The PULP

HUGE this month:

General Meeting: Feb 17th

Preventive Maintence for your computer (PC & Mac)

See you there!

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

Q&A Session: 7:00PM–7:30PM
Meeting starts at: 7:30PM

Contents:

Member of Association of Personal Computer User Groups APCUG

UGC

Apple User Group

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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

I know that the topic for the meeting this month is an area that doesn't usually get a lot of attention -- 'Computer Maintenance'.

I'll try to cover both hardware and software and suggest a toolkit for both.

Upcoming for March will be a followup to some news in the tech world; such as net neutrality, broadband speed control, DTV, and privacy. Following that will be something on using your computer as a TV/DVR.

Stuart Rabinowitz
Editor-in-Chief

Please note that the clubs PO Box has been closed. When membership renewals go out in the fall the return address will be that of our Membership person Richard Sztaba.

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.

Believe it or not, I forgot a significant computer anniverisay and missed the opportunity for a great question last month, so here it is.

1 January, 2009 marked the 25th anniversary of the introduction of a product that revolutionized the computer industry, what was the product?

2 Science and Technology published a paper entitled “The Computer as a Communication Device” by J.C.R. Licklider and Robert W. Taylor. When was it published?

3 Who is Ronald Wayne and why should you feel sorry for him?

4 Which Apple computer featured a Dvorak keyboard switch?

5 What was the first computer to feature the "wrong password shake"

Answers to January, 2008 Quiz

1 Who was the first (based on the fact that he got caught) to succeed in illegally electronically transferring a large sum of money from a major bank? When and how much?
A Vladimir Levin transferred $10.7 million from CitiBank in 1994. He was sentenced to 3 years.

2 Who was the first person to invest in Google and how much?
A Andy Bechtolsheim. He gave Brin and Page their first $100,000 of investment cash in 1998. His investment was worth $1.6 Billion when they went public in 2004. BTW, he had the money because he was a co-founder of Sun.

3 When did Apple discontinue the Apple II line?
A November 1993

4 In February 1985 someone confirmed that it is possible to electronically eavesdrop on the signal between a computer and the CRT. Who?
A Wim van Eck

5 What does the "i" in iMac refer to?
A The "i" in "iMac" originally stood for "Internet" (or alternately: "individual, instruct, inform, or inspire" per Steve Jobs in his introduction)

Let Me Count the Ways I Like Linux

by Kerry Miller, a member of the Front Range PCUG, Colorado
http://www.frpcug.org
n0wiq (at) comcast.net.

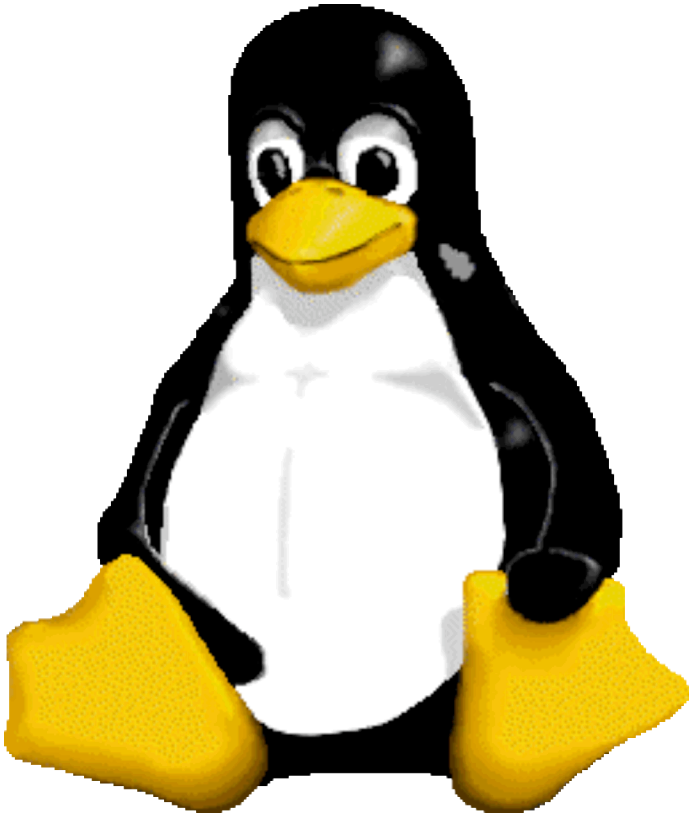
I used to use Microsoft Windows up to Windows 98. I then switched to Windows NT in a dual boot system with Linux. However, when I went to boot NT one more time and NT gave me a message to the effect "I'm sick, fix me," I said goodbye to Windows and Linux has been my main operating system since. I found Linux applications to match all my user data. I was able to move all that data from the NT file system (NTFS) to the earlier Windows file system (FAT). From there I copied all the data into the ext2 file system, which was used by Linux at the time.

Now let me count the ways I like Linux:

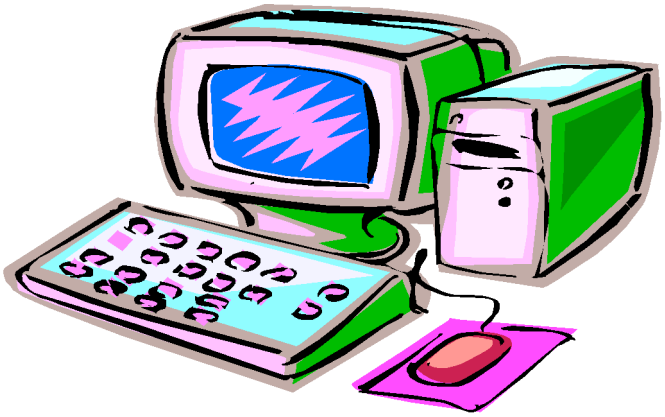
1. Linux resembled the HP-UX operating system (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HP-UX) I was using at work. This made going between work and home easier.
2. The roots of the Linux operating system go back to the late 1980's. By the time I decided to switch to Linux, it was a viable (if little known) multi-user, multi-tasking operating system for Personal Computers. That meant I could establish more than one user for my PC and run multiple programs simultaneously—I was not restricted to either the Windows or MAC operating systems for those PC capabilities. And, of course, Linux was (and still is) free.
3. Linux comes with a distribution of the X windows protocol produced by an international consortium. To understand this capability, think of it as "...providing the basic framework for building Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs), and moving windows on the screen and interacting with a mouse and/or keyboard." (extracted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X_windows). Because this capability was (and is) not built into the operating system, it provides greatly enhanced flexibility for anyone creating Linux applications.
4. For those familiar with the Windows and MAC operating systems, it is surprising to realize that the software that creates what you see as the "desktop" can actually be a separate application program. I use the GNOME desktop together with X windows. This desktop (one of several that can be used with Linux) allows me to use a number of different screens and switch between them as I wish. This allows me to open an application on one screen and switch to a different screen to open another application. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNOME: "The GNOME project puts heavy emphasis on simplicity, usability, and making things 'just work....'"
5. There are a wide range of user applications available, as well as tools to write your own applications.
6. Linux has (and has had for some time) a reputation for stability. The operating system doesn't crash unless the user does something to make it crash. Around 1997 (about the time I decided to change to the Linux operating system) I read an article (in a Linux magazine) professing to use two computers as near identical as production processes allow. They loaded one computer with Microsoft Windows and the loaded the second computer with Linux. They ran similar

bench mark programs on both computers. The machine loaded with Microsoft operating system crashed in a short time. The machine loaded with Linux continued to run for as long as the comparison experiment was set to run.

7. Many distributions of Linux are as easy, or easier to install than Microsoft Windows.
8. A person can customize and/or build a Linux operating system to meet individual needs.
9. Many distributions of Linux include such primary applications such as the Firefox web browser, OpenOffice, an office suite similar to Microsoft Office (word processor, spreadsheet, presentations, etc.), and a number of other “name brand” applications.
10. Linux can be cost free. There are hundreds (or more) of applications written for Linux and there is a growing library of applications.



Microsoft Windows was the new kid on the block at the time I switched to Linux from my point of view and it did NOT do many ordinary things well.



Your Next Computer Will Be Green
By Marjie Tucker, Editor, Mountain Computer User Group, GA
www.mcug.org
mcug(at)dnet.net

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With Europe leading the way, the computer industry is decidedly becoming "green." The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and the Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) directives went into effect earlier this year. These two directives state that certain electrical and electronic equipment must cut down on hazardous materials such as lead, mercury, and cadmium. They also give customers the right to return their equipment free of charge. Companies have several years to fully implement these directives, but the leaders have already started to make changes.

Dell, for example, is advertising Energy Smart workstations and notebooks that can reduce power consumption by as much as 78%. The Energy Smart configuration uses a default power setting that is designed to reduce consumption and energy costs right out of the box. In addition, the power supply, fan, and motherboard use significantly less energy to maintain cool internal temperatures.

HP is using 80 Plus power supplies to lower energy bills and AMD technology that reduces heat output and PC power consumption. In addition, they have already introduced an HP recycling program where you can trade-in or donate the products.
Government Initiatives Many U.S. government agencies have implemented standards and regulations to encourage green computing. The Environmental Protection Agency launched an Energy Star program in 1992 and strengthened its requirements in 2006. In 2003 the California State Senate enacted the Electronic Waste Recycling Act and in 2007 President Bush issued Executive Order 13423 requiring all federal agencies
to use the Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool when purchasing computer systems. In addition, a global consortium called The Green Grid was founded in 2007 by AMD, APC, Dell, HP, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Rackable Systems, SprayCool, Sun and VMware.

Another initiative formed by a group of Global-minded IT executives, the Green Computing Impact Organization (GCIO), was created to be an active participant in transforming the IT community from an environmental liability to an Earth conscious example of responsibility. GCIO is a nonprofit organization that is based on environmental audit programs for consumers and small business homes with respect to general energy-efficiency programs (including lighting, heating, insulation, etc.). GCIO's mission is to educate and assist enterprise technology users in the design of environmentally aware and responsible information system operations. They help consumers become more environmentally responsible by reducing energy consumption and electronic waste in an effort to protect the Earth.

GCIO is sponsoring educational programs across the country and participating in a Green Computing Summit that will be held in Washington, DC on May 20th. The summit will address how public sector IT

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Password Protection
By Sandy Berger, Compukiss.com
www.compukiss.com
sandy (at) compukiss.com

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When technology is good, it is very, very good, but when it is bad it can be truly atrocious. So it is with the hacking of Sarah Palin's Yahoo email account. The bad guys are out there using technology for their own advantage. Whether they are serious hackers who want information for devious purposes or young students who just want to show their technological prowess, this theft shows that everyone is vulnerable.
The recent hijacking of Sarah Palin's email account is also a great example of how a hacker can gain access to an email account and how email accounts need to be better protected against such penetration.

We currently rely on passwords to protect most of our online activity. Professional hackers often use "password crackers" to guess passwords. Anyone can easily find these hacker tools on the Internet. They can even be purchases on CD. There are wordlists for common passwords and dictionary combinations of possible passwords in a variety of different languages. These tools are all aimed at giving a person all the technical tools that they need to guess passwords.

In Sarah Palin's case, however, the perpetrator didn't even have to use tools like this. A hacker identifying himself as "Rubico" claims to have been able to change the password on Sarah Palin's Yahoo Mail account quite easily. All he had to do was use her email name to log into the Yahoo Mail's interface and select the option to reset the password. Yahoo then asked him to provide her birth date and zip code, which have become public knowledge. He then had to answer her self-chosen security question which was where she met her husband. After several television interviews of Sarah and her husband, the answer to that question also became public knowledge.

Sarah Palin was thrown into the public arena quite quickly, but even those of us who are not public figures may find that their passwords and answers to security questions can be easily guessed. Do you use the name of your spouse, children, pet, favorite sport, birthday, or wedding date as your password? Have you entered security questions like place of birth or favorite color that are easy to guess?

Privacy as we knew it before the Internet is now a thing of the past. With the Internet, more of our lives are online than most of us realize. Many people use blogging as a past time and post information on MySpace, Facebook, and other social networking websites. Once posted, all of that information is publicly known. And the Internet is archived, so even when you remove current information, previously posted information can still be found in Internet archives. That information can be used to guess passwords and access personal information.

So here are a few ground rules that may help keep your private information a little safer online:
1. Use passwords that are not easy to guess and cannot be easily cracked. (Look for more on how to choose good

passwords in next week's column.)
2. Choose a security question that others will not be able to guess the answer to. Or answer the security question with an answer that you create which is not necessarily the true answer.
3. Use unique passwords, especially for important services and websites like banking sites and email.
4. Keep your passwords private. Don't leave them on a sticky note on your computer screen or keep them in an unencrypted file on your computer.
5. Change your passwords often.
6. Do not change your password by clicking on a link in an email from someone claiming to be a system administrator, bank representative, or other seemingly reputable party. They may not be who they say they are. When you want to change your password, always type in the address yourself so you know you are at the real website rather than a bogus one.
7. Use one credit card for all online purchases. This will limit your financial exposure.
8. Keep your operating system up-to-date.
9. Use a good anti-virus and anti-spyware programs.
10. Consider using an encrypted password manager program.

Check the Compu-KISS website at www.compukiss.com for more information on choosing good passwords.

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managers, procurement officials, and program managers public sector professionals can transform their IT and data center operations into more environmentally conscious yet efficient solutions. This conference will attract senior government IT professionals and their industry partners tasked with helping agencies become greener in the coming years. Attendees will represent federal, state and local governments, public policy organizations and suppliers to government. You can read more about this event at www.e-gov.com/EventOverview.aspx?Event=SGCS08 .

Features of Green Computing

Power management is the most popular method. The operating system of the computer can be set to directly control the power saving aspects of the hardware. It can automatically turn off the monitor or hard drive after a period of inactivity. Or, the entire system may hibernate, turning off most of the components such as even allow the user to manually adjust the voltages supplied to the CPU to reduce the electricity consumption and the amount of heat that is produced. As of July of 2007, all new Energy Star certified desktops must have a power supply that is at least 80% efficient.

Other features include using motherboard video output instead of a video card, hard disks that consume less power, flash based solid state drives that require fewer write cycles, and lower energy monitors. And, manufacturers of networking equipment are developing switches and

routers that reduce energy costs.

Recycling Materials
Obsolete computers can be reused for charities, non-profit organizations, and developing countries. Parts from really old systems can be recycled through some recycling centers. Some recycling charges can be passed back to the manufacturers. Recycling this equipment keeps the lead, mercury, and chromium out of our landfills. In addition, computer supplies such as cartridges, paper, and batteries can be easily recycled.

How Can We Work Greener?
Visit the website for Climate Savers Smart Computing at sww.climatesaverscomputing.org to view a three step program to go green. Here are the basic steps that they suggest:

Step One - Turn on Power Management. Since the average desktop PC wastes nearly 50% of the energy it consumes as heat, it makes sense to use the power management features that are built into Windows XP and Vista. The benefits? You will reduce your electricity bills and your energy footprint will be lowered as you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Savers organization predicts that the power management features on your computer can save nearly have a ton of CO2 and more than $60 a year in energy costs.

Step Two - Buy an energy efficient computer. Energy Star, the program designed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, specifies the standards that equipment and appliances must meet to wear the Energy Star badge. You can visit their website at www.energystar.org for specifics. Basically an Energy Star compliant PC uses 15 to 25 percent less energy. This program is

expected to save U.S. consumers and businesses more than $1.8 billion in energy costs over the next five years and prevent greenhouse gas emission equal to 2.7 million vehicles.

Step Three – Unplug from phantom power. As long as your computer is plugged in it still uses electricity, even while it is turned off or in standby mode. A computer that is turned off, but still plugged in, can use up to 10 watts. The Climate Savers estimate that you can reduce your electricity bills by as much as 10% by unplugging your appliances and electronics when they're not being used.

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PULP Staff

Editor Stuart Rabinowitz
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.

Officers & SIG Leaders

President:	George Carbonell	568–0492	george.carbonell@comcast.net
Vice President	Stuart Rabinowitz	633–9038	s.e.rabinowitz@att.net
Secretary:	Ted Bade	643–0430	tbade@cox.net
Treasurer:	Charles Gagliardi	233–0370	epencil@att.net
Director at Large:	Richard Sztaba		richer1@aol.com
Web Manager:	Bob Bonato		wmaster@huge.org
Membership:	Richard Sztaba		richer1@aol.com
Integrated SIG:	Stuart Rabinowitz	633–9038	s.e.rabinowitz@att.net

February 2009

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