The PULP

HUGE this month:

General Meeting: May 17th

Real April Fools products &
Securing yourself on the Internet

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

APCUG
Association of Personal Computer User Groups

UGC

Apple User Group

H.U.G.E.

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

Editors Corner

I was going to demo different browsers, but since Pat did that for the April meeting I'm now onto Plan B. I want to thank for doing the meeting. BTW, if you're interested, 'InfoWorld' just tested the 5 main browsers & here's the link:

http://www.infoworld.com/d/applications/battle-the-web-browsers-091?source=IFWNLE_nlt_daily_2011-04-27

So, Plan B will be about securing yourself on the Internet (& in general). At some point we'll talk about location tracking, given the reaction to iPhone tracking (BTW, all phones track you).

In other news: SETI is now on hold, scientists have teleported quantum information, and Samsung announced that they will begin mass production of a new line of translucent LCD displays. Soon you'll be able to see through your screen and see what's happening on the other side.

'Super Wi-Fi' has come to the home of a Houston.grandmother (& soon to yours). Using spectrum from unused television channels 'Super Wi-Fi' is able to increase distance and penetrate through walls better than current Wi-Fi.

Stuart Rabinowitz
Editor-in-Chief

Here is the appropriate copyright citation and a link to the full text. articles from "Tidbits"

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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.

Last month marked 50 years of manned space flight, so this month has a theme.

1 Which mission and in what year did the first live TV broadcast from space originate?

2 Which mission and in what year did the first live color TV broadcast from space originate?

3 What was the first laptop taken into space and on what mission and in what year?

4 In what year and on which mission did someone make a online purchase from space?

5 When was an iPod first documented in space?

Answers to April, 2011 Quiz

1 As you all know this is tax month and many of you will be filing electronically, but do you know when E-filing of taxes began?
  A Just 25 years ago in 1986.

2 When Unisys was formed in 1986 it became the 2nd largest computer company in the world. What companies merged to form it?
  A Burroughs merged (acquired) Sperry

3 What were the original names for those companies?
  A In 1886 Burroughs began as 'American Arithmometer Company' and Sperry- began as Sperry Gyroscope Company in 1910. Unysis also included Eckert–Mauchly Computer Corp. which invented ENIAC.

4 The IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force) created many of the underlying standards that make the Internet work, including fundamental routing, e-mail, directory services and telephony protocols. When did it get started?
  A The first was Jan. 16, 1986

5 In 1994 IETF approved as a standard IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) which enables e-mail clients to access remote mail servers without having to download the message (think Google Mail). When and by whom was the standard developed?
  A It was developed by Mark Crispin at Stanford University in 1986

Bonus: What computer shipped in 1986 with 1 MB of RAM (expandable to 4 MB), 800kb floppy and a SCSI port? BTW, How much did it cost?
  A The Mac Plus at $2600

Hewie's Views & Reviews
By Hewie Poplock
Central Florida Computer Society
Remove Time Stamps from Photos, Rename & Change File Date

I am the webmaster for several websites. I have photos submitted to me regularly to be posted. Sometimes the photographer submits the pictures with a date stamp, which is great for identifying your personal photos, but it does not belong on those appearing on the web.

In most cases, it only appears on the photo because the camera owner did not realize that it was set that way, or they did not know how or even that they could turn that "feature" off.

If you don't have the proper date set in the camera, the date stamp will be wrong, as were several that I recently received. They showed a date that was over 3 years prior to the event, so I needed to remove them from the photos. Have you tried this? It is not easy, unless you continue reading.

My first thought is to crop the photos to eliminate the date. Most of the photos would lose some important pieces if I did that. I have several photo editing programs that I could edit the date stamp out. It is very time consuming and while it can be done, it was going to take more time than I wanted to devote to the project.

My next step was to Google the problem. I tried several combinations of terms including time stamp. There were lots of results, but most had little to do with removing the date. Many of them told me how to place it, but not remove it.

The most informational results were from forums where users were asking for the same solution. The most frequent response was "change the setting in the camera." DUH! Of course. What about the pictures that were already taken? I did find some good tutorials using Photoshop and other editing programs. I was still looking for a tool or hint to make it easy. Surely, I wasn't the only one with the problem.

I figured if there were simple steps to get rid of the red eye, certainly there is a way to get rid of a date stamp. In one of the forums, someone suggested Photo Stamp Remover by http://softorbits.com. This program appeared to be what I was looking for, and then some. According to their website, "Photo Stamp Remover is a photo correction utility that can remove scratches, dust, stains, wrinkles, tears, date stamps and other unwanted artifacts that appear on photographs. With Photo Stamp Remover, you

can restore photos with the minimum of fuss."

I downloaded, installed, and ran the program, using the pictures that I received. In almost every case, the date stamp was removed and did a reasonable to a great job. The trial version does not do batches, but the paid version does and it works well, with 2 settings, quick, or thorough. The latter did a better job.

The program is a bit pricey at $40, but well worth it. A normal procedure for me is to search for coupons before making a purchase. I did so for this program and found a coupon at http://www.tjoos.com/ which is a coupon posting site. It was a 20% off code, which saved me $8.

While removing the date stamp, I also wanted to change the file names and not use the ones that the camera uses. For that I use a tool that I wrote about in a previous column, Lupas Rename http://rename.lupasfreeware.org/ which is free. It is an old program going back to 2005, but it still installs and works on my Windows 7 computer. You can rename batches, changing, adding to, or numbering sequentially. You can change the case of the file filename and extension. I prefer to have my photos all in lower case.

However, Lupas Rename does not change the file date. I had all of these pictures with the wrong date stamp, but also the file date was wrong. While there are ways to change file dates, there must be a tool to do this in a batch. Back to Google. I found Attribute Changer from http://petges.lu [4] which is a free tool. It is a power user tool to change file and folder attributes, date, time, NTFS compression, and even changes the Exif information. It runs in the Windows Shell, which allows you to right click in Windows Explorer and choose "Change Attributes." Its dialog box opens and you make your changes.

With these tools, I can make changes to several photos at once. I can change the file names using a title and numbering them sequentially, remove the time stamp, and then change the file date attribute. Now that's what computers were designed to do. Make tasks simpler.

Power to the Pixels!

Written by Dave Christenson, The digital photo guru and member of the Fox Valley PC Association, Illinois
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I suspect that everyone reading this has at least one digital camera. What criteria did you use when buying it? Size, features, cuteness, need, impulse? Some or all of these? Maybe. But I'll bet that two you definitely considered are price and pixel count. All other things being equal, low price and high mega-pixel count is good! Right? Not always. I'll certainly go along with the low price bit, but let's think about the pixels a bit.

Why do we want more pixels? Obviously, because the picture, or image, is made out of pixels, the more pixels we have the more detail the image can contain and the greater we can enlarge it, or more cropping we can do. If we go beyond the capabilities of the count, we get what's called pixilation, or, more informally, stair-stepping, where a diagonal line zig-zags. Also called, for obvious reason, "the jaggies." So, why don't we necessarily want the most pixels possible for the price?

Well, everything in this world is a compromise, including us. We all make unnecessary noise, so do pixels. When light from the lens hits a pixel it puts out an electronic signal, proportional to the amount of light striking it. But, there is also a residual signal in a pixel, that is, a signal that it puts out whether or not light is hitting it. This is

called noise. This is on top of the wanted signal, and the lower the brightness of the image, the greater the noise appears. Thus, it shows up more in photos taken in dim light. But it's always there, and in all cameras. It appears more obvious in areas of smoothness,
such as sky, or human skin, and causes the image to look somewhat rough or granulated. (To those who are used to film, it's more or less the equivalent of grain.) Altogether, noise is something really undesirable.

What's the easiest way to reduce the amount of noise in a pixel? Easy, make it bigger! Now, do you see the conflict? If we make the pixels bigger to reduce noise, then we have to have fewer of them on a given size sensor. Or, we can have bigger sensors. This method definitely works, but at a price. A bigger sensor means a bigger camera, and a higher price. Large sensors are expensive, huge sensors ridiculously so. (A giant sensor or a new car, your choice!) There is software in cameras designed to analyze the noise and reduce it. It works, but it has limitations distinguishing between
noise and signal. Software packages can be purchased at varying price levels to reduce noise, they help but don't cure the noise problem, if you want to get into that.

You would think that camera manufacturers, being aware of the problem, would design their cameras to have a reasonable compromise between sensor size and number of pixels. The designers could, but specifications are given by the marketing group, who are well aware that "Pixels sell!" So, what should you do?

Email Scams
By Vinny La Bash, Regular Contributor,
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There are at least two dozen people in Nigeria that want to give me twelve million dollars. Imagine that! People are vigorously competing with each other to make me rich. You would think that after all the publicity over the last dozen years everyone would know about the Nigerian scam. Headhunters in New Guinea know about the Nigerian scheme. Lost tribes in the Amazon know about the Nigerian scheme. So why do the scammers keep doing it? Because people keep falling for it. Some folks want to believe, and nothing will stop them no matter what evidence sits in front of them.

Email scams like the one that keeps flowing out of Nigeria can be downright dangerous. Not only have people been scammed out of money, but in a few instances have actually lost their lives. That is a high price to pay for credulity.

Most unsolicited commercial messages (SPAM) may be annoying, but they do little more than eat up some bandwidth. The originators don't want to harm you, just entice you to buy something. It's sometimes called online advertising.

As the Internet evolves, so do the scammers. They have become more sophisticated at attempting to trick us out of our money, hand over personal information, reveal passwords,

frighten us or make us believe in something that isn't true.

For example, our current polarized political system has generated distrust of government in some places. A band of swindlers has used these sentiments to construct an email that "warns" you that the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI believe that you are involved in either money laundering activities or somehow complicit in terrorist activity. Information like that, even if false, can make people uneasy.

Fortunately, the scammers have a solution. For the small sum of $370 the Economic Financial Crimes Commission Chairman will send documentation certifying you as a proper upstanding citizen, thereby avoiding a messy prosecution and jail time. How could anyone pass that up? These government agencies must be terribly busy, and isn't it a great comfort to know that they can resolve important matters by email if you're willing to send them only a few hundred dollars?

Congratulations! You've won the lottery! There are many variations to this theme, but they all involve filling out a form before you can claim your prize. Don't forget to include your social security number since they need to inform the IRS. What makes this scam so devious is that legitimate lotteries really do need this information. One thing that should puzzle you is how could you possibly win a lottery you haven't entered?

Suppose you really did enter the contest or bought a lottery ticket, what then? Legitimate enterprises are aware of these

scams and will almost always provide you with an alternate way of supplying the information. In other words, never be careless with personal information.

You receive an email informing you of a "problem" with your bank account. Strange, you don't recall doing business with the bank. All you have to do to resolve the "problem" is click on the provided link and supply information that the bank already knows if you are a customer.

Tens of thousands of people receive these messages. A few may actually be customers of the bank. Some believing the email is real, click on the link, and are taken to a bogus site. Any information provided won't be used to resolve any "problems", but instead be used to clean out your bank account.

There are so many scams out there perpetrated by email it makes you want to give up in disgust. That would be understandable if there were no way to protect yourself, but many people forget the obvious: **Use Common Sense**.

When you get an email that asks you to be part of a plot to move large amounts of money offshore to your bank account by doing business with people you don't know from a foreign country thousand of miles away, shouldn't that arouse your suspicions?

Any text message that turns out to be an image should be suspect. The only purpose for turning text into images is to defeat spam filters. Be on your guard.

The bad guys are very creative and always seem to be one step ahead of everyone else. The FBI provides a service for citizens to

receive the latest information about online scams. For more information on e-scams, please visit the FBI's New E-Scams and Warnings webpage at http://www.fbi.gov/cyberinvest/escams.htm. Visit the site at least once a month to be aware of new and exciting ways scammers have to separate you from your money.

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from pg. 5

Well, consider how you are going to use your photos. Are you going to print 16" x 20" photos on high resolution glossy paper? Are you going to crop out an itsy-bitsy portion of the center of the picture and enlarge it? If so, I'm afraid you will have to bite the bullet and get a larger sensor camera. But if you are taking photos of birthday parties, vacations, and get-togethers, and want to print them as 4x5's or e-mail them, then I wouldn't be too concerned about pixel counts. Maybe cuteness is more important.

Cleaning Inside your PC
Written by Gary Bentley, Editor, SouthWest
International Personal Computer Club (TX)
Throughput, February 2009
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When I worked for GTE Lenkurt (subsequently GTE Network Systems) in El Paso 1978 – 1982 as a technologist and supervisor of electrical performance quality assurance for their telecommunications equipment produced at that location we were required to be very cognizant of the risk of damage to integrated circuits posed by static electricity. Even static charges that produce no visible spark are sufficient to destroy, or worse, cause subsequent intermittent failure of high impedance inputs on many PC's (non catastrophic damage is more pernicious because it may permit equipment to pass performance testing and fail later in the field, also, intermittent hardware failures are difficult to troubleshoot because you have to be observing the device while it is in failure mode).

All personnel were required to wear grounded wrist straps and work on grounded conducting pads when handling integrated circuit boards. Unfortunately, the plastic tip of a household or automobile portable vacuum cleaner does not conduct electricity and so can build up a significant static electric charge when there are large

volumes of air-borne dust particles swirling within and without the plastic vacuum cleaner nozzle (think of rubbing a balloon on your head and recall the immediate build up of electric charge).

There are various brands of canned dust removing gas with a form of difluoroethane gas that is static free. Combining blowing the dust away with that gas and using a cloth dampened with a dust remover will assure that you do not subject the integrated circuits of your computer to static electricity. Make sure to wipe or blow clean the openings in the case for cooling fans (to assure your system does not overheat). Do not blow the dust remover into a fan in such a way as to spin the fan, or else hold the fan while you spray it as you may create an induced electrical current back into the motherboard (remember that a motor can be a generator).

You may get away with using a vacuum cleaner some of the time, or may think you have until you observe strange intermittent failures down the road (strange crashes, blue screen of death, corrupt files or boot failures). Such failures would require you to replace CPU, memory, motherboard, video graphics card, or power supply (and the failure of any of these components may have corrupted the hard drive and all your data) or simply junk the PC (since the cost of replacement and repair may equal the cost of a new PC tower).

If you unplug the computer prior to cleaning it, remember that the computer will no longer be grounded. So, if you are wearing a grounded wrist strap you should keep one hand on a metal portion of the PC case to maintain a ground path for static charges (or ground the case with a clip to your ground pad). Note of warning: If you still have an old CRT monitor,

stay out of that monitor case as there are lethal voltages that remain in the CRT even when it is unplugged, a CRT being rather like a huge capacitor (unless you have been trained how to drain the CRT without electrocuting yourself).

If you must use a vacuum cleaner on your PC, use one specially designed for cleaning electronic devices containing static sensitive components. If folks tell you that standard vacuum cleaners, even small hand held devices, pose no actual danger to your PC, ask yourself why 3M Company, for example, sells a Service Vacuum (3M Service Vacuum and 3M Vacuum in a Tool Case) that keeps the motor portion (with high electromagnetic fields that could damage data on a hard drive) in the carrying case and permits the service technician to vacuum the inside of the PC or other electronic device with a long hose with static dissipative attachments (dusting brush, crevice nozzle, needle nose nozzle) "to prevent static buildup" for use "involving static sensitive electronic components such as circuit boards" (quoted from 3M Service Vacuum and Vacuum in a Tool Case Operating Instruction manual).

Paraphrasing Clint Eastwood in Dirty Harry, if you intend to use your home vacuum cleaner (portable or otherwise) inside your PC case you gotta ask yourself, *"Do you feel lucky, well, do ''ya?"*

Mr. Bentley studied electrical engineering at the University of Texas, began working in the electronics industry in 1978 with GTE Network Systems (Lenkurt), then software engineering with various startups in the 1980's, designing and implementing, among other things, pre-Internet email communications

systems multitasking on Intel platforms and MSDOS PC's. 1984 - 1986. Gary now provides Information Technology consulting services in the El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces, New Mexico areas. Gary has edited and contributed articles to the award-winning Southwest International Personal Computer Club monthly magazine, "Throughput", since December, 2003.

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| 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.

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May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 1983 MS Word 1985 MS Excel announced	3	4	5	6	**7** 1978 1st 8" Winchester HD announced
8	9	10	11	12	13	**14** 1981 Star microcomputer announced
15	16	17 General Meeting 7 PM	.18	19	20	**21**
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