

Horizons



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The Official Journal of the Computer Users of Erie

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Next Meeting

May 15, 2008

Demo Night

Come join us at our May monthly meeting for a night of Demonstrations. Hosted by Tom Kuklinski, he will be showing off several new applications he has been using as of late.

One of these is Ubuntu 8.04, which many are asking will be a Windows replacement OS.

Web Creation Programs - Show a variety and compare the drag and drop Web Creation Programs available

Review and Demo - Google Tools - How to get them , what they are and what they will do for you.



7 p.m., Holy Rosary School

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Genealogy.....	Dave Howell
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For SIG meeting dates and locations, please check out the monthly calendar, found on page 3 of each issue.

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May 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Digital Photo (HR)	8	9	10 Mac (HR)
11	12	13	14	15 CUE General Meeting (HR)	16 Newsletter Deadline	17
18	19	20 BUG (TK)	21	22	23	24
25	26 	27	28	29	30	31

June 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Genealogy (DH)	4 Digital Photo (HR)	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Mac (HR)
15	16	17 BUG (TK)	18	19 CUE General Meeting (HR)	20 Newsletter Deadline	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Meeting Location Finder

DH Dave Howell • 3904 Myrtle • 866-7308 • dhowell63@neo.rr.com
 HR Holy Rosary • 1012 E. 28th (park behind school) • Contact Lou Cioccio • 868-1320 • lcioccio@mac.com
 TK Tom Kuklinski • 3699 Dogleg Trail • 814-746-9165 • tkuklinski@gmail.com
 LC Lou Cioccio • 5753 Glenview Dr. • 868-1320 • lcioccio@mac.com
 BE Bill Ellis • 1502 Winslow Dr. • 868-2680 • willardellis8@gmail.com

All meetings begin at 7 pm, except for Mac SIG, which is 9 AM (UNLESS otherwise noted by SIG leader).
 PLEASE RSVP for all SIG meetings, to allow for planning changes or meeting postponements.

Secretary's Report

BOARD MEETING

April 17, 2008
Thursday
Holy Rosary
6:30 PM

Olen Seidler
Hadley Jones
Tom Kuklinski
Don Grim
Bill Ellis
John Fair
Sam Fletcher
Mark Mattson
Lou Cioccio

Olen: How does Board want to handle elections? As published in Newsletter, the current board members will stand for re-election unless they object.

Hadley: Would rather not be VP, but would accept board position.

Bill: Thursday meetings are difficult for him and caused him to delay joining club because of conflicts. He would rather not serve on board.

Olen: Switch Hadley to board position and ask for volunteers for VP.

Olen: Received note from APCUG that we need to supply a regional representative. Question raised about whether this would be a VP responsibility. No one knew what the group responsibility was. The item was left for discussion at a future date.

Don: Is web site access available in the event of an emergency? There should be 2 or 3 people with access if Mark is not available. Don will have the user name and password.

Tom: Has yet to acquire the club telephone number on Skype. It is on his to do list.

Meeting adjourned
6:52 PM
Respectfully Submitted:
John Fair

GENERAL MEETING

April 17, 2008
Holy Rosary School
7:04 PM

Members in Attendance: 18
Guest: Mary Best

Olen Seidler: Called meeting to order and welcomed our guest. Asked for motion to accept Secretary's minutes as published in the Newsletter. Motion by Lee Williams, Seconded by Greg Ames

Tom Kuklinski: Gave Treasurer's report.

John Fair: No Secretary's report as he is acting for Scarlett just for this meeting.

Mark Mattson: Nothing to report on the Website since he has been busy with personal matters, but he hopes to start on revamping the site this within the next month. He solicited any member ideas be sent to him soon.

Sam Fletcher: The Nominating Committee had no response from the membership as to candidates for the election.

Olen: There is no report on Publicity or CUE awareness as Scarlett is not present.

Bill Ellis: Genealogy SIG was held at his house with good attendance. The focus of the meeting was on learning more of the features of Legacy 6, the software used by the group.

Tom: The Basic Users Group (BUG) looked at a failed hard drive and Tom was able to get it functioning with gentle but persistent taps. There was a general discussion of various topics. Would like to know what topics people are interested in covering in future meetings. Send him an e-mail. As far as scheduling he wanted input on how to handle

meetings if his work schedule would not allow him to make the current Tuesday meetings. He is also toying with having some structured learning classes on basic computer topics and wants input on interest. Olen suggested BUG members send Tom an e-mail as to best nights to meet if he has to reschedule.

Mark: The Newsletter publication is back to a normal schedule and he needs articles. The May issue will be put together next week and will be sent out the end of the month.

Lou Cioccio: The Digital SIG has been preparing for classes on Photoshop Elements 6 to be given on Saturday mornings. "The Photoshop Elements 6 Book for Digital Photographers" by Scott Kelby and Matt Kloskowski was selected as the text for the course. A lesson will be assigned to work on at home and problems will be gone over the next class period.

~~Olen: As a reminder to everyone, let the SIG leaders know in advance if you are coming to the meeting, so they prepare for the meeting and let you know if the meeting must be postponed.~~

Olen: There being no old business, he moved on to the election. Olen described the slate as the old officers with Bill Ellis replaced by Hadley Jones on the board at the request of both. He requested a nominee to replace Hadley as Vice President. Lee Williams volunteered. Having a full slate Olen asked for a motion to close the nominations. Motion by Sam Fletcher, Second by Lee Williams

There being only one candidate for each office, Olen asked for a voice vote which was unanimous to accept the candidates.

Gene Meeks: The 50/50 winner was Mark Mattson who won \$112.50.

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Greg Ames: Made motion we accept Lee Williams providing a 7 month old wireless router to facilitate giving demonstrations at the general meeting in exchange for two years of paid up dues to the club. Bill Ellis seconded the motion.

Don Grim: Had a question about a free version of Photoshop he heard about. Others suggested he look into Gimp or Point.net.

Tom: Described ReactOS, an open-

ware version of the XP operating system mentioned in a John C. Dvorak article as still being in its infancy, but an interesting development.

Mary Best: Wanted a program to make brochures and flyers. Open Office and Star Office were suggested as free and fully capable. She is also having trouble with the DVD burner on a new Dell computer. She could bring it to BUG but should first pursue Dell warranty service. She wanted to know how to wipe her old hard drive which had quit working. Bring it to BUG.

Olen: Asked for motion to adjourn the meeting and move on to the Genealogy SIG presentation on getting started in genealogy and an introduction to the Legacy 6 software.
Motion by Hal Kelley, Second by Bill Ellis

Meeting Adjourned
8:15 PM
Respectfully Submitted:
John Fair

Power Supply Tips

By Dan Hanson, the Great Lakes Geek, Computers Assisting People, Ohio www.capinc.org/ Dan@magnuminc.com

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

We have all experienced the computer crashing seemingly for no reason. When it does, we blame Windows or a hardware problem or maybe a power surge or under-voltage. All are possible culprits but one often overlooked possibility is the power supply of the computer.

The power supply is the metal box with a cooling fan next to it. Typically it's in a back corner of the case and you plug your power cord into it. When you plug the power cable into the wall, the power supply converts the AC (alternating current) that runs through your home or office into the DC (direct current) that the computer needs.

If you bought your computer from a superstore or discount retailer it may have low-cost, low-capacity power supply installed which may not be enough to handle all the things you do with your PC.

If you have upgraded your PC with newer or more components (like another CD or DVD player/burner, more RAM or another hard drive) then the power supply that came with your system may not be up to the task.

The physics of power supplies (ambient temperatures, 3.3V vs. 5V vs. 12V, etc) make it so that a power supply rated at certain wattage, say 300W, may not really provide that maximum wattage

load. Some experts claim that power supplies are most efficient at 30-70% of their maximum capacity. So if you are nearing that maximum, you can be in for trouble.

Because the power supply gets a rush of AC (alternating current) when the computer is turned on and it heats and cools each time it is used, it is more prone to failure than many other components in your PC. You may notice a slight burning smell before it shuts down. Sometimes the cooling fan stops working and the system overheats.

Newer systems let you monitor the status of the power supply from Windows. Servers and other mission critical computers often have more than one power supply so that when one dies, the other kicks in and the system stays operational.

So what can you do?

Next time you buy a PC, don't just get a cheapo system with a sub-standard power supply unless you never plan on adding memory, drives or other components to the machine.

Take care of your power supply by keeping the cooling fan away from the wall or anything else that might block the air flow and make the fan work harder (and die sooner).

Keep the PC off the carpet or other surfaces where it may suck in particles and clog the fan. Cooler is always better with electronic components.

Periodically, blow out the fan and case with compressed air to get rid of dust and other particles that may clog up the fan and overheat the system components.

Add up the wattage of the components in your system to see if you are near the maximum of the power supply. E-mail us at dan@greatlakesgeek.com for a list of Estimated Power Requirements of common PC components.

If that is too difficult for you, look to see if most of the slots in the back of your PC are filled and if the drive bays in the front are being used. Those are indications that you may be close to maxing out your power capacity.

If you have a need, you can buy and install (or have someone else install) a new, heavy duty power supply. They come in several standard form factors to fit in most PCs. Warning this may not be a project for beginners though.

Get more tips at www.GreatLakesGeek.com

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Presenting Tom Kuklinski

Interviewed by Dave Howell, Computer Users of Erie

When the opportunity arose to interview Tom, I happily jumped on this honor. It goes without saying that he has proven to be one of the most valuable members in the history of C.U.E. Hopefully, this article will show why I believe this to be true.

Tom is married to Carol who he has termed “a wonderful and understanding woman” - now that supports the theory that behind every great man is a great woman - but it certainly helps! They have been married since 1996. He has one girl and two boys and a stepson. Tom has lived in Erie most of his life except for the time he spent in Pittsburgh getting his degree in pharmacy from Duquesne University.

He is a pharmacist in Erie. Many of you may have seen him working at various pharmacies in the city and county. The fact that he is interested in computers is not hard to understand when you know his background. He’s always been interested in electronics and science most of his life. As a youngster, he liked to experiment with chemistry and electronics. But back then, computers were very bulky and rare. He only saw them in science fiction movies, newspapers, and magazines. He liked the way computers used a certain “logic” and could be made to mimic certain human thinking patterns but in a pure sense, which is obviously not the same as intelligence. That a machine could use “logical thinking processes” fascinated Tom.

Since most of the readers of this article are computer users and ostensibly members of C.U.E., I hit Tom with a bunch of questions primarily about his interest in computers and his involvement with C.U.E. Here are his answers which I, as the author, have edited for the sake of clarity.

Did your job have anything to do with your interest in computers?

No. In fact, when microcomputers became popular, I made the decision to continue to be a pharmacist. My professional training was in pharmacy. I also

loved computers. I had to make a choice between to 'lovers'. I devoted my career to pharmacy. Therefore, computing, or computers if you will, became only a hobby. That way, I could simply walk away from computers if I lost interest in them at a later date. If I chose computers as a “line of work,” I would run the risk of becoming a slave to them.

So, your interest in chemistry led to a career in Pharmacy. What happened to your interest in electronics?

I never lost interest in electronics. My brother Ed influenced me. When in the seventh grade, I earned an amateur radio license and became a ham operator. But interest in ham radio waned when I discovered girls in high school. This plus my need to focus on chemistry, physics, and biology left me with little time for anything else. Remember that this was in the early seventies when computers were still confined to large corporations and air-conditioned rooms. Transistors were still being developed for use in integrated circuits. Logic chips didn't become commonplace until the mid to late seventies.

Then, a cousin, who selected electronics as a career, showed me integrated circuits and logic chips. I felt like I was hit in the head with a book! I could not believe all of this took place when I wasn't looking. WOW! I began to realize what I've been missing. In the late seventies, the first microcomputers became available at reasonable prices to hobbyists. I was smitten with the computer bug! I will never forget the excitement I was feeling!

What was your first computer?

Hmmmm! Do you mean as a video game computer? If so, it was PONG. If you mean my first personal programmable microcomputer? Then it was a “used” TRS-80 Model 1.

What did you do with the TRS-80?

At that time, I was not sure what to do with it! I only knew that I had to have one. So, I had to learn what it could do -

but in doing so, I had to make it work! That's where I needed help.

Who did you go to for help with this “new toy”- the TRS-80?

Ha! Ha! Ha! There was nobody! The sales people did not know anything about microcomputers. The only books written were the ones that came with the computer. There were no clubs where I could get help. Nor was there an Internet. Sometimes a magazine would have an article on a computer.

Then, like spring buds on flowers, magazines began appearing specializing on specific computers and how to program them. I subscribed to a magazine called “Softside” which listed lines of programming code in BASIC language. I was very busy typing and learning to program my computer, how to modify, create new programs, and to debug them.

It wasn't long before I realized that to pursue my interest in computing as a hobby, I would have to find people with similar interests. The year was 1980 and I have been hearing of computer clubs forming across the nation. Then I asked myself, “why not in Erie?”

How did you first get involved with C.U.E.?

From the very beginning I guess. When hearing about the idea of joining together to learn about computers and get help in using mine, I talked to Jack Sulecki, manager of the Tandy Computer Center. This was a Radio Shack store that sold only computers. I often visited the Center to see what was new and occasionally bought merchandise. Jack gave me the name of a Mike Daly who he thought might also be interested in forming a club. I called Mike and we hit it off well. We posted some signs at Radio Shack stores in the area and picked a night to see if anyone was interested. The first meeting was March 9, 1982 in the small learning classroom in the back of the Center. Over twenty-five people showed up and we have been

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meeting monthly ever since for over 25 years. A few of the people in C.U.E. today were right there in the beginning!

We named the group the "Erie Tandy Users Group" or ETUG. It stayed ETUG for many years until we saw that people in the mid '80s were moving away from the Tandy platform to that of IBM DOS-type microcomputer systems. Hence the group became known as Computer Users of Erie which welcomed hobbyists having many different platforms and brands.

Since you've been a member for 25 years, you've probably held every position in the Club at one time or other - right?

In the beginning, I was President for five terms. Since then, I've served in other major Club roles including Treasurer, board member, newsletter editor, picnic chairman, spokesman for the Club, and SIG leader.

Spokesman for the Club? Is that when you and I "appeared" on some local radio talk shows and told Erie about C.U.E. as "Erie's best-kept secret?"

Yes, that's what we did! And, I know that you, Dave, actively spoke to various civic groups in Erie on what C.U.E. has to offer computer and Internet users in the community.

I also loved to set up booths at the Millcreek Mall and at Computer Shows sponsored by N.U.A.G.E., the consortium of computer groups in Erie County. It was at these occasions that we mingled with the public and met fellow computer users to tell them all about us, what we do, and the fun of it all!

And Tom, do you remember the many Saturdays and evenings spent in Gene Meek's garage sorting, checking, and repairing computers for donating to charities?

Oh yes, I have photographs from back then. That was one of the most worthwhile projects C.U.E. ever conducted! Not only did the charities, often involving children, benefit from this effort but many of our members had a ball getting their hands dirty inside the guts of computers!

You are also the coordinator of BUG (Beginner User Group), right?

Yep. Have been for a number of years now. I enjoy helping people get started with computing. And since that's how I got started, through people who helped me, I really enjoy helping people understand what it's all about and how to work with them. And the BUG SIG is a perfect platform for working out problems both newcomers and the more experienced members have with the newer computer technology. Even I learn new things through this SIG.

I am always amazed at how many people we've had over the years that willingly gave up much of their personal time to help others in the Club.

Were you, or are you, active in other SIGs?

Yes, I'm active in the Digital and MAC SIGs. I would love to get involved with the Genealogy and Photo SIGs but my schedule just doesn't leave enough time.

Are you happy with the current affairs in C.U.E.?

Yes, I am. I'm always happy to see new faces at meetings. Seeing that many computer clubs have ceased to exist these days, we must be doing something right. We have to continue meeting the needs and expectations of the membership - both new and experienced. We usually have upwards of 25 people at general meetings and hefty attendance at our various monthly SIG sessions. We also produce a monthly award-winning newsletter, maintain an electronic "bulletin board" called CUElist, and a website at CUERIE@GMAIL.COM. This all speaks well of our talented volunteers in CUE!

Where, or how, should CUE proceed in the future?

The formula for success in the Club was always in its founding. C.U.E. should continue to provide a forum with which its members can learn more about computing. We are what our members make it to be. The continued existence of the Club also lies in growing new members by striving to meet their needs and expectations.

Tom, I remember your massive collection of "antique" or "classic" computing machines you had at your old home on Sassafras Street. What computer platforms did you own since the TRS-80?

In addition to the Pong! Atari 2600 and the TRS-80 Model I, I collected the home brew Commodore PET 4032, TI-99/4, Commodore VIC-20, Commodore-64, Radio Shack Tandy Color Computer, MD DOS-based IBM Clone (may have been the first in Erie, it was home-brewed), Tandy TRS-80 Model III, Atari 400, Atari 800, TI-99/4a, Grid Laptop 8088 chip-based, Apple II, Apple IIe, Commodore PET 8064, Macintosh Plus, Amiga 500, Tandy 1000, Atari ST, many DOS-based clone machines, OS/2 machines, Apple iMac 333, various Windows-based machines from the Windows original version to Vista, Apple iMac flat-panel, and the Apple iMac Intel-based computer. I also have the Nintendo Wii.

I collected and stored these machines with the thought of putting them on display for people to view.

Do you still have them - I didn't see them when we come to your house for BUG meetings every month?

About 5 years ago, my wife and I decided to move to a smaller home. I had to give up the collection. I gave them to someone who agreed to sell them on E-Bay but as yet I have not seen a single nickel from him.

What are your favorite software programs?

I love SAFARI or FIREFOX. iTunes is my second favorite. I also like a version of OPEN OFFICE.ORG called NEO OFFICE, PhotoShop Elements, iPhoto, and Quicken. The games I like to play include LUXOR and BOMBERMAN.

I should explain why I appreciate FIREFOX and OPEN OFFICE so much. This strikes at the heart of what I said earlier that I didn't want to risk becoming a slave to the computer industry. With computers, I have always felt that I could stop what I was doing and do what I wanted like play a game whenever I wanted. I liked the aspect that I could

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tell the truth about computers - at least the truth as I saw it. Whenever someone asked my opinion, I could give it to them unbiased without worrying about any monetary consequences.

As I look back and answer your question, this may be the reason that I like OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE so much. I suppose that people similar to my thinking use their talents to create. They too give back and want to help.

All you reading this article, jump on board and get Linux up and running, use Firefox and Open Office.

Do you use iPods? If so, for what purposes?

Of course! I love iPods. They are great for listening to music and use them to control my treadmill - when I run them! I do not have a video iPod. Some day I will get one to watch movies and show off pictures of my family.

Can you recall any unusual or "far out" experiences using computers?

Oh yes - back in the old days of computing (1982-1983), at the time when my main computer was the Tandy Color Computer or COCO, there wasn't any Internet world wide web. A fellow C.U.E. member found a way to create weather maps from the Navy. He did this by hooking up a short wave radio to the COCO machine and tuned it to a specific frequency to get weather maps. At the time, this was a procedure that only expensive equipment could do. It was exciting to see this humble machine do this.

Another experience dealt with the old floppy diskettes which became "flippies" after modifying them. Orig-

nally, floppy diskettes provided an enormous 150 K of storage. They were expensive, large and single-sided. Someone found out that by punching holes on the opposite side of the protective sleeve, we could record data on the other side, too, thus doubling the storage capacity of a single diskette! Many articles were written about this but manufacturers opposed this since it cut into their profits. I've been doing it ever since and never had a failure. It felt like I was "sticking it to the man!"

Then there was the case of my cousin, "the dumpster diver." It was about 1980 when he actively searched and bartered for electronic scraps. One time, he bartered for old Commodore PET motherboards. Commodore was leaving California and trashed their old non-working motherboards. They even attempted to sabotage them by drilling holes into the chips. Someone retrieved these boards and my cousin and I spent many late hours recreating and fixing these boards to get them working. This was a time when manufacturers did not release any information about their electronics. It was all a secret. Thanks to my cousin, this is how I learned many electronic skills I have today.

What ISP do you use?

I am using TimeWarner Cable (formerly Adelphia). Unless I go to satellite, I cannot get anything else where I live.

What are your favorite websites and why?

At one of our C.U.E. meetings, I listed fifteen pages of my favorite websites. So I won't list them here. I usually like to read snippets of articles at these sites. If I want more information, I will jump to the full article, My interests are in bargain deals, computer geek news, astron-

omy and physics, consumerism, and general news bulletins.

Getting back to you personally, what other hobbies and interests do you have?

I like to garden. I enjoy getting into the dirt and growing things. I like to golf, not that I'm any good at it but I do enjoy being "bad" at it! I also like to remodel and build things such as porches, decks, additions, and basements. Traveling is another favorite thing to do, whether it be hiking and biking, or just camping. The earth and its people is an amazing place to see.

Do any of these figure in your retirement?

That is still a few years away. I hope to have more time on my hands when I do retire. Right now, I have a difficult time believing that I will not have to get up and go to work!

Tom, is there anything in your career or organizational life that you would have done differently, if you had the chance?

Yes, I would have liked to take singing lessons and become a famous and rich rock star! Life gives us many paths to follow. That is not to say that one path is better than another. It is just a different direction in life's progression. When I look back on my life, there may have been a change in direction that I would have taken. However, I would not like to have give up what I have done today. So, I suppose I would not change anything.

**Remember to check the CUE Website at www.cuerie.com
for a listing of Review Software.**

**Contact the Editor to request a software title to review; test it, write
a review for the newsletter, and it's yours to keep...for FREE!!!**

Converting CD-based Music to Compressed Audio Files

By Mike Moore, Editor, Bowling Green Area Microcomputer User Group, Kentucky www.bgamug.org ml.moore@ainsightbb.com

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

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.

Compressed audio files, though the wonder of a shared internet database called Gracenote (formerly CDDDB), 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 CDDDB 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 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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Scotty, I Need More Power!

By Alan Mildwurm, President, Diablo Valley PC Group, California www.dvpc.org avm@mildwurm.com

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When my kids were young, I bought batteries by the bushel. All of their toys required some batteries. The phrase **“batteries not included”** raised almost as much terror as **“some assembly required.”** I still recall going out one Xmas morning in search of “C” size batteries because we missed the warning on the box. (7-11). One very cool pool toy took 16 batteries - in 3 sizes.

In those days, rechargeable batteries were garbage. Most rechargeables were nickel-cadmium and with a memory that made them useless after a few charges. Shelf life was a joke and power output dismal. For several years, I bought throw away alkaline batteries at Costco because they were cheaper than those clever bunny batteries. Not environmentally friendly, but definitely kid toy friendly. As the kids grew up, their needs for batteries diminished (actually they now buy their own), but my need for batteries is increasing. Wireless keyboards, wireless mice, gps, wireless game controllers (the Wii-mote takes 4 batteries per controller and there are 4 controllers), iPod external power units, camera ac-

cessories and on and on. I am going through more batteries now with my toys than I ever did with the kids! Luckily, rechargeable battery technology has come a long way.

Sanyo produces the **eneloop**

(www.eneloop.info). According to their spec sheet, the AA battery is rated at 1.2 volts and 2000 mAh. Not bad for a rechargeable. (A disposable usually is 1.5 volts.)

There are two sizes of eneloop batteries, AA and AAA. They also produce C and D size cylinders in which you insert AA bat-

teries.

From their site:

eneloop is a totally new type of battery, which satisfies in a unique way the needs and expectations of the consumers.

Consumers would like to have a battery, which

- can be used right after the purchase
- has a high performance
- has a long shelf life with no loss of energy
- can be used everywhere
- is cheap in purchase and usage
- is environmental friendly
- is easy to use

So far these requirements could not be satisfied by a single type of batteries. The consumer had the choice between disposable batteries or rechargeable batteries.

Disposable batteries have several advantages:

- they can be used immediately
- they have a long shelf life with low loss of energy

- they are rather cheap in purchase
- they are easy to use and no charger is required

These advantages of disposable batteries however, had to be seen alongside several clear disadvantages:

- can be used only once and therefore mean substantial waste and risk for the environment.

- have to be purchased over and over again and are therefore expensive considering the life-time of your equipment.

- are not quite powerful enough in certain applications (like digital cameras)

- are being offered in many varieties and special application-specific types, which confuses the consumer.

The classical advantages of rechargeable batteries are:

- high performance, especially if high discharge currents are required (like in digital cameras)
- cheap in use, because they can be recharged many times.
- environmental friendly, because one rechargeable battery replaces 1000 disposable batteries.
- good performance at low temperatures.

Given these advantages, rechargeable batteries also have some disadvantages, which made consumers reluctant to exchange disposable batteries

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by rechargeable batteries:

After purchase, rechargeable batteries have to be charged before they can be used.

Rechargeable batteries lose the stored energy rather fast.

The state of charge is hard to determine.

Continuous charging or frequent charge (without complete discharge) can destroy the battery.

Proper charging is complicated for an average consumer

The charging takes quite long and rapid chargers are expensive.

All these negative attributes have one root-cause: *self discharge*.

Self-discharge means, that a charged battery slowly discharges itself without any equipment consuming any current. This is the reason for rechargeable batteries being sold in discharged state. And this is the reason for that keeping charged batteries for some time did not make any sense. When you needed them, the energy was gone.

How was the self-discharge reduced? (For you techy folks!)

Modern Ni-MH batteries consist of two metal stripes (anode and cathode), which are separated by a non-conductive porous plastic foil (separator). These three stripes are laid on top of each other and are wound to a coil. This coil is put in a metal can and immersed with a liquid (electrolyte). Then the metal can is closed with a cap.

The self discharge of Ni-MH batteries is caused by three main reasons:

- the chemical decomposition of the cathode,
- the natural disaggregation of the anode,
- Impurities of the anode.

Now, how could the self-discharge in

the eneloop been reduced?

The chemical decomposition of the cathode has been reduced substantially by the use of a new superlattice alloy. As an additional benefit the superlattice alloy increases the electrical capacity of the battery and reduces the internal resistance, which allows higher discharge currents. Another advantage of the reduced decomposition of this alloy is the fact that less Cobalt is needed to stabilize the alloy. The anode has been strengthened by another new material, which reduces the natural disaggregation. Additionally the separator and the used electrolyte have been optimized for low self discharge of the eneloop.

They really are good batteries!

I have been using eneloops for several months. They work fine. I have both a wall charger and two battery (AA or AAA) USB charger. Both chargers work very well. I like the USB charger and I love the fact that they come charged and ready to go.

The kit shown below lists for \$50.00 but is available at Amazon for \$32.00 It comes with 4 AA, 2 AAA, and 2 spacers each for C and D plus a charger. I have found even better deals with more batteries at Costco!!

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Membership News

Current Membership: 38

New Members: None last month

Renewals Received:

Renewals Due: Nick Woznicki Vivian DeWitt Deborah Cole Kathleen Bolla

Remember, a CUE Membership makes a nice present!!

Internet Security: iFrame Attacks

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida www.spcug.org bwsail@yahoo.com

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I'm sure that most of you reading the title of this article are asking "What is an iFrame?". Well, sit back, get comfortable and I'll tell you about the latest method hackers are using to steal information from you.

First the definition of an iFrame, which is shorthand for inline frame. That clears it up doesn't it? I guess I'd better add some more to that. An inline frame is code within a web page that permits a second page to be imbedded inside the first page. For example, they can be used to imbed an ad that is located on a different web site. One example is the clickable scrolling ad you frequently find on web sites. IFrames generally load after the main page and may sometimes have their own scroll bar. The iFrame may contain Javascript programming code which can permit interactive content. Some iFrames may be invisible and may contain code which can redirect the user to another page or download trojans or viruses.

Whenever your Internet browser sees an "iFrame tag" in the web page code it sets aside the space requested in the tag. It also goes out to the web page specified in the code to download the requested information.

So is this something new? I thought it was until I read a report in a tech newsletter (Windows Secrets) about an attack on the AskWoody web site. It turns out that iFrame attacks have been recorded since 2004. The first exploit implanted a worm on thousands of computers. The only thing that stopped it was a patch that Microsoft had to apply to Internet Explorer 6. In June 2007 over 10,000

pages were infected in Italy. In November 2007 Monster.com had to shut down as a result of an iFrame attack. Then, this year the AskWoody site had iFrame code added to its main web page. His research indicated that the code originated on a Russian web site, which subsequently disappeared. The code placed on the AskWoody web page linked to a web site in China and subsequently to the Russian web site. This was all done by a short length of code that setup a single, invisible pixel on the web page. The code was designed to load data from the Chinese web site. Anyone with an unpatched IE 6 that visited the AskWoody web site would probably have been infected. However, it was never determined just what was being delivered by the offshore web site.

The worst part of this scenario is that the owner of the AskWoody web site did not find out about the iFrame exploit until he started receiving messages from someone who advised him that their AVG Resident Shield said his site was infected. That was followed by Google advising him that his site was infected and down rating the site. Google also provided a warning to anyone attempting to link to AskWoody warning them that visiting the site might infect their computer.

The question becomes, how did the iFrame code become attached to the web page? The code pages on web sites are generally password protected. Access to these pages for the purpose of making changes is controlled by the web site host and the hosting software. However, there are several programs available which enable hackers to take advantage of holes in web site security. Some of these are described as "kiddie

scripts", indicating their ease of use. Others, such as Mpack, require a more sophisticated knowledge of programming. The problem is that thousands of respectable sites have been infected. The following are only a few that were reported in March 2008 by Dancho Danev's blog (a security information web site):

eHawaii Portal - ehawaii.gov - 992 pages
 The World Clock - timeanddate.com - 944 pages
 Boise State University - boisestate.edu - 471 pages
 The U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) - aoa.gov - 425 pages
 Gustavus Adolphus College - gustavus.edu - 312 pages
 Internet Archive - archive.org - 261 pages
 Stanford Business School Alumni Association - gsbapps.stanford.edu - 157 pages
 BushTorrent - bushtorrent.com - 147 pages
 ChildCareExchange - ccie.com - 131 pages
 The University of Vermont - uvm.edu - 120 pages
 Hippodrome State Theatre - Gainesville, FL - thehipp.org - 112 pages
 Minnesota State University Mankato - mnsu.edu - 94 pages
 Medicare - medicare.gov - 12 pages

In many instances it appears that the hackers were able to "harvest" passwords which gave them access to these sites. Then, if the site did not have current input validation patches, the iFrame could be added to web pages. In some cases, home users may have been the source of the initial password theft. By use of a keylogger a hacker can obtain passwords to any protected site visited by the user. In other cases clicking on a banner ad that attracts you can result

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in the download of a bot, a trojan or other spyware. This is especially true if you are still running an unpatched Internet Explorer 6. It appears that Firefox is less vulnerable to these types of exploits. Also, clicking on an executable file in IE 6 generally results in running the file. In Firefox you are usually only given the option to download the file. Obviously you should never download or run any file that you don't know or don't recognize. This is especially true when the site tells you that you need some kind of add-on or special viewer to see the information you want. This is the type of social engineering being used to tempt users into downloading spyware.

There is also a danger related to the firewall you are using on your computer. A keylogger or other trojan needs to be able to report "home" without the user being aware that information is being sent out. This is done by opening a "back door" to the Internet; an outgoing port in one of the thousands on every computer. If your firewall doesn't check on all outgoing data and requests permission for new unknown activity, then you will not be able to block the trojan's back door connection. So it is very important that your firewall check both incoming and outgoing data. Then, anytime your firewall requests permission for a program, one you don't recognize, to connect to the Internet, just say NO.

There is one other recognized method for obtaining the information needed to get into web page code. Hackers can purchase web site administrator information on the black market. One software application used to hack web sites, Mpack, sells for about \$1,000 US. The person behind this software is known as \$ash in the Russian underground. The software exploits six flaws in Windows and Internet Explorer. Thus for not a lot of money, hackers can obtain everything they need to

exploit weaknesses in web pages.

As you can see, the iFrame attack is a real danger for those who surf the Internet. If you want to read more about these attacks, a Google search will provide you with tons of information. If you want to protect yourself from these attacks, your ability is limited. It is really up to your ISP and the web hosts to provide the security needed to prevent the web page intrusion of an iFrame. So what can a home user do? The following will help, but are no guarantee of protection.

Beware of pages that require software installation. Do not allow new software installation from your browser unless you absolutely trust both the Web page and the provider of the software.

Scan with an updated antivirus and anti-spyware software any program downloaded through the Internet. This includes any downloads from P2P networks, through the Web and any FTP server regardless of the source.

Use only a firewall that checks both incoming and outgoing data.

Beware of unexpected strange-looking emails, regardless of their sender.

Never open attachments or click on links contained in these email messages

Enable the "Automatic Update" feature in your Windows op-

erating system and apply new updates as soon as they are available

Always have an antivirus real-time scan service. Monitor regularly that it is being updated and that the service is running.

OR another option would be to verify that the address is safe before going to it. You can do this by checking it at: <http://linkscanner.explabs.com/linkscanner/default.asp>

As you can see, for Windows users, the Internet about clicking on links or accepting download to succeed.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years; teaching, developing software and assembling systems. He can be reached at [bwsail at yahoo.com](mailto:bwsail@yahoo.com).

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Home Phone: Yes No and/or Email Address: Yes No

Please indicate how you wish to receive your monthly newsletter issue. **Please note that if you choose US Mail delivery, there will be a \$5 surcharge added to your dues to help offset the rising postage costs to mail your newsletter.**

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X	Computer Interest	Skill Level		
		Low	Med	High
	Office Applications			
	Digital Imaging			
	Graphics			
	Internet			
	Operating Systems			
	Macintosh			
	Programming			

X	Computer Interest	Skill Level		
		Low	Med	High
	Advanced Technology			
	Hardware			
	Networking			
	Financial			
	Genealogy			
	Beginner's Group			
	Other:			

X	Volunteer Interests
	Greet Guests and Members
	Newsletter Reporter
	Software / Book Review
	Photographer
	CUE Demonstrations

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	Present Programs
	Publicity Activities
	Solicit Advertising
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X	Computer Platform(s)
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	Windows 2000 / XP
	Macintosh
	Linux
	Other:

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Mail completed application and check to:

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Directions to Holy Rosary School

CUE Members and Visitors

Arriving at the school, turn into the drive between the Church and the School building.

Proceed through the chain poles at the rear of the drive into the main parking lot.

Turn RIGHT in the lot, and proceed to the far end of the parking lot.

Park anywhere near the ramp and steps. Enter through that doorway, the meeting room is to your LEFT.

****If the chain is up at the rear of the drive, go around the corner and into the lot from 27th Street****

Finding Holy Rosary

From the West

Take 26th St. (Rt. 20) to the intersection of Parade Street. Turn right, go to the next light. Make a hard left turn onto 28th St. Follow to the school, which will be on your left.

From the South

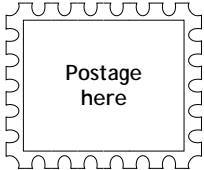
From Rt. 19 (Peach St.), Rt. 97 or Rt. 8, follow that street to 38th Street. Head east on 38th street. Turn LEFT onto East Ave. from East 38th street (first traffic light east of the intersection of Rt 8 (Pine Ave.) and East 38th St. The school will be immediately in front of you when you reach the T-intersection of East Ave. and 28th St.

From the East

Follow Rt. 20 WEST to Broad Street. Follow Broad street until you see Wal-Mart and McDonalds on your left. Turn LEFT onto Burton Ave. When you reach the end of the street, turn RIGHT onto 28th St. School will be on your right in approximately 3 blocks.



Horizons
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