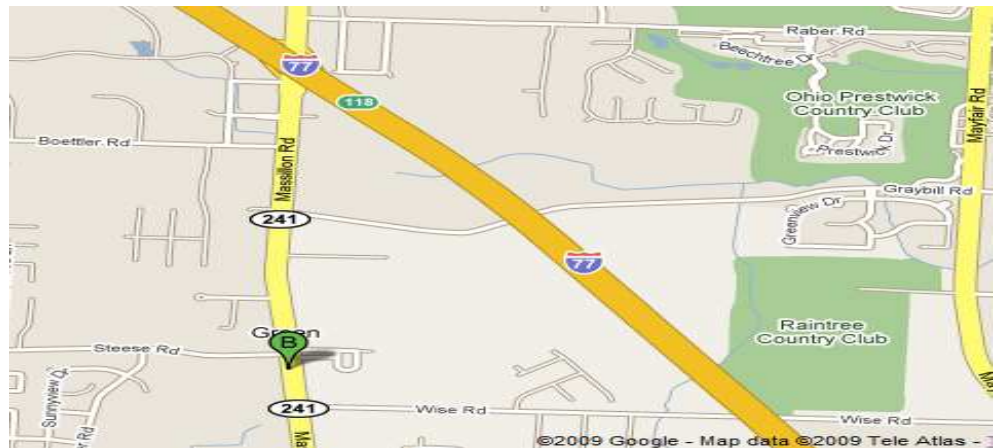# ACPCUG Newsletter
April 2009

A K R O N · C A N T O N   P C   U S E R S   G R O U P

April 6th 2009

Main Program:
Google
Sketchup by Art
McRowe

PLEASE NOTE

The new location of our meetings, The John Torok Community Center, 4224 Massillon Rd in Green. The center is about 1 1/4 miles south of I77 and Massillon Rd. See the map below.

April Meeting
April 6th, 2009, 6 pm
John Torok Community Center
4224 Massillon Rd
Green, Ohio 44720

*Try This One On For Size

Three months ago, I purchased a digital picture frame, but when I hooked it to my desktop machine via the USB cable, "My Computer" was unable to "see" the picture frame's memory, which had software on it to install for processing my pictures automatically and sending them to the frame's memory. I tried repeatedly and it might finally see it briefly, but once you clicked somewhere else, then back, it was gone. Windows Explorer didn't work with this frame's memory any better. I tried it on my other desktop computer with the same results. Both of these computers have an Intel Pentium-4 3.06 Gigahertz motherboard. I adjusted the pictures with another software and put them on an SD flash card, inserted it in a memory slot on the picture frame, and it would run the picture slide show fine when standing alone. As I said, neither machine could see that frame's memory, except for a brief glimpse occasionally. I returned the picture frame for a refund thinking it was defective, and the store manager agreed with me after I explained.

I bought another digital frame the other day, bigger and better. When I tried hooking it up to my desktop with the USB cable, I got the same results all over again. I was unable to "see" the digital picture frame's memory with "My Computer" to install the software that came with it. I finally decided to download the software in question from their Web site and install it on my desktop. After that, I ran the software to access the pictures from the My Pictures folder, process them, then send them to the frame's memory, but it gave me a message that it couldn't find the memory. I couldn't find it with Windows Explorer either, except briefly on rare occasion, then it would disappear, however, during that brief viewing, I did notice that there were actually three pictures that got loaded before getting the error message.

After several tries using different USB plugs on the computer, different USB cables and always the same response, I gave up and tried it on my other desktop, with no better luck. I have used many USB items on my desktop machines with no problems. I decided there was a coincidence here and tried hooking it up to my laptop, which has Vista on it. Both desktop machines use XP Professional. It works fine on my laptop and I am at a loss to figure out what's wrong on the two desktop machines that work good otherwise. A knowledgeable friend worked with me on the phone one evening, with no luck. I am out of ideas.

*Want To Get Modern, Stable and Futuristic?

Do you need a modern, stable and free user interface with 3D effects for Windows Mobile? Touch Shell is now available. MobilityFlow announced the release of Touch Shell Free, a modern user interface integrated with 3D effects for Windows Mobile. With the release of Touch Shell Free, MobiltyFlow combines the full screen customizable user interface with a cutting edge 3D effect user interface, giving users the most advanced and intuitive Windows Mobile user interface available on the market today. Touch Shell Free, with its groundbreaking functions, features and design offers much more than other user interfaces with 3D effects on the market today. Many of them are only available on very expensive high-end devices sold direct from the mobile carriers. MobilityFlow also has a Touch Shell Pro version of the application that offers additional functions and features.

I included this item because there is a free version, but according to the Web site there is also a 50% discount on the right side of their Web page for the Pro version, making it $9.98. However, I don't know how long that discounted price will last.

Touch Shell Website: <http://www.touch-shell.com>

*Tired Of Quicken or MS Money? Try This One

Alzex announced Personal Finances 3.2, the newest version of a personal finance manager that will help users track income and expenses quickly and virtually automatically. With a glance at its reports and graphs, users will understand their earning and spending patterns, find areas of excessive expenditure and cut down unnecessary expenses. Personal Finances also provides future planning. Users can project expected spending and income, and know their exact financial situation at a future date.

The budgeting task is a snap. Running the program will open a simple, uncluttered interface that puts all the financial details, tools and options that matter most to you up front. First the user needs to start budgeting by seting up accounts, categories, and subcategories. Personal Finances allows for any number of accounts, so the user can set up accounts for your bank, credit card, and cash. Next, set up categories and subcategories. They will classify and sort income and expenses and help the user see this important data in a meaningful and detailed way through reports and graphs.

Next for budgeting is to enter transactions that can reflect income and expenses. Transactions can be one-time or scheduled, which makes Personal Finances handy for regularly occurring expenses, such as tax payments, electricity bills, Internet, etc. Transactions can be identified in a number of ways including categories, family members, and tags. Tags provide a way to differentiate between similar transactions that fall into the same category. Categorization by family members will show spending habits of each member of the family in reports.

Personal Finances offers a summary view of all transactions, reports by categories, family members and tags to see how much of the budget is allocated to each category or family member, and identify areas to cut spending if the budget comes out on the negative side. The user can generate reports that cover any period of time. Results can be printed out, or saved to one of the formats: HTML, CHM, or TXT.

With Personal Finances, one can have the convenience of the personal finance software without carrying around the laptop. When the user goes out of town, they can install Personal Finances onto a USB flash drive and keep track of all purchases. Simply plug the USB flash drive in to any computer, update transactions and unplug it. No traces are left behind on the host machine.

New to version 3.2 are 50 icons for accounts and 200 icons for categories. Now the user can see the summary for a month, confirmed and non-confirmed transactions, and can group transactions by name.

Personal Finances runs on Windows 98/NT/2000/XP/Vista and comes in two editions: Professional and Freeware. For more information about the products, visit <http://www.financessoftware.com>. You can download the 30-day trial version, an absolutely "free" version or the paid version. For the paid version, user group members are offered a 20% discount on the purchase of Personal Finances 3.2. The coupon code is pf43M5G. They failed to respond when I asked when the discount will end, but right now the discount code will still recalculate the price so I hope it's still good when you read this.

Also, be aware that the description I included above is for the paid version, so do your homework if you want the free one and look at the comparison columns on their Web site. Several features in the paid version aren't in the free version. Also, I'm not sure if it tracks securities, which MS Money and Quicken will do.

*Multiple items on the clipboard

Gerry Gerstenberg of Broward Personal Computer Assn. Inc. wrote a review of Clipomatic in their C:\BPCA NEWS, the group's newsletter. <http://www.bpca.com> Its an handy product that allows you to save up to 64 text items that it will hold in a cache, and you can retrieve them singularly when you need a particular one. They will be saved even when you shut your computer down, and be available again next time you start it up. She was happy with the performance and it is a free program that can be obtained at <http://www.mlin.net/ Clipomatic.shtml>, but the author is open to donations, which I consider worthwhile if you like it. She said it's not clear if Clipomatic is compatible with Vista, but it works with other Windows versions. Gerry's review is in their august newsletter at <ftp://bpca.com/newsletter/2008/bpca0808.pdf>.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. 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 at bellsouth dot net>. Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>.

Computer Basics
Written by Hilton Kaufman, a member of the Chicago Computer Society, IL
www.ccs.org
hmkaufman (at) earthlink.net

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A computer is nothing but a bunch of wires and parts sitting in a box. Programming makes it work. Over the years computers have become smaller and more powerful, while programming became more sophisticated.

Years ago memory was expensive and the programming was relatively cheap. Now, memory is quite cheap. For many purposes the necessary programming either comes with the machine or can be purchased in a box or online.

For most people, a commonly available operating system and an office suite meet their needs. The operating system helps direct commands through the parts and wires, although there is a chip with some very low level programming on it that is part of the machine. The office suite has the programs or applications that allow business-type things to be done.

The most common operating systems are those in the Microsoft® Windows® line of products. These come with some useful applications and games. WordPad®, which comes with the Microsoft® Windows® operating systems, is sufficient for the word processing needs of many people who do not need a complicated office suite.

When you buy a computer, the operating system and its included applications are usually pre-loaded into the

machine. Depending on the package that is purchased, other programs may come with the machine. There is likely to be a minimal office suite, such as Microsoft® Works®, a web browser and an e-mail program. These will be inexpensive, low end products, which may be adequate.

A business class office suite may cost a few hundred dollars depending upon what is included. A powerful database program will approximately double the cost of the office suite.

The required power and cost of the machine depends on how it will be used. Computer games with life-like graphics require powerful machines. Text only e-mail messaging can use inexpensive machines.

Many computers are connected together through something known as the Internet. Several services, such as the World Wide Web and e-mail, are delivered through the Internet. The Internet works through a complex addressing system so that messages can go where they are supposed to go. Any computer may or may not be connected to the Internet at any given time.

Connections to other than local computers, such as to the Internet, usually go through a commercial Internet Service Provider, or ISP, which connects to the Internet trunk lines. This connection could be through a school, government agency, business, or other organization instead. ISPs can be small neighborhood operations, large International concerns, or in between.

One should be a bit careful when using the Internet. While there is a lot of useful information available, there is also significant bad stuff. Attempts are made to scam people in various ways or to harm computers.

Hilton Kaufman serves as an Internet content provider and unit technical support person in the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Among his other duties, he designs interactive forms and assists people with the use of computer programs.

He is old enough to have seen room size computers that were programmed by inserting boards with plug in wiring. Yet he is familiar with much of the modern technology. For several years he has been writing articles for beginners on the use of computers, which have been published in computer user group newsletters.