The PULP

HUGE this month:

General Meeting: Mar. 20th

???????

See you there!

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

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

Contents:

The Quiz	3
Linkscanner – Free Protection from Web Threats	4
History of Open Source Software	6
Tech Terms Mac Tips	7 8
Calendar	10

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)

Editor's Corner

I'm not sure if I used enough '?', but I think we'll leave it as an open Q & A session (unless I can get a Raspberry Pi by then). If interested: go to http://www.raspberrypi.org/faqs

In the news: Researchers have built a working transistor from a single phosphorus atom embedded in a silicon crystal.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has raised concerns about privacy as that relate to children using apps on the internet. It seems that many may not be in full compliance with the "Children's Online Privacy Protection Act".

Ever wonder whether someone is tracking you while you surf the internet, talk on your phone (google 'google iphone tracking'), you may not be paranoid., they probably are tracking you. There is a browser extension you can get to both alert you to who's tracking you and to block them. "Do Not Track Plus" is available as a free download at

http://abine.com/dntdetail.php

While SOPA and PIPA maybe dying in congress, but the 'Protecting Children From Internet Pornographers Act of 2011' is coming. Among other things it requires ISPs to store your internet history for over a year (the current requirement is 3 months).

March 8 could prove to be a very active geek news day, if you can get on the internet. Last November the FBI shut down a group that had infected something over 400k PCs and redirected the DNS lookup to their servers. Since then the FBI has maintained the servers with correct DNS information, but that runs out on March 8. If you have not run updates and patched your computer, on March 8 you may not be able to go to any sites on the internet.

In other news Apple is expected to announce iPad3, Mountain Lion (OSX 10.8) on either March 7 or 8.

Researchers have reportedly reviewed millions of public keys used by websites to encrypt online transactions (banking, e-commerce and email) and found a small but significant number to be vulnerable to compromise. Their conclusion, attackers could use public keys to guess the corresponding private keys that are used to decrypt data

Stuart Rabinowitz, Editor

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.

Sometime between my writing this & the meeting, Facebook will go public with an Initial Public Offer (IPO) and be worth an estimated $100 billion. This will make a number of people very rich. With that in mind, let's take a few other tech companies from the past.

1 In December 1980 the Wall Street Journal reported that this company went public on page 12. What was the company and the IPO price?

2 What company offered (in 2004) its IPO shares at $85 and closed at $100, raising $1.2 billion?

3 Microsoft had its IPO in March 1986. What were theta opening and closing prices?

4 In 1997 what tech company went public in May at a price of $18 a share and closed at $21?

5 In April 1996, what company had its IPO opening at $25 and closed at $33?

Answers to Feb., 2012 Quiz

1 Ever wonder how people found different sites before Google, Yahoo, Alta Vista? There was "The ...."?
A Internet Yellow Pages, a PRINTED book pointing to various resources on the Internet.
2 I'm sure many of you have seen the 2 dimensional bar codes -- QR Codes (Quick Response code) in ads, you take a picture & get some data or linked to a web site. What was the first commercial use of 2 dimensional bar code technology?
A Cauzin Softstrip Reader, each strip held just 5500 Bytes (thats 5.5 KB). QR Codes can hold unto 7 KB
3 When was it first introduced?
A 1985
4 What information was it designed to transfer?
A Instead of having people type in long programs by hand, it provided software distribution in print, instead of shipping diskettes in magazines. It also provided software to print your own softstrips, allowing you to save your own data and programs to share with others.
5 How much did it cost?
A About $200

Linkscanner – Free Protection from Web Threats

Written by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio Talk Show Host
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WEBSITES:
http://linkscanner.avg.com

Many of us have felt secure while surfing the web, safe in the knowledge that our PC security software will protect us from all of the threats out there. Initially, in the early days of PCs, we came to understand that a good antivirus program would give us all of the protection that we needed. Later, we learned the hard way that antivirus software by itself would not protect us from the then-current threats, so we needed a firewall and anti-spyware software. The major publishers of security software obliged us by producing and selling us better, and more comprehensive protective software, culminating in today's typical security suites. Sadly, the miscreants that create the threats to our computing safety are often a step ahead of the security software publishers, and manage to craft new categories of threats that are explicitly designed to penetrate our protective shields, or even bypass them altogether. This makes us vulnerable to attack, even though we blissfully surf the net, oblivious to these new threats, confident in the knowledge that our security software will forever protect us. Regrettably, many of us will find that our personal computing has been compromised by malware from which our security suites provide little or no protection, leaving us open and vulnerable to attack.

According to published reports, as many as 95% of the new online threats are now coming from the websites that we visit, and are often undetected by our existing security software. This means that the blind trust that many of us have in our security software, regardless of the brand, may be unfounded, as our computers may be substantially unprotected from this new vector of attack. According to a recent article on the subject on ZDNET, "The most dangerous page on the web may be the one you are about to click on." As many as 100,000 to 150,000 legitimate websites, often those of national brands and companies, are compromised every day, and are "poisoned" in such a way that innocent visitors to those web pages unknowingly load malware onto their computers, bypassing the antivirus and anti-spyware software installed on the computer to expressly protect against such malware. This malware, when loaded on the victim computer, can open the victim to identity theft or other damages to his privacy or the sanctity of his data. Traditional whitelists (directories of safe sites), and blacklists (directories of dangerous sites), while widely used by conventional protective products are ineffective, as 60% of the poisoned websites are dangerous for less than 24 hours, many of those malignant for only a few hours. This threat is real, and according to security vendor AVG, "One in eight web users will unknowingly come across a poisoned page at least once a month."

The European computer security company AVG (formerly known as Grisoft), has an excellent reputation in the industry, and currently has over 80 million registered users of its software. While the AVG Antivirus software is among the most

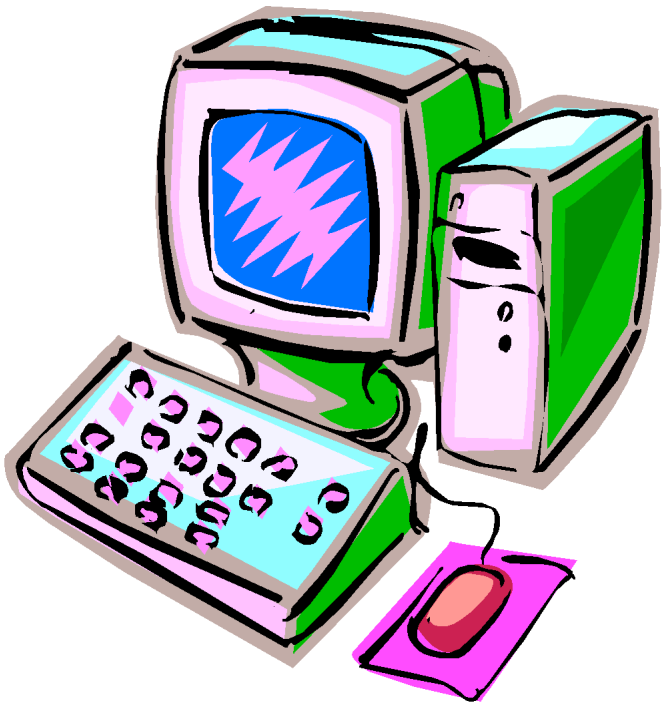
widely used free antivirus software in the world, AVG also publishes comprehensive commercial security suites that have a loyal following in the millions. AVG has always been considered as a leader in security technology, as demonstrated by a feature included in its top commercial security suite, Linkscanner. The Linkscanner technology has given AVG a strong competitive edge when compared against many of its commercial competitors, as it provides substantial protection from the web borne malware that would possibly slip by competitive products.

Recently, AVG released a free version of its Linkscanner software which I immediately downloaded and installed on several computers. Linkscanner installed smoothly on each computer except one, that one computer having a security suite that was incompatible with Linkscanner (Trend Micro Internet Security Suite 2009 Pro). According to the AVG webpage, this conflict was unusual, as Linkscanner was tested and found to be compatible with almost all other security suites available.

Linkscanner, available for free download at linkscanner.avg.com, scans each webpage as it is downloaded to your browser, looking for dangerous content, and blocking the loading of the webpage if malware is found. This prevents the web borne malware from being installed on the computer as it is stopped before it is effectively downloaded. Linkscanner does this so quickly, and utilizes minimal system resources, such that there is no noticeable effect on the speed of websites loading and being displayed in the browser. Linkscanner works well with Internet Explorer and Firefox browsers, and will run on most current versions of Windows, including 32 and 64 bit operating systems. Except as mentioned above, Linkscanner will generally not interfere with other security software and runs in addition to it.

There are two components to Linkscanner, Search-Shield and Active Surf-Shield. Search-Shield works with the major search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN, and displays a safety rating for links displayed during a search. If a website is known as safe, and is free of malware, Search-Shield will display a green star with a checkmark adjacent to the site name. Websites known to harbor malware will be displayed with a red “X”, warning the user not to go there. By knowing in advance which websites are safe to go to, or should be avoided, the user can search with a high degree of safety. While not a scientific study, I compared load times with and without Search-Shield running, and I could not notice any difference in the time to load and display Google and Yahoo search results.

cont. on pg. 9



Open Source Lab
History of Open Source Software
By Cal Esneault, President of CCCC (Cajun Clickers Computer Club) and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs
July 2011 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News
http://cccclinuxsig.pbwiki.com
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In the 1960's, computers were large ("main frames") and each manufacturer had a unique operating system (OS). Attempts to develop a more universal OS failed, but Bell Lab developers used these efforts to make a new OS (Unix) that ran on smaller "mini" computers (size of a refrigerator versus size of a kitchen). Since there was little commercial interest in smaller "personal computers" in the early 70's, they were allowed to offer source code to universities. Unix became a key tool to develop computer professionals since results could be openly published in contrast to proprietary systems.

In 1984, AT&T was broken-up into the "baby Bells," and they took the opportunity to ask for return of rights to Unix since PC's were now a big commercial item. However, a lot of additional code had been written since 1975 by others on which AT&T had no claim.

Developers set about to write missing pieces taken back by Bell Labs and to further develop robust operating systems that would be freely available to all users. On the US east coast, Richard Stallman launched the GNU Project and developed the GNU Public License (GPL) as a legal tool to ensure future software would continue to be free. On the west coast, a group at the University of California at Berkeley worked on and improved the Unix system and built applications for their Berkeley Software Distribution (BSDUnix).

It was not until the early 1990's that Unix versions unencumbered by any AT&T license requirement were available. Bill Jolitz developed 386BSD for PC's which spawned a family of operating systems – NetBSD, FreeBSD, and OpenBSD). Linus Torvalds implemented a new kernel (Linux) and used utilities from the GNU project to inspire a family of GNU/Linux systems – Red Hat, Debian, Slackware, etc.)

Given the essential software base and necessary legal standing, software developers pushed to create programs for these new systems. Initial programs were limited, however, to using a Command Line Interface (CLI) which was different from the Graphics User Interface (GUI) used by proprietary systems at that time. To address this, GUI desktop" front-ends were developed. The two most popular desktops were GNOME and KDE. In addition, "package management" software was developed to aid the normal user in finding and installing software free from the Internet.

With a wide variety of freely similar options, groups had to bundle selected software into an infrastructure of operating system and applications that worked well together. These sets of programs are called distributions ("distro's"), and over 300 distro's are available today.

In 1997 the term "open source" became popular to define these non-proprietary works. "Source" code is a set of computer instructions written in a type of computer language that can be read by humans. It is later "compiled" into a machine-code readable by computers. With source code "openly" available, programmers can make modifications and additions to the original program with little effort. Thus, once the original work is done by dedicated volunteers,

cont. on pg. 9

Tech Terms
By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS Newsletter
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If you want to be knowledgeable in today's world, you have to understand some high tech terms. Here are few of popular terms for 2011.

Terabyte
For the last few years, we have talked about the amount of storage that a computer has in terms of gigabytes. Now we are starting to see computers offering terabyte drives. A terabyte is 1,024 gigabytes. Or to test your mathematical abilities, it is equivalent to 2 to the 40th power or 1,099,511,627,776 bytes. You don't need to know the details, just know that a terabyte hard drive can store thousands and thousands of documents, songs, and other data.

SSD
SSD stands for Solid State Disk. This is a storage device like a hard drive. Unlike a hard drive, however, it contains no moving parts. SSDs are much faster than hard drives and so they improve the performance of a computer or other device.

Cloud-Computing
In terms like "cloud computing," "cloud storage," and "cloud services," the cloud simply means the Internet. In cloud computing, applications that run on the Internet replace desktop programs that are usually stored and run locally on your own computer. When working "in the cloud," your computer or your mobile device is simply the conduit that connects with your data and with a program that accesses your data.

Bing
Bing is a search engine that was developed and is run by Microsoft. It is a Google search engine competitor and performs a very similar function. Note the name. This may well be the first decent name that Microsoft has chosen since it put out Microsoft Office and Microsoft Word. You can check out Bing's search capabilities by going to www.bing.com.

Video Streaming
Streaming is a technique for transferring data so that it can be processed as a steady and continuous stream. It is commonly used for video and movies. With streaming, the device you are using to view the videos can start displaying the video before the entire file has been transmitted. That means that you get to enjoy the video or movie more quickly. Today's streaming techniques also play movies more smoothly than previous technologies.

Land Line
A land line is an old-fashioned telephone line that gets service from a telephone company and allows you to talk via telephones that are attached to the wall. People are giving up their land lines in droves to take advantage of cell phones and Internet telephone services.

FarmVille
FarmVille is a Facebook game by Zynga. Millions of people play FarmVille. They raise flowers and crops, feed the animals, and organize and decorate their farms. It is a truly incredible game and judging by the numbers of players, it is also quite addictive. Ask around. If any of your friends are playing this game, have them show you their farms. I guarantee that you will be amazed.

Netflix
Netflix is the leading subscription service for

renting DVDs and streaming movies and television episodes over the Internet. It currently has more than 20 million members who pay $8.95 or more a month for this service.

Tablets

If you haven't heard of a Tablet or a Tablet PC, you have been living under a rock. Tablets are a very easy way to work with email and to browse the Internet. Tablets have touch screens and run small Apps that perform tasks like playing games, getting the weather, sports scores, and other information. Currently Apple's iPad is the most popular tablet, but competitors are starting to appear. Blackberry has a tablet called the Playbook. Motorola has the Xoom. Samsung has one caked the Tab. HP recently introduced a tablet called the TouchPad.

Now that you are up-to-date on some of the technologies out there, it won't be long before you buy a tablet to view your Netflix movies and buy a computer with a terabyte hard disk to tend to your FarmVille farm while doing most of your computing in the cloud. Technology is moving fast. Jump aboard and join the fun!

Mac Tip of the Month - Hardware

By Ernie Cox, Jr., Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ,
Summer 2011 issue, Green Bytes
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1. Determine the Integrity of Your Hardware.

If you suspect you have a hardware problem, not related to your Mac's hard drive, troubleshoot with these three steps:

Run the Apple Hardware Test to confirm or deny your suspicions. Follow these directions: http://support.apple.com/kb/ht1509. [MacBook Air instructions:http://support.apple.com/kb/ht2644].

Reset your SMC (System Management Controller) to alleviate common problems with fans, power management, sleep, or lights with these steps: http://support.apple.com/kb/ht3964.

Resetting your PRAM and NVRAM (http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1379) can alleviate problems with volume, screen resolution, and startup disk selection.

2. Repair Your Hard Drive.

If your computer is running slowly, files are disappearing, or you get a question mark at startup [this is usually not a good thing], the problem may be your hard drive. Try these two things before buying a new one:

Use Apple's free tools to repair your drive. Boot in Safe Mode, run Disk Utility from your Mac OS X Install disc, or run fsck. These functions are described in detail at http://support.apple.com/kb/TS1417.

Use Disk Warrior ($100, http://www.alsoft.com) to rebuild the drive's directory, which can repair corruption and prolong the life of your drive.

3. Reinstall Snow Leopard

When all else fails, try reinstalling Mac OS X 10.6 from the original installation DVD, performing what was formerly known as an "Archive and Install" of your operating system. This doesn't take too much time and can often solve big problems that aren't hardware related. Afterward, be sure to update your software by choosing Apple Menu > Software Updates.

from pg. 6

incremental improvements require very little time and
programs can be offered without cost to users.

There are now many sophisticated open source programs available for major PC operating systems (Windows, Mac OS, Linux, and BSD). Some examples are:

1. OpenOffice.org (personal productivity)
2. Firefox (Internet browser)
3. Thunderbird (e-mail client)
4. GIMP (photo editor)
5. Inkscape (vector graphics program)
6. Audacity (audio editor)
7. Avidemux (video editor)

Due to slower development of open source programs in general and momentum of established proprietary systems, open source OS has only a small share in the PC arena. The situation is different in the mobile market, however, where the open source Android OS for smart phones is currently the most popular platform. Android development is being led by Google, and over two dozen handset and tablet manufacturers have implemented it on their equipment.

From humble beginnings, open source software has grown to be a key factor in modern technology.

from pg. 5

The second key feature in Linkscanner is Active Surf-Shield, which scans the webpage behind any link click on, or web address typed into the browser. If Active Surf-Shield detects that the page has been “poisoned”, the continued loading of the page is stopped, and a large red warning window is displayed. Again, in my non-scientific tests, I did not notice any difference in the load times of web pages with and without Active Surf-Shield running, and it appeared that the results were displayed almost instantaneously.

Linkscanner (linkscanner.avg.com) is listed as “free forever” when used on individual personal home computers, and provides a valuable and worthwhile adjunct to the security software that we already have on our computers. Since as much as 95% of the contemporary cyber threats are web borne, and Linkscanner explicitly protects against those threats that may slip through our antivirus and anti-spyware software, Linkscanner should be installed and used as

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. Meeting topics, times and places can be found on page 1 of this issue.

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March 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 1968 HP9100 introduced	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 1976Apple I design completed
11	12	13	14 Pi Day 1960 LISP introduced	15	16	17
18	19	20 General Meeting 7 PM	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 1962 LINK demo'd 1st graphics mini	28	29	30	31