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Volume 26 Issue 5



May 15th General Meeting:

Privacy & the Internet": Part 2

Stu Rabinowitz will continue last month's discussion on internet safety

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

Q&A Session: 6:30PM–7:15PM
Meeting starts at: 7:15PM



Huge This Month:

- May 15** **General Meeting** See above; 7:15 P.M.
- June 9 :** Deadline for **ALL** Articles. Please upload articles to editors@huge.org, or give them to the Pulp Editor
- June 19:** **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 President

by George Carbonell

May 2007, the summer vacation time for all is forth coming. What are your plans for the summer time? The weather is getting better and days are longer.

During the 25th anniversary year what special programs or events would YOU like to see? This is the time to speak back to the group. Please do not be like the town's people that did not vote and the council stated that because they did not for or against then everything I just hunky dory. So the new budget goes in with everyone paying much more then they should have.

Picnic, would you all like to have one? These have been a good time and thanks to Martin Ritter for sharing his house in the past. OK, what is your pleasure?

Meetings are still the third Tuesday of month. Is this really a good night for you attend? Stu and Pat are doing nice presentations for those in attendance. If you have not been able to attend for a while, try to make this meeting.

Summer meeting topics will be discussed at this coming meeting. Did you get anything new or wanting to get some new hardware or software?

Let's get it on the meeting agenda for the summer and in to the fall.

I am looking at my school schedule and must chose a subject or two. Really like to finish the degree program before I retire from work. This semester I did two subjects and if I do that again I may have to retire just to have the time. The courses U.S. History and Business Law did take more time than I anticipated. That was the main reason I was not making meetings, or doing many of the hobbies that I do.

My finals are the week of the May 14-16th that could cause me to miss this meeting. I will do my best to attend.

See you at a meeting and share the knowledge you have with others.

George C

President

A Little Computer Quiz

by Stuart Rabinowitz

May 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.

Up-up-down-down-left-right-left-right-B-A-Start

- 1 What is it?
- 2 Where was it first used?
- 3 What does it do?
- 4 Who created it?
- 5 Why?
- 6 xyzzzy?

Answers (continued from right)

- 5 One of the most popular game consoles of all time is the Atari 2600, how much RAM did it come with and what was the original price?

A It originally sold for \$200 and had 128 bytes of RAM.
- 6 In addition to being one of the early Atari games, 'Asteroids' had another distinction as a computer game first. What was that first?

A It was the first game to use 'bank-switching' to double its available memory.

April Quiz Answers

- 1 Who smashed a watermelon onto a group of IBM execs at the fall '93 COMDEX?

A The comic Gallagher, he had been doing his act all week as part of the IBM exhibit. (see picture by Computer Times Editor Terrance Kibiloski)
- 2 In 1983-84 a company called Intertec released the 'Headstart VPU' computer. It had 1 MB of RAM for its Z-80 and 8080 processors and ran CP/M and DOS 2.1. Who did the company use as one of its spokespeople?

A The late wrestler King Kong Bundy. If you don't remember him it's OK few people remember the computer either.
- 3 Who are Fran Bilas, Betty Jennings, Ruth Lichterman, Kay McNulty, Betty Snyder, and Marlyn Wescoff.

A They were the original programmers for ENIAC when it was first turned on in Feb., 1946
- 4 Betty Snyder (later known as Betty Holberton) went on to win the Augusta Ada Lovelace Award, why?

A She won the Augusta Ada Lovelace Award, (the highest honor available in the field of computer programming) for developing the C-10 instruction set for BINAC. The C-10 instruction set maybe the forerunner of all modern programming languages. She also wrote the statistical analysis programs for the first US census done on the UNIVAC in 1950.

Why You Need A Firewall

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida

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When you connect your computer to the Internet, you have opened a door which invites any other computer in the world to come in. Actually, you have more than 65,000 doors into your computer, any one of which may be open. That is, unless you have taken steps to keep these doors closed. That is the purpose of a firewall. The firewall filters the information packets that show up at your "door" or computer port as we usually refer to it, and can either prevent them from entering or pass them through.

When your computer connects to the Internet, it is assigned a numeric address or IP (internet protocol) address. These addresses are a 32 bit number. They usually written out in four groups with periods between each group as follows: 111.11.11.111. Traveling over the Internet are many programs that simply look for unprotected IP addresses. The IP address of any unprotected computer is sent back to the originator who can then upload a trojan or spyware package to that address. The originator can then take control of the computer or the application will record keystrokes and send all recorded information back to the program originator.

Although your computer has one IP address there are many different ports on your address. There are different ports for different purposes on your computer. Your connection to the Internet is usually through port 80. This is referred to as the HTTP (hypertext transfer protocol) port. It is used when you connect to a web page. The web page data is downloaded to your computer through this port. Another commonly used port is 25. This is used for the SMTP (standard mail transfer protocol) or e-mail transfer. Another port is used

for incoming mail or POP3 transfer is port 110. These are all part of the port series from 0 to 1024 that are the most common ports. Many applications use ports in this region including PC Anywhere, Internet telephones, MSN messenger, Net Meeting, and all AOL operations. Ports 1024 to 49451 are referred to as registered ports. There are many Internet games that use ports in this region. There are also other specific functions assigned to these ports and some may duplicate functions in the common port region. The final group of ports are dynamic and have no specific functions registered. However, the point is that all of these ports can be accessed by remote computers somewhere out on the Internet and use them to connect to your computer if you have not protected them.

Automated port scanning software is available free on the Internet from many "hacker sites". Its use is very common on the Internet. There are various types of scans. Some scanners will look for any of the 65,535 possible ports. Another type looks for open UDP (user data protocol) ports or may use an FTP (file transfer protocol) bounce to hide the origin of the scan. If an open port is located, software can be downloaded that will open a "backdoor" on your computer. This allows remote input and output. Such access can be used to record and transmit out information from your computer. It can also be used to attack other computers to produce a "zombie" network. Such networks have been used to attack large computer servers in attempts to bring them down or to produce a "denial of service" attack.

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Many users believe that a router with a firewall is adequate protection. Most routers use either network address translation (NAT) or a packet filter. Information on the Internet is transmitted in packets which contain the IP address of the sender and the address of the receiver in addition to the data. The routers firewall uses filters that look at the sending and receiving addresses of incoming packets on port 80 (HTTP). Only those packets that are a response to an outgoing request are allowed through. If your router uses a packet filter it can be penetrated by a fragmented scan. This type of scan breaks up packets into fragments which can easily get through the simple packet filter found in most router firewalls. Routers using NAT either alone or in combination with a packet filter can also be easily thwarted. NAT is not successful when the packet is an FTP packet or is sent by Microsoft's Netmeeting or similar audio/video applications that bury the address in the body of the packet. Only when the address is in the header of the packet can the router use address substitution. So packet filtering and NAT, although useful, do not provide complete firewall protection for all Internet connections.

Another method for preventing intrusions is "stateful" packet inspection. This is the method used by most software firewalls and is found in some of the newer routers. When your web browser opens a connection to the Internet, the firewall software records that connection and keeps a record of its status. Whenever a packet arrives at your computer, the data in the packet can be compared to the information in the firewall state table. The firewall software can also make decisions based on the data content of the packet, not just the sender's address. Because this examination does require some time there may be a slight slowdown of your system. However, in most cases, there will not be a long enough delay for most users to notice.

So inbound packets can be filtered and examined for dangerous content. However, when the user connects to a web server, the page requested is downloaded to the users computer. It is possible

for that web page to contain a small program or a link to a dangerous site in a one pixel unit on the page. When this is downloaded the program is run or the link activated. This results in an outgoing packet to some Internet address through a non-standard port so the user is not aware of the activity. This type of activity would not be stopped by a hardware firewall in a router. It can only be blocked by a software firewall which recognizes that this activity is coming from a new application that has not previously made an Internet connection. In this case the software will query the computer user to determine if this new application should be allowed to connect. Hopefully, the user would recognize that this was not an application that the user was running and the outbound packet would then be blocked. It is absolutely necessary for the firewall to process both incoming and outgoing packets. Only a software firewall can establish the necessary tables for comparing the incoming/outgoing packets to allowed activity and request user interaction when necessary.

This leads us to the Windows firewall. This firewall, as used with Windows XP, does not have any control of outbound packets. Any application is allowed to connect to the Internet without any filtering or other checking of source or content. Windows Vista was supposed to come with both inbound and outbound filtering. However, as it is delivered it provides only inbound protection just as did XP. The outbound protection is turned off by default. So, if it is there, how do you turn on the outbound protection. To change this you have to use the Microsoft Management Console. Then you have to write a rule to block each "malware" application you anticipate might get on your computer. You can not create a general rule for all malware. Creating rules that would cover all possible malware applications is an impossible task. Microsoft has been quoted as saying "outbound filtering isn't really needed, and the key is making sure that malware doesn't infect the PC in the first place." Also they have stated that large

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Guilty!

By Berry F. Phillips,

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Guilty, the strange judge shouted as he banged the gavel. The defendant will rise and receive his sentence. You have been found guilty of dirty deeds done to your computer and are sentenced to electrocution!" I thought to myself, with my knees shaking, there must be some kind of an appeal process since the judge and jury all had heads that looked like monitors and bodies like upright computers and could easily be biased and not in my human favor!

I did find the testimony at my trial to be informative. A clean environment does not require computer cleaning usually more than once a year. Many computer users like to do the cleaning when they are doing their annual spring house cleaning. The dirtier the environment the greater frequency of cleaning needed. A clean computer cuts down on downtime, repair bills, and minimizes health risks. **DO NOT EAT, DRINK, SMOKE, OR USE MAGNETS NEAR YOUR COMPUTER AFTER ALL IT IS NOT A FAST FOOD JOINT!**

Here are some tips: (1) shut your computer down properly, (2) run scan disk and defragmenter at least monthly, (3) Delete files and programs you no longer need, (4) use antivirus, anti spyware programs and a good hard drive cleaner like the freeware CCleaner and a registry cleaner like the freeware RegClean to keep your hard drive healthy, (5) **BACK UP YOUR DATA IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY!**

When cleaning your computer case, use a damp lint free cloth. **NEVER SPRAY WATER ON A COMPUTER OR OTHER ELECTRICAL DEVICES.** Place liquid on the cloth not directly on the system and normally 100% alcohol which has no water content. Use a pencil eraser on hard to remove marks. The monitor can be cleaned with a commercial glass cleaner using a damp clean lint free cloth. Using an anti static wipe or a dry

cloth with anti-static fabric softener will reduce the dust attracted by static discharge. The keyboard can be cleaned by turning the keyboard upside down and shaking the gunk out of it while singing, "There is a whole lot of shaking going on." Clean the keyboard surface with a damp lint free cloth with 100% alcohol. **DO NOT TAKE THE KEYBOARD APART OR YOU MIGHT NOT GET IT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!** Clean the mouse by taking it apart using a damp lint free cloth and clean the rollers inside of the mouse (be sure to rotate them) with a clean cotton swab with 100% alcohol solution. After the mouse has dried put it back together reversing the steps you did when taking it apart. The inside of your computer is a dust magnet. An annual cleaning in a normal computer environment is a good idea. **YOU MUST BE VERY CAREFUL IF YOU DECIDE TO CLEAN THE INSIDE OF YOUR COMPUTER OR YOU COULD DO DAMAGE TO YOUR SYSTEM!** Whenever, you go into the case of your computer it is a good idea to wear a grounding strap to reduce the risk of a static discharge. Blow out dust with compressed air or a vacuum cleaner. Avoid touching chips or electronic components on your system. Electronic components run hotter when covered with dust blankets, and it shortens their normal life span which is why your computer needs to be cleaned internally periodically.

I have to go now to get a human attorney to appeal my case so I can avoid electrical execution so there will be another article in the Computer Hysteria Column for next month. However, I do have one final question for you, "Are you guilty?"

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Vista Vexes – April

The Windows Vista Pains'n'Gains Page

By Jan Fagerholm,
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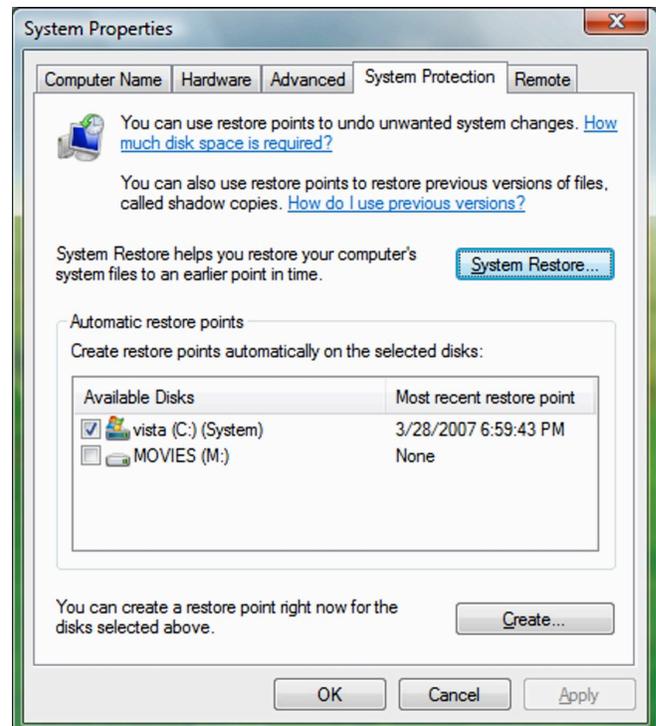
I've been transitioning to Vista cautiously with a dual boot system with both Vista and Windows XP for several months now. This has not been as painless as I might have expected because of the changes that

Microsoft made in NTFS and the System Restore feature. Before delving into diatribe, though, I need to explain how this system is set up.

I use conventional IT practices for installing the OS, programs, and data on separate partitions on the hard drive. This is useful for preserving data in case the OS fails. (That's "when", not "if" in the case of Windows.) So, installing another operating system is a simple matter of creating a new partition for it, then installing the OS on that partition. You can boot into either OS at startup, then access the data, which is on its own partition. (Incidentally, this also makes backup chores easier, as you can simply back up the partition with the data on it, which is what you really want to keep.)

The problem comes when running Vista and XP on the same drive, because of the changes Microsoft made in System Restore. They are not compatible between Vista and XP. If you have System Restore set to monitor all partitions (the default), XP will wipe out Vista's restore points when it starts, and Vista will wipe out XP's restore points when it starts, so if you have a problem with, oh, let's say Vista, which you will because it's barely out of beta, then you boot into XP to recover something,

guess what! – you cannot restore any of your drives in XP because Vista wiped out all of XP's restore points! (Ask me how I know . . .)



There is a solution to this, though it does require you to commit to one system or the other. In my case, I took the plunge and gave System Restore responsibilities to Vista by turning off System Restore in Windows XP. This way I can still use both XP and Vista without losing the much-needed functionality of System Restore. I am committed to moving to Vista on the Windows side (though I spend most of my constructive time in the *nix

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Memorials and Memories

By *Charlie Sickels, Managing Editor, Hard-Copy, Chicago Computer Society*

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In the US, the end of May is a national time for remembering people and events, a time to recall and to honor. Some of it is public; some is personal; it is all profound and deeply felt. It is well and good that we should engage in this process. It is affirming and appropriate that we honor what is worthwhile and often bought at heavy cost. Our lives and society have been affected for good or ill by what has gone before. Some will come again and it is up to us to learn from the past and keep watch on the future.

No less profound, but with less emotional content, is the march of technological progress. This journal is concerned with many aspects of personal computing, what it does and can do, what we believe it will do if properly managed, where it will go. But this may also be a time to consider where it has been, not necessarily how it got here, just what it was like in an earlier era.

Those of us of a certain maturity and extended contact at whatever level with the world of computing can surely recall many steps along the way, glimpses both trivial and meaningful on the decades-long path we have trod. Let us try a hasty and hazy recollection of those steps and share some here. We refer to the earlier and later days of what has become both common in our lives and essential to them. We speak not of the Cray and Lord knows what other supercomputers are now extant, whether acknowledged or secret, but of the early surge in size and power, names like Burroughs, RCA, Honeywell, and the prince destined to be king, IBM.

We may all remember the Big Iron years of heavily air conditioned big rooms of big machines with rows of tape drives the size of refrigerators, all color matched in IBM Blue, IBM Red, or IBM

Gray. Spinning inch-wide tape reels were the size of huge dinner plates and gave way in time to the real and early floppy disks. The machines were handled by skillful computer operators and used information digitally coded by intense computer programmers, the new elite career of the time which sheltered nerds and geniuses alike from the world of the commonplace.

Changes came. Evolution brought "distributed processing", which evolved into microcomputers still with linkage to the heavy hardware and equipped with the arcane language of DOS. Then massive increases in memory capacity enabled the Graphical User Interface, GUI, and the dam began to give way. GUI and Windows fostered independent personal computers, growing from ever increasing memory, speed, and what vendors loved to proclaim, "increased productivity". Then, being linked to the wondrous Internet made having a home computer as reasonable as having a car. Or two. Fame and fortune has shifted to the little machines spread throughout the land, their developers, their makers, and their users, In our marvels of expanded access to information and communication, this can be a time to pause and honor those who made it all possible by many years of work and logical choices. Most of them are not famous and I do not know their names, but no less do them honor. Those who are famous already have what they deserve, or more.

In honoring ingenuity, I'd like to relate a lesser-known incident from the early days of Big Iron's reign. IBM was establishing new information hubs at major international cities. The Paris center was having mysterious problems with new information tapes and periodic updates. Emergency calls for replacements brought new tapes and similar though

slightly different problems. They were undamaged but still faulty. Poughkeepsie sent an international systems engineering team to Paris to discover the problem's cause and find a solution. They carried a fresh set of calibrated tapes proven functional. They watched them disappear into and re-emerge from French Customs, whereupon they too proved faulty.

Careful inspection revealed that the tapes were a bit shorter. Sure enough, the suspicious French Customs officials were routinely clipping several meters from the start of every tape for later analysis. With this deduction, IBM simply moved the initialization instructions some fifty feet deeper preceded by sacrificial random data. Success was immediate. No protestations needed; no excuses received; no announcements made. We also honor enterprise.

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Firewall (Continued from page 5)

enterprises had requested that it be turned off by default. Microsoft does say that "core Windows Services have specific behaviors which are monitored by the firewall". Instead of using outbound filtering Microsoft recommends that you buy "Windows Live OneCare", a product and subscription service. My recommendation is that you obtain a free two-way firewall like ZoneAlarm and ignore the Windows firewall completely.

Whatever you do, don't connect your computer to the Internet without using a firewall and an antivirus application. I have come across too many computers recently that are attached to constant on Internet connections and had no protection. The cost of removing the malware from these systems was more than the cost of premium protection. So don't get caught short!

Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail: bwsail at yahoo dot com.

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Vista Vexes (Continued from page 8)

systems of Linux and OS X.) At least this way I am able to use System Restore where I need it most, namely in Vista.

Looking beyond the gloom and doom view, there have been a couple of nice additions to Vista since it came out. I'm running Vista Ultimate, which offers something called "Windows Ultimate Extras". These are some fluff pieces offered from time to time that are similar to what the old Plus Pack used to offer. In the case of Windows Ultimate Extras, these additions are offered as downloads and you receive notification of them through Windows Update, where you can download them. A recent addition is a wallpaper feature called DreamScenes, which provides animated displays as wallpaper on the desktop. Microsoft has turned some thoughtful people loose on this concept, so while my first reaction to things that wiggle on the desktop is that it is just distracting, there are some very pleasant and gentle animations that I find pleasing without being disquieting. There are a couple of nature scenes that I like to activate while I am writing, as the effect is similar to gazing out the window when you sit back seeking inspiration.

The last month has seen two of my must-have applications come out with Vista compatible versions; Corel Graphics Suite X3 and ABBYY FineReader Pro (OCR program). I'm still recommending that you wait for Vista SP-1 before upgrading from XP, unless you are adventurous enough to try some alternatives to what you may be using now.

So this month I found out that dual booting XP with Vista will trash my system recovery options while soothing my jangled nerves with moving wallpaper. What next?

PULP Staff

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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May 2007

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