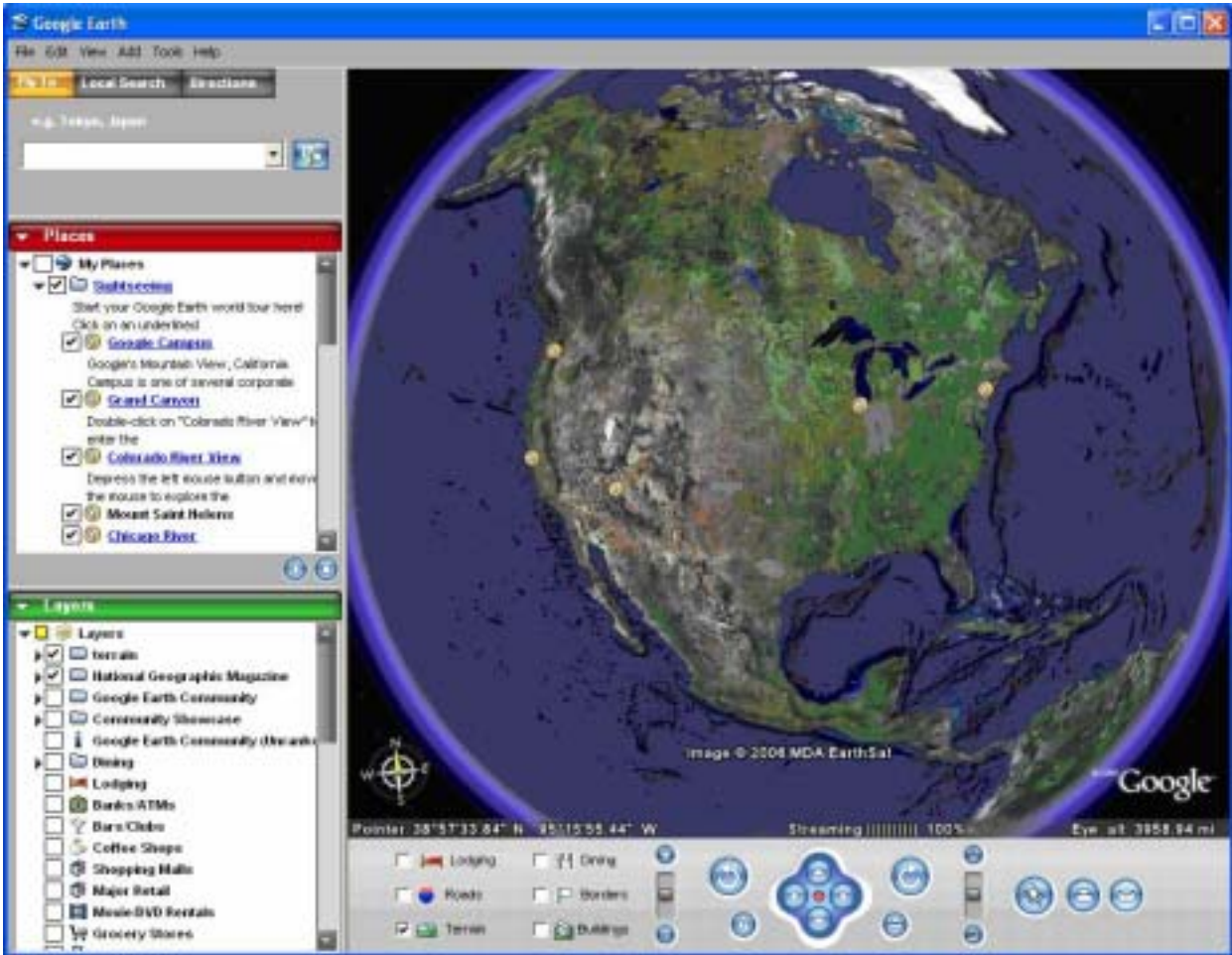
Believe it or not, one of the biggest uses for online maps is not for that big long trip to the Grand Canyon with the kids but for finding local addresses. How many times recently have you used a service such as www.mapquest.com or maps.google.com to find that new restaurant or new store? While the online services available can be used to find the next route cross-country they are more often used locally.

Another popular role that current cartographic sites such as map-point.msn.com serve is where a particular place is in relation to your current location. There are many times when we are watching the news and someplace like [Jumbo, WV](#) pops up; there is now a great new tool to let you explore the world virtually.

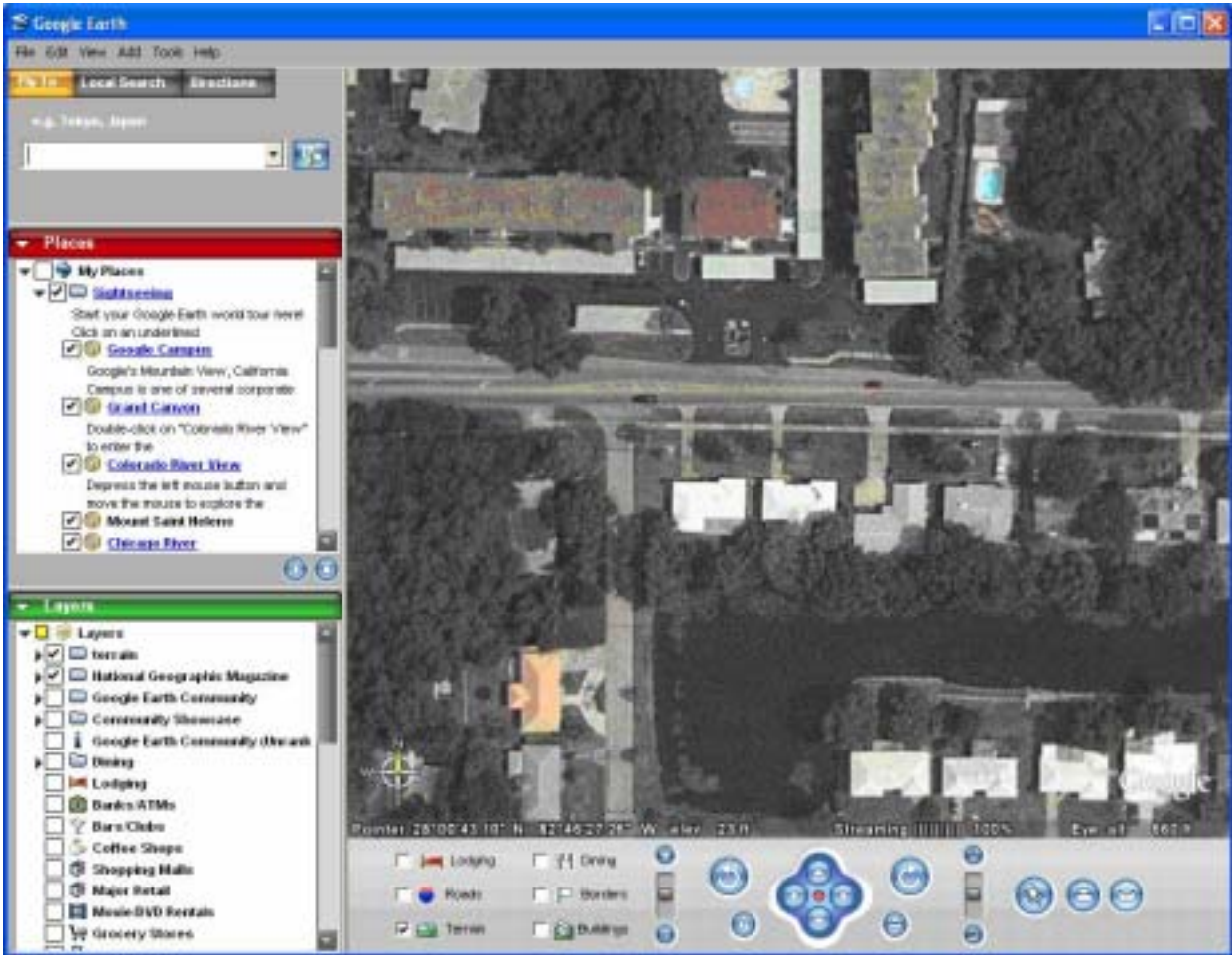
[Google Earth](http://earth.google.com) (<http://earth.google.com>) is a new offering from Google that offers a unique spin on online cartography. While most mapping services try to offer you a straight forward approach to mapping, Google's newest tool takes quite a different tact. Described by Google as "a globe that sits in your PC," Google Earth offers a new perspective on mapping software. Like all its major competitors, Google Earth will allow you to find addresses, points of interest, or a driving route. What makes Google Earth different is the way in which items are displayed to the user. Google Earth has to install software on your machine, and once installed it needs an internet connection to display its images. Also be advised that Google Earth is resource intensive: it requires a fairly fast machine with 3D graphics capability.

When you first start up Google Earth you see the below image:

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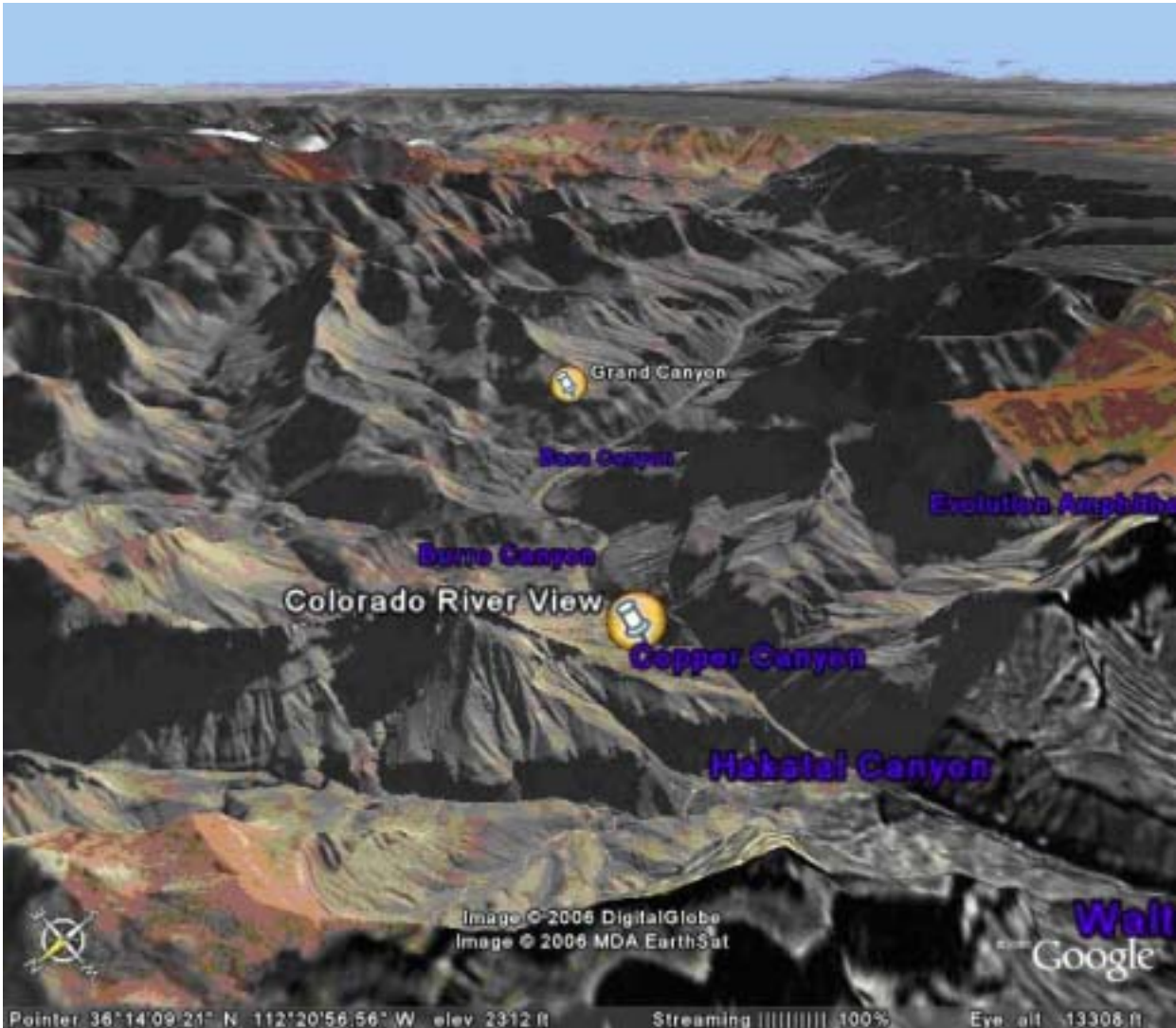


Google Earth generates an image of the planet taken from a mosaic of satellite and aerial photographs. If you enter an address such as your home in the search bar, Google Earth doesn't just pop a map of your neighborhood but actually *flies* to the location. You see the image of the earth get larger and larger as if you were descending on the location from outer space. All the time as the planet moves closer, the program continually generates more detailed pictures of the surface until you are sitting above the location you are searching for.



Another great feature of Google Earth is angular display. Not only are dead top center views available but you can also tilt the plane of the viewing area to see things in the distance. Now this sounds like I should be able to tilt the image and see the windows on my house, but that just isn't possible. All the images are from satellite or aerial photographs that are also taken from straight overhead.

Topography is another feature that Google Earth incorporates makes the tilting feature quite impressive. Topography is how the terrain rises and falls in any given location. Google earth uses 3D technology to render the rise and fall of the land based on radar data gathered from multiple space shuttle missions. The images are melded with the topography and you have the impression of seeing mountains rise and canyons fall:



Not only does Google Earth provide these new ways to explore the world but they have also included the ability to include data files of your own. If you choose to upgrade to the "plus" version you can import data from any of the popular GPS (Global Positioning System) receivers currently available. You can import waypoints, routes, and tracks from the unit.

Also, you can import images, such as a topographic map, and orient them as overlays on the satellite images. The application will let you resize and rotate the map until it fits. Google Earth will also let you save data in files that can be shared with other users. One interesting aspect is files that can utilize data available on the web for dynamic interaction. Click on this link to see some examples: <http://earth.google.com/tour/thanks-win.html>. For example there is a link to a file that will track flights around the US live. It displays an icon for the plane and shows it in relation to where it is in the

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air.

Google Earth offers some new and interesting ways to explore our world. With thousands of user files, it can be customized to any number of needs to suit your tastes. A great resource for new ideas involving Google Earth is the Google Earth blog at: <http://www.gearthblog.com/> or at the community: <http://bbs.keyhole.com/ubb/ubbthreads.php/Cat/0>.

The only limits to Google Earth are what your imagination and determination can achieve.

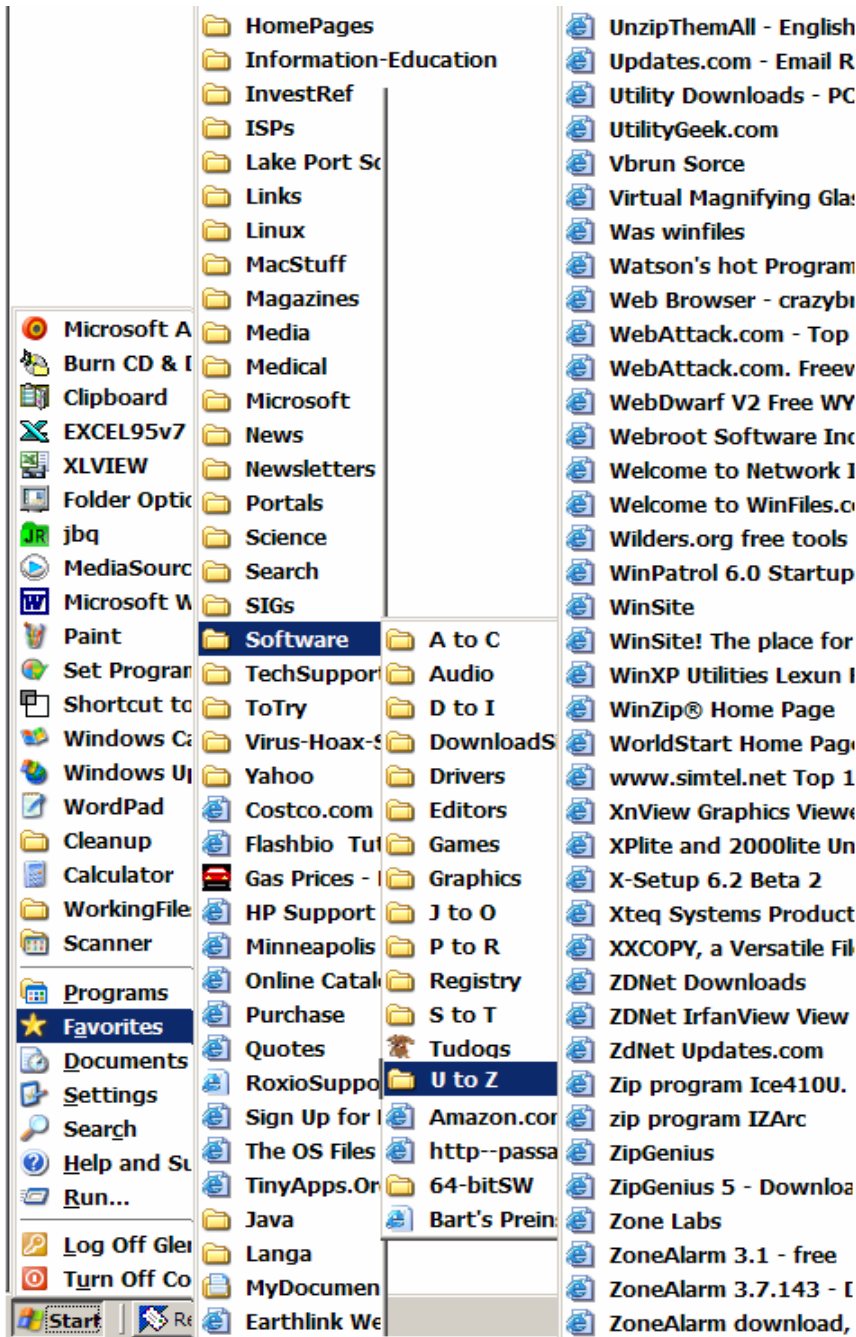
Joe Schmitt is a computer and technology guru, who also has a love for the outdoors. He can often be found tromping around the woods with his GPS and digital camera.

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Organizing the Favorites Menu

by **Glenn Richards**, Emeritus Member of the Lake-Sumter Computer Society, Leesburg, FL grich32(at)yahoo.com www.lscs.us

This is a follow-up on a tip from Worldstart. I have been using the method for years. When you collect shortcuts to web sites like I do the Favorites menu gets difficult to manage without some organizing.



It is easy to add sub-folders to the Favorites main folder, either via the Internet Explorer menu item Favorites, or using Windows Explorer.

The figure shows a main Favorites subfolder I named "Software." Under that folder I have a subfolder named "A to C," etc. down to "U to Z." The right-most column shows some of the contents of the UtoZ subfolder.

I split the alphabetic range of the subfolders so that the height of the contents of any folder does not exceed the vertical space on the Desktop. The figure has squeezed the display horizontally to make more room for these words.

My Software folder is for web sites where I have found worthwhile pro-

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grams for download. One of its subfolders is "Tudogs," a web site that has shortcuts to hundreds of free programs. I have acquired many of them for the group's CDs.

The method of creating the subfolders using Windows Explorer that I use is to have WE in a two-pane mode with the Favorites folder highlighted in the left pane. Right-click in the right pane, New, Folder, and give the folder a name of you're choosing. This method can be cascaded as far as you want to go.

The above method of organization can also be used to consolidate items in your Start, Programs menu. Use WE to open your Programs folder at C:\Documents and Settings\\Start Menu\Programs, create subfolders for categories of menu items, and move appropriate shortcuts to this new subfolder. This can reduce the height of the Programs menu so it will fit on the screen.

My Favorites folder has 1968 files (web addresses) in 136 subfolders occupying 403KB, with no web address more than two clicks away.

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Back to the Future with System Restore

By Marjorie Tucker, Member of the Mountain Computer Users Group,
Young Harris, GA
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<http://mcug.org/>



Did you know that your computer has the ability to go back in time - just like the movie, Back to the Future? Well, it does, using a Windows XP program named System Restore. This built-in Windows program periodically makes an image of your hard drive, much like a backup copy. Then, when you have one of those annoying problems, like losing all of your desktop icons, you can restore that image to get your computer back in good working order.

You can find System Restore under Start - All Programs - Accessories - System Tools - System Restore. The screen that initially comes up gives you some basic information about this program. It will restore your settings to an earlier point in time, but leave your data completely intact. And, there is no fear of using it since the program is completely reversible.



To begin, you merely click the Next button on the right side of the screen. The next page shows a calendar, open to the current month, with bold numbers indicating the dates when an image was created on your computer. You can also use the arrows at the top of the calendar to go farther back in time, if necessary. You merely choose one of these dates and click again on Next.

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The following screen reviews your choice and advises you to close all open programs since System Restore will be restarting your computer. Verify that you want to take this step and then click on the Next button again to start the process.

Be patient because it will take several minutes to perform this action; but eventually your computer will restart itself and it will be back to the restoration time point. If this didn't solve your problem you can run the program again and go even further back in time.

Create Your Own Restore Point

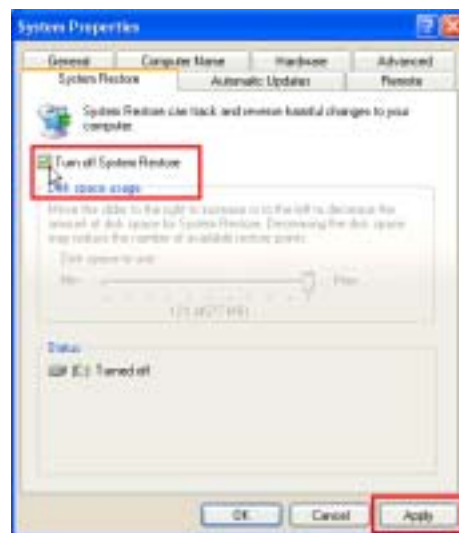


There are times when it would be very nice to know that you have a backup all ready to use - such as just before you start to install that monstrous new program that may destroy your entire computer setup. Well, System Restore will let you create an additional restore point anytime it would be convenient. To do this, merely click on the second choice of the initial System Restore screen, Create a Restore Point. The program will make an instant backup that you can use when that new program fails.

There are Some Cautions

System Restore is very useful tool and you will probably need to use it before long. However, this handy feature can cause problems when your computer catches a virus or gains an unwanted trojan. Every time your computer creates a new restore backup point, it is also backing up that virus or trojan. That means that although you get rid of the problem, it has the ability to sneak back into your computer from that backup. For this reason Symantec and other antivirus software companies suggest that you turn off the System Restore feature before you de-virus your computer.

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To turn off System Restore click the Start button, right-click My Computer

AMD'S VISIONARY GAMBLE

by **Jim Hinwood**, Monterey Bay User's Group – Personal Computer (MBUG-PC)

(Illustration by Regina Doyle, MBUG-PC)

MBUG-PC Newsletter, Volume 25, Number 23, March 2006

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www.mbug.org

We computer enthusiasts have been the spectators in what I like to think of as a grand race. Leaving all the David and Goliath analogies aside, I like to think of the computer revolution like a car race. Different technologies race around the track — if one pulls a little too wide on a turn, it falls behind, only to make it up on the straightaway later. One “spinout” and you can be permanently out of the race.

There have been some grand reversals in this past year, quite unlike what I've seen in any other business. Quick and decisive changes leading to *huge* differences in market share. When I first started to play with computer hardware, **Intel** was king. For 35 years **AMD** (Advanced Micro Devices) was the “Beta” to Intel's “VHS”: a lot of people would only buy computers with Intel chips even though in many ways AMD was the better value. The problem that Intel ran into was the buildup of heat, and the gamble by AMD on the 64-bit processor. Intel ran their chips as close to 4 GHz as they could, but they couldn't seem to crack the 4 GHz ceiling. A lot of gamers did, by going to water cooling, but nobody in the mainstream wanted to deal with water cooling.



Then, multimedia computers came in as the next best thing. With **Microsoft** wanting to make headway into your living room, they came out with a new operating system, **XP Media Center**. Now we

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had an operating system strictly for a media center PC in your living room, but without a solution to the heat problem, we had water cooling, or a computer with a CPU fan that sounded like a leaf blower. You don't want to watch a movie when the computer running all of your media devices sounds like someone starting a two-cylinder motorcycle!

The other problem is obvious — you don't want laptops that will scorch the gonads off anybody foolish enough to use it on their lap (and eventually you won't be calling it a "laptop" anymore)! Intel found a solution in the **Pentium M** for the laptop, reducing clock speeds and heat, and increasing battery life. AMD focused on 64-bit computing. When AMD presented 64-bit architecture, there weren't going to be any applications to really take advantage of 64-bit computing for a long time and no operating system in sight, but the AMD chips had immediate and substantial gains in performance for gamers and they started to trounce the Intel chips in any performance face-off.

Also, clock speed doesn't remain as important when you have a 64-bit pipeline. Instead of continuing to increase clock speeds, 64-bit computing doubles the amount of data that can be processed per clock cycle. 64-bit architecture also means exponential amounts of memory that can be addressed. The best home computers can address 4 GB of RAM if the motherboard can handle it, but with 64-bit computing you can run 1 terabyte (1,000 GB of RAM). RAM is very fast and this adds substantial gains to the whole package. AMD then went to a true dual core processor which put two chip cores on the same die, the equivalent of two microprocessors in one. Then you need fewer clock cycles to process the same information — speed can remain the same with double the processing power and running 250 times the RAM.

With the addition of dual core processors and the expected increases in performance that come from splitting the processing of information between chips, AMD has again raised performance without increases in heat. These three things: 64-bit architecture, larger amounts of RAM, and splitting the processing between dual lower clock cycle cores have, for the moment, catapulted AMD from a distant second to an over 50 percent market share in personal computers. AMD is in first place for the first time in their 35-year history.

Does this mean the end for Intel? Not anytime soon, with Intel being seven times as large as AMD and with 34 billion dollars in revenue. Intel earns in 11 days what AMD will earn all year. Intel also sits on 14 billion dollars in

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cash, to AMD's 1.1 billion. This gives them a huge advantage in research and development and in building state-of-the-art production facilities. AMD's surge in market share is due as much to the stumbling of Intel as it is to its own genius. The only thing that seems to be holding AMD back is the refusal of **Dell** to use AMD chips. If consumer demand becomes great enough for AMD chips and Dell makes a reversal, it could mean huge gains for AMD. It remains to be seen if Intel can soon regain the summit on which it once stood firmly!

[Coming in the April **MBUG-PC Newsletter**: Part 2 - "ATI vs Nvidia"]

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New Hard Drives and XP Hard Drive Management Utility

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX;
Radio & TV Show Host WEBSITE: <http://www.langa.com>

With the oft mentioned convergence, where our desktop computers are now commonly used for more than traditional computing tasks, many of us seem to run low on hard drive space. A quick review of the newspaper and online ads for the electronics and office supply stores often show a selection of large capacity hard drives for very reasonable prices. Sometimes these hard drives can be purchased for an exceptionally low price after the application of high value rebates. Now that many of us are using our hard drives for the storage and editing of video (very large files), countless music files (typically a few megabytes each), and even recording and time shifting TV (huge files), it is quite easy for hard drive space to run short. This is an indication that it is time to somehow utilize an additional hard drive.

The aftermarket hard drives now so readily available come in a variety of packages. Generally the lowest priced drives are name-brand drives packaged as "OEM" intended for computer builders, and typically lack cables, installation software, instructions, brackets, screws, and other sometimes useful accessories. Commonly available at the retail stores, for slightly more, are drives packed in retail packages which usually include cables, detailed install instructions, partitioning and formatting software, technical support, brackets, and other paraphernalia. At the top of the price charts, but still sometimes bargain priced are external drives, already partitioned and formatted, and ready to use by simply plugging one cable into a USB or firewire port, and connecting the traditional power cord, with no other hardware installation. External drives often come with a variety of utility software titles for creating backups, and other purposes. Since there are a variety of hard drive controllers (the device that physically connects the motherboard in the computer to the cable and drive) in use, the purchaser needs to be sure that any internal drives purchased are compatible with the controllers in the computer. Acronyms such as IDE, EIDE, and SATA are commonly used to describe the interface of the hard drives advertised. If the purchaser is not sure which type is correct, a knowledgeable salesperson or call to the hard drive manufacturer may help the buyer select the correct type.

Installing an additional hard drive in a desktop computer may be easy, and can be done by anyone with moderate mechanical or electrical skills. The retail packs often come with very easy to follow directions (and sometimes even a video!) showing the step-by-step process. Most typically, com-

puters come with two hard drive controllers either built in to the motherboard, or on a separate card; each controller can usually drive two hard drives, or a hard drive and a CD/DVD player or burner, allowing for up to four hard drives and CD/DVD units in any combination without the installation of additional controller hardware. One proviso worth noting here is that if the computer is still covered by warranty, opening the case to install an additional hard drive may void the remaining balance of the warranty. There is no warranty risk in using an external hard drive since there is no "hard" installation necessary.

Once a new internal hard drive is installed, it must be partitioned and formatted appropriately in order for it to function properly. If a retail pack was purchased, there will likely be a floppy or CD included that contains the necessary utilities; if an OEM drive was purchased, either a third party utility must be used (my favorite is Partition Magic), or a little know XP utility can be used. External drives, unless home built with a separate drive and case, generally do not need any utilities to make them function properly. Fortunately, users of Windows XP have a built-in utility that can be used for the necessary partitioning and formatting of new drives, as well as other hard drive and computer management tasks. Fred Langa, author of the very popular "Langa List" (www.langa.com) published a series of articles in early March documenting the availability and utilization of this integral utility. "Administrator" access is necessary to access this utility. While there are several ways to access the utility, one of the easiest ways is to right click on the "My Computer" icon on the desktop, and then clicking on "Manage". "Disk Management" is listed under the "Storage" heading. From this point, hard drives can be partitioned, formatted, have drive letters designated or changed, and a variety of other hard tasks can be accomplished. It is important to be especially careful not to partition or format existing hard drives with this utility, unless explicitly desired, as it is likely that existing data on the drive may be destroyed or otherwise become inaccessible. Other non-hard drive management tasks can also be utilized from this utility.

If a new hard drive is installed, it will show up as an "unknown" disk. Right-clicking on the new disk will open a menu with "partition" as one of the choices. Selecting this will open a wizard which will guide the user through the steps of initializing and partitioning the drive, and then formatting it with an appropriate format. After the process is completed, the new drive should show up in Windows Explorer.

Since many of the new hard drives are truly huge in capacity, it may be more convenient in the long run to partition them as if they were several smaller hard drives, each partition with a separate drive letter. This makes

disk storage more efficient, with less wasted space, as well as easier to backup, maintain, defragment, and perform other tasks.

A new large capacity hard drive may be useful to improve the utilization of the computer as well as allow it to be used for the many new non-computing tasks that are becoming popular.

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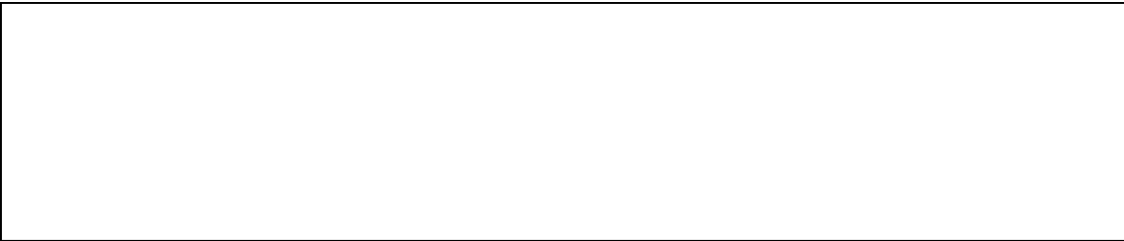
Note: Meeting Place:
 North Canton Public Library
 185 North Main Street
 North Canton, OH 44720
 I-77 Exit (Portage) turn *EAST*.

From Rt.77, take the Canal Fulton/North Canton Exit (Portage St.)

Head east on Portage St. (If traveling north, you will turn right. If traveling south, you will turn left.)
 Follow Portage for approximately 1 1/4 miles to a sign that reads: "All thru traffic bear left."

Do not bear left. Continue straight on Portage until it dead-ends at Ream St.

Turn left on Ream. The Library is the 2nd building on your right. Small amount parking alongside and more across the street at rear of building.



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