



<http://www.huge.org>

Volume 26 Issue 1



January 16th General Meeting:

Howto: Slideshows

Stu and Pat will show you how to create slideshows on your computer using a number of different software products.

East Hartford Public Library

Main St. & Central Ave., East Hartford, CT.

Q&A Session: 6PM–7:15PM

Meeting starts at: 7:15PM



Huge This Month:

- January 16** **General Meeting** See above; 7:15 P.M.
- February 5:** Deadline for **ALL** Articles. Please upload articles to editors@huge.org, or give them to the Pulp Editor
- February !!:** **General Meeting** Starts at 7:15 P.M.

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MEETING LOCATIONS

East Hartford Public Library
Main & Central Avenue
in the Lion's Room(downstairs)

Wethersfield Public Library
500 Silas Deane Hwy.,
Wethersfield, CT

From The Editor

by Pat Teevan

Happy New Year!

Random thoughts as we enter 2007:

January 30th will see the official consumer release of Windows Vista. It looks like you'll have about a dozen versions to choose from at all sorts of prices. My advice: Don't be the first kid on the block to get Vista. Historically, Windows versions are best sampled after the release of Service Pack 1.

If you're a Windows user and want to learn more about troubleshooting problems on your computer, tune in to "Computer Talk with TAB" from 10AM to Noon on Saturdays on WTIC AM 1080. All the WTIC shows are also available as podcasts, so if you can't listen on Saturday morning, you can surf over to WTIC.com and listen when you want or download the podcast to your iPod. If you're a Mac user, it's still an interesting show, so check it out.

Bob Bonato has sent me some more code samples of several programming languages. I'll have an article that includes them when I get the time to add the explanatory text.

Sometime in the Spring, the next version of Mac OS X—codename Leopard—will be released. Right now, no one seems to be sure if that means April or June. I'm sure the date will firm up in the next couple months at some Apple announcement. There are rumors that not all of the features of Leopard have been made public yet. Some of these suggest that it's to keep another company from getting a jump on similar features for their OS. ☺

As always, if anyone would care to write an article or review for the Pulp, I'd appreciate it. If there's any interest I could republish some past member-contributed work as part of our 25th anniversary. Drop me a line at editor@huge.org and let me know what you think.

At this month's General Meeting Stu and I will be demonstrating computer slideshows. If you'd like to create slideshows on your computer, we'll be covering that for Mac, Windows, and, possibly, Linux.

'Til next month...

Happy computing!

A Little Computer Quiz

by Stuart Rabinowitz

December Quiz

The trivia and minutiae of the computer related world. The answers will appear next month or you can submit an answer sheet at the General Meeting. Good Luck.

- 1 Beside the fact that they're all highly successful individuals in the computer field, what do Steve Wozniak, Bill Gates, Larry Ellison, Paul Allen, Steve Jobs, and Michael Dell. have in common?
- 2 Can you name the computer company each is associated with?
- 3 Who started a company called PCs Limited?
- 4 What was the original name of Microsoft
- 5 Steve Wozniak received a bachelor degree in electrical engineering and computer sciences from what college?
- 6 In an effort to shield himself a little Woz used an alias to attend college. What was pseudonym did he use?

December Quiz Answers

- 1 25 years ago a popular "...question of the day was: "Do you want to buy a computer from _____ or from a company named after a fruit?" What company filled in the blank?
A International Business Machines
- 2 What was the computer?
A The IBM model 5150.
- 3 On what date was it introduced?
A August 12, 1981
- 4 What was the initial sales target for the machine (in other words--how many did they hope to sell)?
A The initial goal was 250,000 within 5 years. By 1986 they were selling that many a month.
- 5 What was the base price?
A The base price was \$1,265
- 6 What were the options?
A The base price did not include a monitor, video card, parallel or serial port, operating system, or floppy drive.



Laptop Desk

Simple Accessory Provides Comfort and Ease of Use

by Gabe Goldberg, Columnist for CompuKISS.com;
APCUG Advisor; Program Coordinator & APCUG Rep, Capital PC User Group, Inc.
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It's the rare simple device that hitches a ride on multiple trends simultaneously. How simple? Three moving parts. Which trends? First, folks downsizing living quarters as their nests empty; second, increased use of laptop PCs as primary, only, or secondary computers; and third, laptop computers operating hotter as they become ever more powerful. The device? The Laptop Desk from LapWorks.

It's an elegantly simple laptop stand. My wife calls it, "a seemingly insignificant piece of plastic, which I love". Before she had it, she was constantly trying to find things to put under her computer to prop it up. She tried books of varying sizes, pieces of wood, parts from other office equipment, TV remotes, whatever came into view. None of them worked and the laptop's utter flatness drove her crazy.

Now, she takes it everywhere she takes her laptop. "It's great!", she says. She props it up at varying angles, depending where she's working...on her lap, a table, a desk, wherever she moves, and she moves around a lot. Folding flat and sliding into the laptop case, it's not in the way when she's on the move. It allows customizing the keyboard angle for easy typing. And because of the elevation, our cats no longer walk across or lie down on laptop keyboards.

The stand consists mostly of two sturdy hinged plastic pieces with raised rubber pieces that hold the laptop in place. A smaller third piece fits into slots providing five different elevation options.

The hinged pieces, rippled in design with raised rubber pieces, hold the laptop in place and allow

air to circulate underneath it. So the computer's heat is well-vented, avoiding discomfort from resting the laptop on your lap or major damage to the computer.

Three models of The Laptop Desk are available: the UltraLite, for newer/lighter laptop computers; the Laptop Desk 2.0, for heavier PCs; and the Laptop Desk 1.0, a simpler version not providing elevation, intended for human-lap use only.

Costing less than \$30, the Laptop Desk is a handy addition to portable PC computing. And unlike most computer accessories, it needs no assembly or installation, doesn't require reading instructions, and includes no software that will become obsolete.

Manufacturer: LapWorks

<http://www.laptopdesk.net>

Retail: About \$30

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Crash! Windows Will Not Come Up!

This could be YOU

2002 Desktop HP Pavilion 770c

Written by Irene Ganas, a member of the Chicago Computer Society
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My HP desktop suddenly crashed. The screen came up black with the following white text:

“Windows could not start because the following file is missing or corrupt:

“Windows root>\system32\hal.dll

Please re-install a copy of the above file”.

My computer with its two 120GB internally-installed hard drives is still dead or, more descriptively, a vegetable on life support.

We continually discuss "How to Backup Your Computer" at our meetings, in Hard-Copy and on Yahoo! eGroups. It always looks so easy to do a "One Touch Backup." But, I have always wondered, and I have heard many others of you similarly wonder, whether the backup that we made is good and will work.

I religiously make backups and use Drive Image v2i Protector from PowerQuest, now Symantec. My Drive Image backup looked like it was good and I know it worked because I could read the data on the DVDs on another computer.

Using my Sony notebook to access the Internet, I looked up that missing file and a solution to the problem.

All the directions I received told me to "Insert and boot from your Windows XP CD." I need that Windows XP CD. I do not want to restore the computer to its as purchased condition that the HP recovery set accomplishes. I want to replace that one file. I need to boot from the Windows XP CD to install another copy of the hal.dll file to fix the problem.

HP refuses to supply the Windows XP Home Edition CD and Microsoft, for all its

"authentication" and "genuine Windows" gibberish, backs them up. Microsoft lets them get away with not giving us the "genuine Windows XP CD" it advertises that we should be sure we are getting when we buy a computer with the operating system installed.

I have only a set of HP Recovery CDs that begins by reformatting the drive wiping out all the added drivers, updates, authentications and authorizations for programs from Microsoft, Adobe Photoshop CS2, Intuit, etc., that took forever to obtain via dialup Internet. I just want to replace one teeny file not wipe out my whole drive and start anew with a fresh computer as it was purchased.

My Drive Image v2i Protector 120 GB C:drive backup totaling 76GB used was made and copied by the Drive Image backup program to the second internal 120GB drive in 3900 MB blocks so that I could burn them to DVD disks. I have 19 DVDs Drive Image backup and the Power Quest Recovery Environment CD from which to boot.

All would have been well and the computer fixed in 15 minutes if the second hard drive had been large enough to accommodate at least one more 76 GB backup. But, alas, that second backup would require 152 GB and the backup drive is only 120 GB.

(IMPORTANT: my first mistake was buying a backup drive the same size as the C drive) I spent 4 days copying the backup images to DVDs so that I could remove the 76 GB backup from the internal second backup hard drive to make a current backup. After checking the DVDs, I deleted the image to

Continues on next page...

make room for the new backup. With Murphy at work, that is when the computer crashed.

So, I have ALL MY DATA and it is readable from those DVDs on my Sony notebook. I just need to get Windows XP going again on the HP desktop by getting the missing hal.dll file into the system 32 folder of Windows.

Here is how I tried to solve the problem.

Since Windows is set by default to boot first from the Floppy A drive and then the C:drive, I had to change the boot order to be able to boot from the boot CD in the DVD drive. I needed to boot from the DVD drive because the backups were on DVDs.

After booting the HP desktop and pressing F11 to get into the SETUP, I changed the boot order (by using up and down arrows to highlight the drive and moving it up by clicking + and - buttons) to reorder the drives from the original:

1. floppy A;
2. C drive;
3. CD-ROM drive; and,
4. Int Network

To:

1. Int Network (which I used to get the DVD drive to boot by inserting the PQRE boot disk in this drive instead of the CD-ROM drive as the backups are on DVDs;
2. C drive;
3. CD-ROM drive; and,
4. Floppy A.

Booting from the DVD drive (the computer now calls it the G drive) worked and I selected the System Recovery option from the PQRE. It asked me to locate the Image folder and file name.

I had to take the PQRE CD out of the DVD drive to insert the first of the 19 backup DVDs. Look in: My Computer, CD Drive (G:) where the backup DVD was inserted. That was confusing because the computer called it a "CD Drive (G)" even though it

is a DVD drive. I needed that drive instead of the CD-ROM drive (D) because the backups are on DVDs.

I got the error message:

“Disk is not formatted “

Windows cannot read from this disk. The disk might be corrupted, or it could be using a format that is not compatible with Windows.

The disk is definitely not corrupted and it is compatible with Windows in my Sony notebook. I can read it well.

That attempt at fixing the problem did not work!

Must take another tack and try new ideas. Next three ideas to try are:

1. Again change boot order to CD-ROM to run the PQRE boot CD, then DVD drive to feed in the backup image on the 19 DVDs, then C drive so Windows will start next, then Floppy A drive and HOPE THAT IT WORKS! Or,
2. Buy a Windows XP CD for \$95 + tax to run to get the missing or corrupted file, hal.dll, replaced in the <Windows root>\system32\ folder so that Windows will work again and I can run the backup DVDs and HOPE THAT IT WORKS! Or,
3. Buy a removable USB hard drive enclosure for \$39 + tax + \$8 shipping. Remove all the wires from the desktop, unscrew the computer case, open the case, disconnect the cable and remove the second 120 GB hard drive and plug it into the removable USB enclosure. Attach that enclosure as a removable USB hard drive to the Sony notebook, feed in the 19 Drive Image backup DVDs and copy them to the 120 GB removable USB drive. Safely remove the USB hard drive from the notebook, open the enclosure and unplug the hard drive (because without the hal.dll you can't use USB on the desktop), reinstall the

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120GB backup hard drive into the HP desktop in its former place as backup drive, reassemble the desktop case and replace the screws, plug in the monitor, keyboard, mouse and all the other wires again. Turn on the computer with the PQRE CD in the drive and boot. Run the System Recovery and locate the Drive Image backup that has now been copied back to the second drive where it had been originally. Now that you have played the game, "plug-n-pray," you can now HOPE THAT IT WORKS!

Of course, even if it works, solution #2 would require a change to a larger backup hard drive or you are right back in the same situation of having too small a backup drive to be able to put the recommended child, father and grandfather set of three backups to rotate saved backups in the future.

Fixing that problem requires all that rigmarole AGAIN! Remove all the wires from the desktop, unscrew the computer case, open the case, disconnect the cable and remove the second 120 GB hard drive and plug it into the removable USB enclosure. Buy a 120GB x 3 = 360 GB or larger hard drive for about \$300 including tax. Put that drive into the desktop for the second backup drive. While you have the case open, you may as well install that USB 2.0 plug (this four year old desktop has the slow USB 1.0) so that the USB 2.0 peripherals will run at the speed for which they were designed. Reassemble the desktop case and replace the screws, plug in the monitor, keyboard, mouse and all the other wires again.

May I remind you, I am still HOPING that it will RUN when it is turned back on again? God bless its little heart!

A review of all that work gave me a fourth idea that would solve all my problems, be less work and would stand me in good stead for future recovery after a crash that will probably never come again.

Idea #4 is:

Get a new computer with a second hard drive

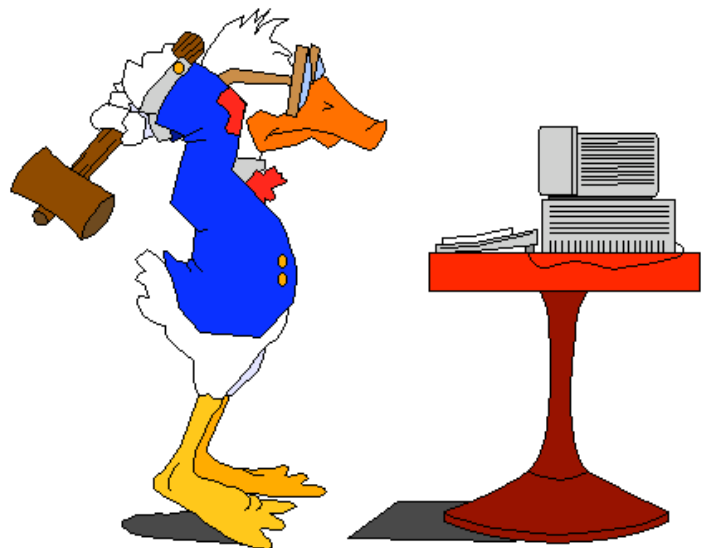
installed that is at least three times the size of the C: drive! THAT SHOULD WORK!

Why spend all that time and money and on a four year old computer? (Because I was hoping to hold out until Vista arrives in 2007, that's why.) Run the HP recovery set on the old desktop and relegate it to making labels and printing cards. Maybe it would work for a main computer to attach to a wireless router if cable Internet ever becomes available in my out-in-the-country, forested neighborhood. The cable company is getting closer and may, at last, be here. Ah, the possibilities never end!

The Moral of the Story:

Get that second internal hard drive at least three times larger than your main C: drive, back up an image of your drive every few months until you have three backup images. HAVE MORE THAN ONE BACKUP IMAGE AND DON'T ERASE MORE THAN ONE AT A TIME!

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Strike any key to continue...

Inner Circles

Written by Berry F. Phillips,
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<http://www.ccokc.org>

The birth of a new year brings changes in membership and planning activities within the "Inner Circles" that often operate almost like occult groups in their private inner sanctums. They are elected or appointed to serve others and work without compensation. These "Inner Circles" operate in civic organizations like computer clubs and represent a very small percentage of the memberships. While those of us who served in the military were told never to volunteer, the "Inner Circles" volunteered.!

Volunteerism is the very life blood of many civic organizations. Research has verified the positive rewards of doing for others and finding meaning in activities which greatly contributes to an older person's ability to age successfully. Older volunteers with their longer experience, often assume leadership roles within nonprofit organizations whose programs and activities are dependent on volunteers for help. Volunteers sometimes

receive only modest recognition - since their activities involve free will, beneficence, and lack of reimbursement.

Research has further verified that staying active contributes to a healthier and longer lived life and that social supports are critical to healthy aging. Fisher and Shaeffer in their book, "Older Volunteers" list the following benefits: "self satisfaction, altruism, potential learning or acquisition of new skills, specific benefits for the receivers of volunteer efforts, relaxation, socialization, status of reward, career opportunities, and community involvement."

National Volunteer Week was created in 1974 by President Richard Nixon who signed an executive

order establishing an annual celebration of volunteering as a time to recognize and celebrate the efforts of volunteers at the local, state, and national level. The Points of Light Foundation, based in Washington DC, and the Volunteer National Network together reach millions of people to encourage volunteerism. The Foundation has received national recognition as America's address for volunteering. As President George W. Bush commented, "The Points of Light Foundation embodies America's spirit of volunteerism and the goodwill of its citizens."

Why not make a New Year's resolution (and not break it) to express your appreciation to the past and present members of the "Inner Circle" in your computer club? "A mind is a terrible thing to waste," and like a muscle "use it or lose it." Get involved and volunteer in your computer club in 2007!

Happy New Year from the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and the Association of PC Users Groups!

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Dufferdom

Kingdom of the Ordinary User

Written by David D. Uffer, a member of the Chicago Computer Society

<http://www.ccs.org>

[davidduffer\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidduffer(at)sbcglobal.net)

Hello folks. I'm Dave Uffer, retired in good order from the world of education, where I was a cog in a wheel that barely notices losing cogs. Now I can do more of what I like to do. One of those things is messing about with a PC. I use it for learning, getting and passing information, for communication, and just a bit for entertainment. I make no claims as any kind of expert. I'm an ordinary user with some experiences and views that may be of interest to others. I try to share them from time to time.

Word Processors

Over the years I have used plain text and PROFS for messaging, then for more wordage, composition, and records WordPerfect, WordStar, DisplayWrite, MultiMate, MS Word, and Ami Pro. They are not for the simple minded, but some are easier than others. Some are more challenging and useful. Some walk alongside you as you learn and grow along with you in subsequent versions. That's the way I feel about WordPerfect, a friend and companion of many years, capable and patient with many features I've yet to explore. It is now in its 13th major (numbered) version. All versions are compatible, just one of the ways in which it has served me better than has been my experience with its major competitor, without "Perfect" in its name.

Of Mice, People, and Paranoia

The "mouse" pointing device was an early convenience, a means to change the point of attention more easily than by tedious scrolling with the underline cursor. It came into its own with the graphical user interface and gained more adherents. People were tickled by its usability and

found it to be fun. The basic design was ingenious and stable, needing only occasional cleaning of little specks of crust from the clever rollers. It has been so for about 10 years, or into the last century as we old-timers might say. Some variants were developed with more or different button configurations, differing means of locomotion or connection. I can recall a pleasant 3-button Logitech mouse of great convenience for a CAD program of the era.

Then, less than a year ago, there seemed to me to be some strange movements. I joked that it was mousey wanderlust, hoping it would subside before the allusion grew stale. Nope. My mouse and its inexpensive replacements worked initially but were similarly afflicted with abrupt sideways movements much greater than the occasional prior small ones. Ultimately, I bought a \$15 new mouse. A Microsoft mouse prominently described on the box as their BASIC MOUSE, all I'd need or want. Wrong, it worked fine on basic ops. But I learned there or nearby of their fancier mice. Smoother movement, optical not mechanical drive, sideways scrolling, easily invoked magnification. Interesting; why should I continue to deprive myself?

So I got a new and better one with the soothing, elevating name of Optical Comfort Mouse 3000 for \$30. Worked fine and still does. What had developed was that I had a need, tried other cheaper mice, then bought first one then two Microsoft mice. Clever marketing. Then the steadfast and reliable mouse on our other PC began worsening in a different, recent reluctant movement behavior, unheard of heretofore. Not

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fixable by any means known to me, it dragged and stalled. Of course I knew one likely solution, a new MS mouse. Fortunately, I got the last of the same model as above. They were being replaced by new and still fancier series from MS, cordless, laser connected.

Wait a minute. What's happening here and why? And how? Faithful devices developing two kinds of corrupting condition in two time periods following a series of free Windows upgrades. How could that be? Super clever marketing? Sneaky sci-fi? Evil enterprise? Hard to believe. Still, I wonder and suggest you be aware of this experience. You might let me know if it happens to you.

A Touch of Terminology

It turns out that what most of us like to call simply "computer programs" have a useful division into "applications" and "utilities". Applications are what we use to do specific things. Utilities are a sort of set of servants to enable the applications to do their things. They work together smoothly. Usually.

License Agreements

One of the entertainments in loading a new program into your computer is the license agreement. I know, or know of, a few users who still read them. Reading them is an optional chore, like reading the small print on a product with big print claims you've decided to trust. A similar pleasure is half-listening on radio or TV to the rapid but required counter-claim cautions following the opening proclamations of better health now available to the user. Marketers of more general new conveniences or higher glories seem less bound by law or conscience and low ball or ignore the cautions.

Not so the makers of software. License agreements are a signal that the producer of the product is sincere. And worried. Worried enough to hire

lawyers to make up and repair fences to protect them from other lawyers looking for holes. Reminds one of why there are so many lawyer jokes abroad in the land. But fewer than there are lawyers.

Some of them work for the makers of software, composing their proofs of sincerity, walling off their anxiety. One of the best agreement statements I've seen was while installing a pretty good application. At least 3, maybe 4 steady screens of legalese. [Mild compared to Buy.com's 13 screens.] You've gotta laugh out loud at that. Another one had a 4-line-deep viewing slit for the agreement. The user was expected to scroll through all the conditions and speculations. Or maybe not. Maybe that was just a candid admission that the makers knew they needn't use up screen space with trivia.

Of course that's essential trivia, since it's a required hurdle. You can pay the money but not use your purchase if you object to their narratives of what might possibly go wrong—for them. You can buy their software but you can't use it until you lie a little, let them off the hook in case anything goes wrong in any way that alerts a legal mind to potential loss or profit (depending which side in a dispute). Correction above, rent their software, since as I understand it, the maker retains ownership. The user buys access and may use it any way he wants unless he can't be cool and somehow displeases the maker.

Dave Uffer, originating in Colorado, has been an Illinois resident most of his adult life, so far, preferring to live in or near Chicago. He is a member of some standing & longevity and has attended meetings scattered around North Shore, West Suburban, and Downtown.

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Interim Editor Pat Teevan
Distribution George Carbonell

Membership: Anyone may become a member. Dues are \$12 per year and include a one-year subscription to The Pulp as well as access to the HUGE Public Domain disk libraries and BBS. Meeting topics, times and places can be found on page 1 of this issue.

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January 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Happy New Year! 1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			