



The PULP

HUGE this month:

General Meeting: June 17
MacProVideo Demo
Potpourri
Door Prize

See you there!

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

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

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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

Editors Corner

The June meeting has a great deal of special activities planned, mostly catch-up on a variety of topics, all of which will be a surprise.

There will be a DOOR PRIZE!!!!!!

For those of you using Windows XP and haven't upgraded to Service Pack 3, WAIT. There have been some issues (endless restarts during & after the upgrade) with certain OEM AMD based machines. So check for any notices from Microsoft prior to upgrading or use the update feature. The SP download is in the 343 MB range.

There will be a DOOR PRIZE!!!!!!

For those of you that went out and got Microsoft Office 2008 for the Mac, SP 1 has been released. It fixes about 1,000 items. The SP download is also in the 180 MB range.

There will be a DOOR PRIZE!!!!!!

How many of you have heard of the new Mac clone by Pystar? The base model is a \$400 Mac-mini with 2.2 Ghtz processor, 2 GB of RAM, DVD r/w drive, and 250 GB HD. You can check it out at their website (Pystar.com). BTW, it is shipping.

There will be a DOOR PRIZE!!!!!!

Stuart Rabinowitz
Editor-in-Chief



A Little Computer Quiz

by Stuart Rabinowitz

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 In 1998 Apple introduced the first iMac, what color was it?
- 2 In December, 1977 the first commercially installed local area network was installed, where?
- 3 What type of network was it?
- 4 What company developed/sold it?
- 5 What was the original project name?
- 6 At what speed did it operate?

Answers to May, 2008 Quiz

- 1 Who is Mark Erickson and why is he part of this quiz?
A Mark created a hoax video about signing up for "Google TV"
- 2 On September 9, 1986 a rather significant event occurred in the PC world, what?
A Compaq released the first Intel 386 based PC
- 3 On February 19, 1990 Adobe released Photoshop. What was the original name for the program?
A ImagePro
- 4 Who wrote the original?
A Thomas Knoll
- 5 On March 31, 1999 a commercial service began operation and changed the way some people watch TV. What was the service?
A TiVo
- 6 Who started the company?
A Jim Barton and Mike Ramsay





Hulu Offers Free TV and Movies over the Net
By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The
Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio and TV Show
Host
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WEBSITES:

<http://www.hulu.com>
<http://www.hulu.com/browse/alphabetical/tv> - TV
Shows Alphabetically
<http://www.hulu.com/browse/genre/tv> - TV shows
by Genre
<http://www.hulu.com/hd> - HD Videos
<http://www.hulu.com/browse/network/movies> -
Movies by Studio
<http://www.hulu.com/browse/genre/movies> -
Movies by Genre
<http://www.adobe.com> - Adobe Flash Player
(Free)

One of my readers recently emailed me about an offer he received via email (probably a spam email) about a \$50 program that will allow him to view what was described as satellite TV over the internet, without paying a monthly fee. According to the email, with this program, he could discontinue his cable or satellite service, and watch over 3000 channels on his computer. I researched the product he referenced and found that it was a multilevel marketed program that was, in my opinion, deceptive in that it did not offer real satellite TV, but instead only offered a software utility that could receive the thousands of streaming videos already available for anyone to view for free, and that often required no special software to view. I strongly recommended to the reader that he not purchase the product, and instead just search for streaming video, and to keep his current TV provider.

In researching this service I came upon a recently released and legitimate way to view thousands of TV programs and movies over the internet, for free, and only using any of the common internet browsers. This free service (registration required) is the Hulu service available online at www.hulu.com. Hulu was founded in March of 2007, and is a joint venture owned by NBC Universal, and News Corp, and financed by \$100 million of venture capital. As I type this, Hulu is offering advertising supported content from over 50 sources, such as Fox TV, NBC, MGM, Sony Pictures, Warner Brothers, Lionsgate, 20th Century Fox, and other providers. The content available for viewing includes TV shows, full length feature films, and clips. Several full length, prime time shows are available on Hulu the morning after they air, and include such popular shows as The Simpsons, and The Office. There are also dozens of classical TV shows, available as full length episodes, including such favorites as Miami Vice and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. If users are willing to put up with unobtrusive ads, often in the lower right corner of the image, or standard TV type commercials, they can watch for free such full length feature films as Ice Age, Three Amigos!, and many others. Hulu is headquartered in Los Angeles, with research and development being done in China.

Hulu will play on almost all current browsers as they are currently configured, and require no special software or add-ons to utilize the service, and requires a broadband connection to view the videos. Almost all computers already have Adobe's Flash Player installed, but if not, Flash Player is a free download from



Adobe at www.adobe.com.

Once registered at hulu.com (free registration), a broad selection of videos becomes available for viewing at will. As I type this, there are about 11,200 full length TV episodes and feature clips available, with more being added daily. Currently available for viewing are almost all of the episodes of The Simpsons, 30 Rock, The Office, Knight Rider, House, Medium, Bionic Woman, American Dad!, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, 24, Prison Break, Heroes, about 160 full length children's cartoons (Woody Woodpecker, Spiderman, Astro Boy, and many others), and other TV shows of all genres. For those partial to Saturday Night Live skits, there are about nearly 500 available, including such contemporary issues as presidential politics. TV wrestling fans would appreciate the over 300 matches available for viewing, while NBA fans can view over 140 clips from professional basketball games. A collection of recent (2008) full length college football games, including many of the bowl games are available for viewing, including the 2007 and 2008 Sugar Bowl, Cotton Bowl, Fiesta Bowl, and others, enough to satiate any college football fans, and keep them glued to the computer screen for days on end. Soap opera addicts will appreciate the well over 100 clips from Days of Our Lives. In total, Hulu lists 25 different TV genres for every taste, making something available for everyone. The large assortment of TV shows (and movies as well) can be displayed by clicking on "Type" (TV or Movie), and then "Genre"; this will display only those selections that meet both criteria. Simply clicking on the image of the selection will play that selection. All of the TV shows can be displayed in one window alphabetically at www.hulu.com/browse/alphabetical/tv, and can be run by clicking on their titles. All of

the TV shows can also be displayed in one window, sorted by genre at www.hulu.com/browse/genre/tv.

Hulu is not just about TV, but also full length feature films, clips, and trailers. As I type this, there are 760 movies available, of which 80 are full length feature films, the remainder being shorts, clips and trailers. According to Hulu, the most popular full length films viewed by members are Ice Age, Master and Commander: The far Side of the World, The Girl Next Door, The Jerk, Usual Suspects, Planet of the Apes, Weekend at Bernie's, Dragon – The Bruce Lee Story, Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea, Three Amigos!, All Dogs Go to Heaven, and dozens more. Movies are divided into 10 genres, including action and adventure, animation, comedy, crime and mystery, documentary and biography, drama, family and kids, horror and thriller, music, and sci-fi and fantasy. Movies can be selected by genre, or by studio.

Opening

www.hulu.com/browse/network/movies will display movies alphabetically by studio, with full length features being clearly indicated. Each of the movies shown is hyperlinked (click on the title) directly to the movie. Similarly, all of the movies can be sorted by genre, and displayed

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Converting CD-based Music to Compressed Audio Files

By Mike Moore, Editor, Bowling Green Area Microcomputer User Group, Kentucky
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I spent the equivalent of two or three days in January, working a few minutes at a time, converting all of our CDs to MP3 format. I had been dreading this project, thinking that it would take too much time, but it really was not that bad and the results are going to be worth it.

A few years ago I purchased a 400-CD jukebox type CD player. This device does have the capability of displaying a short line containing the album's title, using a standard PC keyboard, but the process is complicated with problems. It's easy to get CDs in the wrong slot and of course, you can only play them in the room where you've physically situated the jukebox unit.

In the past few years, we've been getting away from the album and becoming more focused on individual songs. This lamentable trend has been fueled by the 99 cent price point associated with downloading music by the song. Artists and producers alike have vilified this process, claiming that the artistic sum worth of songs on an album is greater than the tunes taken as individual songs.

I can buy into this sadness, to a point. I remember the smell of vinyl LPs, unwrapping the cellophane outer wrap, and the incredible detail the producers went into in packing artistic

value into the finished product, right down to the order the songs appear on the album. These days, you just Google the album or artist title and download the Jpeg, that's about it. For a fee, a program called iTunes will do this for you automatically.

So why would a guy spend the time to rip (compress) the tracks of a CD or other ancient audio product to MP3 files? There are a few good reasons to do this.

For one thing, the devices that play music have become decentralized. What I mean by that is if you can imagine your computer as the "record player," then it's not much of a stretch to think of playing music anywhere in the house, car or workplace.

Doing this in the past meant locating the song you want (which may or may not be an easy task), finding the CD (or tape, or LP) it's recorded on, and hoping that it's not damaged.

Then once you've got it, you carry it to where ever you want to hear it. For me, this was often the car, and a car is a great place to scratch or otherwise ruin a CD, and I've also known friends whose entire CD collections have been stolen from vehicles. Physically moving music and other files from player to player is sometimes humorously referred to as "Sneaker Net"

But once you begin to think of your songs and other media in terms of compressed MP3 files, they become at once more searchable, more replaceable, and more portable.

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The World's First Computer
by Charlene Brown, Newsletter Editor, Big Blue
and Cousins, Canada
www.bbc.org
[newsletter\(at\)bbc.org](mailto:newsletter(at)bbc.org)

Using Google Alerts is a good way to keep up to date on media coverage of on-going developments in scientific research. I have requested these alerts with various combinations of search words - archaeology + computer + maps or GPS or 3D models or mtDNA etc.—to obtain updates on the topics I write about in the area of computer applications in archaeology.

The alerts, which I receive several times a week, provide links to news stories and thus tend to emphasize surprising research findings or announcements of odd theories:

The discovery could accelerate efforts to clone woolly mammoths and other extinct beasts

Device made for contractors helps archaeologists create first-ever digital blueprints

Topographical or historical details in Gospel of John may be accurate

Some weeks ago, I received an alert about the Antikythera Mechanism, which caught my eye because it referred to two of the places I was planning to visit in October.

The Antikythera Mechanism is the world's first known 'computer.' It was developed at an academy founded by Posidonius at Kamiros on the Greek island of Rhodes. In the first century BCE, the mechanism was on board a ship, part of the treasure transported to Rome to support a triumphal parade staged by Julius Caesar. Unfortunately, the ship sank in a storm off the

island of Antikythera. Since the device was found in the wreck in the early 20th century, it has been the subject of much debate - some scholarly, some not.

Various models of the mechanism have been constructed, based on fragments, now on display at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens (two of the fragments shown). CT scans of the pieces have revealed much about the 2nd model workings, and computer-enhanced, optical-imaging techniques were used to examine explanatory inscriptions on the many surfaces.



The mechanism has over 30 gears, the most amazing feature of which is the incorporation of a sophisticated system of differentials. Gearing of this complexity was not known to exist until 1575! The device determined the position of the sun and moon, and calculated other astronomical information such as the location of planets and the timing of eclipses. The possibility has even been raised that it was based on the concept of

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Compressed audio files, though the wonder of a shared internet database called Gracenote (formerly CDDB), contain informational tidbits that can be searched. On the other hand, ordinary music tracks on a Compact Disc have no information associated with them at all, not even the name of the song. By converting CD-ROM music to MP3 files, your database can pull up a playlist for you using information encoded in the MP3 file. Most ripping software (such as C-Dex, available at <http://cdexos.sourceforge.net/>) will query the CDDB so that you won't have to manually type in the names of the songs or the name of the CD.

Compressed audio files can be stored on any hard drive in the house and can be made available on inexpensive MP3 players, iPods, and Multimedia computers that attach directly to your sound system. There is usually no special hardware to buy - you can just feed the stereo output from your computer's sound card to the audio input on your TV or stereo amplifier.

Most of the MP3 player devices out there do not require a lot in the way of software - you generally plug them into a computer, they assign themselves a drive letter, and you can just copy your songs to the devices as if they were another hard drive. There are even self-contained wireless hard drives (see: <http://www.apple.com/airportexpress>) that will broadcast your music wirelessly to any networked computer in the house!

Compressed audio files cannot get scratched like CDs do, and if your iPod or MP3 player is stolen or accidentally formatted (happens all the time!), or even if your entire CD collection is stolen, it's no

longer the end of the world. You just re-copy the files back to another device and you're good to go.

Though not exactly small, compressed audio files do lend themselves much better to e-mail. A typical MP3 music file is around 3 to 6 megabytes, which is just under the threshold of being too large to send to someone using dial-up internet. If both ends of the connection have high-speed, it's no problem at all, as this amount of data can be transmitted by most DSL and cable internet services in about 10 or 20 seconds. The MP3 compressed format is "lossy" in the sense that some of the music data is lost during compression, compared to the original recording, however I've never been able to tell the difference between a compressed song and a non-compressed track on a CD. The data you lose is not data that manifests as part of the music.

By the way, the songs as recorded on CDs you buy are very large - 50 to 80 megabytes would not be uncommon. For those of you audiophiles who need compression but don't want any data loss, consider using the FLAC mode of compression (See <http://flac.sourceforge.net> for information). FLAC stands for "Free Lossless Audio Codec"

So, there are a host of reasons why we would want to compress our audio collection, but what is the downside? The only problem I can think of is that most automotive and older CD players cannot recognize the MP3 or any computer generated music format. Some of the newer CD players can, but it's not something that people generally know. So, for example, when I transferred an audio book selection to CD for my wife, she found that the CD player in her car refused to play the media, even though her car is not that old. My car, a

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Chevy Monte Carlo, played the disk without a problem even though it's an older car than hers. So in this situation you may want to take advantage of software that does the reverse of ripping - it would take MP3 files and lay them down on the CD as if they were ordinary Audio CD tracks. iTunes and many CD-writing utilities such as Nero will do this for you.

Now does anyone wanna buy a used 400-CD jukebox player?

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heliocentricity, rather than the then-dominant view espoused by Aristotle, that the Earth was the centre of the universe.

This ancient, and apparently lost, 'computer' technology is mentioned on various paranormal blogs to support the theory that alien beings (usually arriving from space in chariots of fire) passed on advanced technology - but departed without providing follow-up support, another concept years ahead of its time.

Or perhaps failure to form a user group caused the technology to be lost until the twentieth century.

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in one window at
www.hulu.com/browse/genre/movies.

Hulu is about to roll out "HD" (High Definition) videos, and currently has 20 HD movie trailers available to demonstrate the service at www.hulu.com/hd. Since HD video carries more data than conventional video, the system requirements are higher to view HD. In order to view the HD videos, the computer must have a minimum of Flash Player 9.0.115.0 (a free download from Adobe, available for most operating systems), a 2.5Mbps or faster broadband connection (many of the basic broadband services are incapable of operating at this speed, and a premium or upgraded broadband may be required to view HD), a fast processor (3Ghz minimum for Windows or Linux, or a 1.83Ghz Intel Core Duo for Mac). Almost all modern computers of recent manufacturer meet the minimum RAM and video requirements to view HD videos.

While not a substitute for cable or satellite TV, Hulu can provide countless hours of entertainment for free. Since new content is frequently added, and additional providers are being solicited, Hulu has the potential for becoming a major entertainment resource.

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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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June 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 General Meeting	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					