

NEWS JOURNAL

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Volume 20 No. 4

"Members Helping Members"

September— 2003

**This months demo is DB3 Broadband—Interested come to this months meet-
ing and find out what it's all about**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Dan Belmont
dan.belmont@db3broadband.com
Office: (847) 247-1500

News Flash: db3 Broadband goes live on new antenna site!

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill., July 15, 2003— db3 has just finished 'lighting up' another tower. This one is in the north eastern Gurnee area. It will deliver high speed Internet access for residential and business users in parts of Waukegan, Beach Park, Gurnee and Wadsworth. CTO and installation manager, Tim DeBruler states, "This is a key backbone tower for our network because of its line of site to our other tower locations throughout the county". Service will be offered in the aforementioned areas as early as Friday 7/18/03. db3 Broadband, LLC is an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that is building a broadband Internet network throughout Lake County, Illinois using the Motorola Canopy Wireless solution.

db3 is launching an introductory offer of \$99.00 installation and monthly service starting at \$29.95/mo with no contract for residential users! This is worth up to \$400 in installation discounts! This is a limited time offer for the first 250 customers that sign up for this tower. Register on their site at www.db3broadband.com or call them at 847-247-1500.



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**Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
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Membership

Membership for L.C.A.C.E is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 per individual/family. Associate membership is only \$10.00 (out of state, unable to attend meetings). Membership includes a one year subscription to the L.C.A.C.E. News Journal and access to all club libraries and functions. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club Hotline and are now available on our WEB site at - <http://www.lcace.org>

Meetings

L.C.A.C.E. meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at the Grayslake Area Public Library 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting location opens at 12:00 a.m., the formal meeting begins at 12:30p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

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Review

MouseCaster Mouse & Radio

Sandy Berger

MouseCaster is a two-button wheel mouse that also serves as a digital FM radio receiver. To be honest, I didn't think much of this product when I first received it. The MouseCaster sat in my product area for months before I actually took a look at it. My initial thought was "Why would anyone want to purchase a mouse with a radio built-in?" But I changed my mind quickly after I tried the mouse and saw the reaction of my office mates.

MouseCaster is easy to install. It works with Windows 95 or better. It is a PS/2 mouse, so it comes with a cable that fits into that little round mouse port available on most personal computers. Another attached cable plugs into the computer's sound card. There is an antenna inside the cords that pick up the radio signals which are then broadcast through the computer's speakers. Install the included software and you are good to go.

Once installed, the MouseCaster icon appears in the system tray in the bottom right-hand corner of the computer screen. Click on the MouseCaster icon and an onscreen control panel appears. From here you can program pre-set buttons just like you can on most car radios. You can also control the volume and mute buttons.

One of the best things about the MouseCaster is its ability to record radio broadcasts. Just tune to the station of your choice and click on record. There is also a timer that can be programmed to play and/or record a favorite show at the same time everyday. This feature was so useful that I wish the MouseCaster people would expand this aspect of the mouse to give it expanded functionalities, such as the ability to re-

cord more than one program a day.

For an inexpensive piece of equipment, MouseCaster has a lot substance. It even comes with two different "skins" that give the onscreen control panel different looks. I also found another that could be downloaded from www.mousecaster.com. I really liked that one -- a patriotic skin with the American flag in the background.

So what's not to like? The MouseCaster comes with two instruction sheets that I found in need of improvement. Although most of the installation is intuitive and the installation diagram is good, several things could have been presented more clearly. For instance you are not told if you should attach the mouse with your computer on or off. Also, after I installed the mouse, I could not get the volume control to work. A call to tech support provided a simple solution. If this had been more clearly stated in the instructions, it would have eliminated the need for the call.

All in all though, this is a dual function product where both functions work very well. It is an excellent mouse and an excellent radio. I found that you can easily become accustomed to listening to the radio while working on the computer. Having the radio controls right on the screen is very convenient. This little mouse even turned the heads of my office mates, who are used to seeing a variety of gadgets in the office. As soon as I finished using the MouseCaster, there was a line of others who wanted to give it a test run on their own computer.

So if you are in the market for a new mouse or you love to play the radio when working on the computer, MouseCaster may be just the gadget you need.

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This customer comes into the computer store. "I'm looking for a mystery Adventure Game with lots of graphics. You know, something really challenging."
"Well," replied the clerk, "Have you tried Windows ME?"



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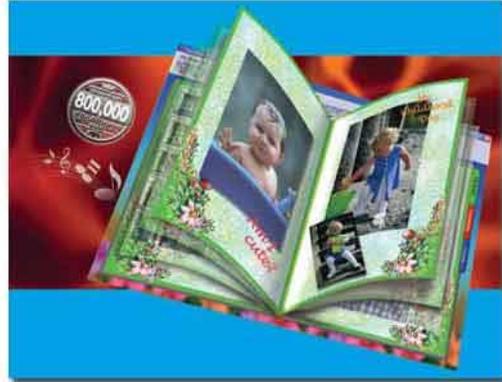
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Tips & Tricks

Two Monitors

by I. Luv Irata

Bought one of those sleek LCD monitors? Don't know what to do with your old monitor? Don't throw it in the trash. Instead consider using it right along side your new monitor.

All newer operating systems including Windows 98 and better and the Macintosh operating systems will allow you to easily add a second monitor to your computer. Working with two monitors has personally given me an enormous productivity boost. It not only makes computing easier, but makes it more fun. Tasks that are tedious with one monitor are a breeze with two. Need to enter an address from a document into your address book? Just open the document on one screen and your address book on the other. Then drag the address from one screen to another. Keep two entire Web pages visible at the same time. Work with spreadsheet information on one screen while writing a letter using that spreadsheet data on the other screen. I could go on and on about the many ways that using two monitors will help your computing.

In order to use two monitors you must either have two video cards, or have what is called a dual head video card, which is a single card that can run two monitors. Matrox is a company that makes excellent dual head video cards. I have a Matrox Millennium G450, which performs flawlessly, installed in my own personal computer.

To add one of these video cards you have to open your computer and change some settings. You can do this yourself or take the easy route of hiring a computer consultant to install the card. If you hire someone, they will be able to ascertain what type of video card you need, obtain it for you, and perform the complete installation. If you decide to do your own purchasing and installation, remember that video cards come in two flavors, PCI and AGP. In order to add a second video card, or insert a dual-head

video card, you must determine which type of slot you have available in your computer. Look at the documentation that came with the computer and make sure that the graphics card you purchase matches the type of slot that you have (PCI or AGP). Also make sure that your new graphics card is the type that will accept the role of second fiddle. (Some won't)

You can make the process of adding a second monitor even easier by thinking ahead when you purchase a new computer. Just order it preconfigured with a dual head video card so when your new computer arrives, all you have to do is plug in both monitors.

Two monitors? Try it! I can't guarantee that you'll love it, but from my experience and those of others who have written to me, I think that you will be very pleasantly surprised.

FYI

Worst Month for Viruses

Sandy Berger

August 2003 has been a tough month for everyone from IT personnel to the average computer user. Three very infectious viruses made it a month to remember, as individual computers became infected in record numbers, e-mail servers were overwhelmed and Internet slowdowns became commonplace.

First, MSBlast, also known as Blaster, Lovsan, and Posa appeared. Blaster is a fast-spreading Internet worm that takes advantage of a security hole in Windows 2000, Windows NT, and Windows XP to infiltrate computers as they connect to the Internet. This worm does not even use e-mail to get to a computer. It simply scans the Internet for susceptible computers and infects them when they are connected to the Internet.

For those of you who are interested, Blaster scans on port 135. When it finds a vulnerable computer it exploits the buffer overflow flaw, creates a remote shell on TCP port 444, then uses FTP to download the msblast.exe to the in-

Continued Pg. 7

ected computer. One of the most obvious symptoms of a Blaster-infected computer is a constant shut-down when trying to connect to the Internet.

Then two new viruses surfaced within two days overwhelming some corporate networks including those at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The first was W32/Sobig/F@mm. SoBig is a mass-mailing worm that sends itself to all the e-mail addresses it finds in the address book of the infected computer. It chooses a random name in the address book as the sender of the tainted e-mail. Because SoBig sends so many e-mails, it saps bandwidth and slows network performance. It also opens a communications port making an infected computer vulnerable to hackers and further viruses. If you find your e-mail box filling up with bogus messages and/or returned mail, it does not necessarily mean that your computer is infected. It just means SoBig is spreading rapidly and is forging addresses.

If any virus could be labeled as “good” it would be the W32/Welchia.worm (also called W32/Nachi.worm). This worm uses the same hole in Microsoft Windows that was used by the insidious Blaster Worm. Welchia targets computers that are infected with Blaster. When it finds an infected computer it actually deletes the Blaster file from the infected computer, patches the hole in the Windows operating system and reboots the computer. But Welchia is not good! It sends a multitude of pings out over the Internet to test computers for the Blaster virus. Because of this aggressive scanning as Welchia spreads, the traffic that it is producing is disruptive.

Any unpatched Windows XP, 2000, or NT computer is vulnerable to all of these viruses. Microsoft issued a patch on July 17, 2003. If you haven't yet installed this patch through the Microsoft update process, you are advised to do so immediately by visiting the [Windows Update Center](#). For removal instructions, see the [Symantec Web Site](#), the [McAfee Web Site](#), or the Web site of your anti-virus manufacturer

Remedies for Virus Relief

When you hear about a computer virus going around, it's time to make doubly sure that your computer is not vulnerable to catch—or pass along—the infection. Besides the preventative actions you can take, there are things you need to do if you think you have a virus to get your computer back to health.

How Do I Know If a Virus Alert is Genuine?

Is it real or is it a hoax? If you've seen or read about a new virus via a reputable news source or publication, it is probably not a hoax. However, if you receive an e-mail, even from someone you know, regarding a new virus alert that asks you to pass it along, stop! This is a common trick used by virus creators to spread the infection.

Instead of forwarding a virus alert e-mail to your address list, confirm whether or not the virus alert is real by contacting either your antivirus vendor or Microsoft® Product Support Services. Once you've confirmed that the virus threat is real, the next course of action is to fix it.

How Do I Know If I Have It?

Unless you have antivirus software installed on your computer, you simply won't be able to know if it has been infected. In many cases, a virus can slow your computer's processor or trigger other unusual behavior; however, these symptoms can also be caused by a number of unrelated reasons.

Keep up-to-date with the latest virus definitions by regularly visiting your antivirus software vendor's Web site to download them, or by running scheduled updates to your antivirus software. Only then will your software be able to recognize the latest identified threats.

How Do I Get Rid of It?

Once you have identified that you have a virus, follow the directions on your antivirus software vendor's Web site to download the latest defini-

tions or updates that will fix or remove the virus. In some cases, you may also need to follow the steps provided to manually remove viral code within your system.

If you need further assistance, you can contact your antivirus software vendor or Microsoft Product Support Services for support in removing the virus. (To obtain virus removal support from Microsoft Product Support Services, you will need current antivirus software installed on your computer.)

How Do I Know It's Gone?

In most cases, if you download the latest virus definitions from your antivirus software vendor, this will take care of the virus. However, you still need to be alert, because many times a Trojan horse is spread like a virus or could be spread with a virus, but may not show symptoms for quite a while, if ever. If you notice your computer or Internet connection running without your using it, or if your computer settings change, you should go to your antivirus software vendor's Web site to install the latest definitions or scan your machine to detect the presence of any Trojan horses.

How Do I Help Protect My Computer from Viruses?

There is no magic bullet that will protect your computer or files from infection. One of the best strategies against any security breach is a well-informed and proactive defense.

The most important actions you can take are:

Install antivirus software and keep it current, ideally updating it weekly. This is your first and best defense. See "[Checklist: Use Antivirus Software](#)".

Use Windows Update to scan and update your Windows operating system with the latest free software patches, including those for Microsoft Internet Explorer and Microsoft Outlook Express. See "[Checklist: Keep Software Up-to-Date](#)".

Use [Office Products Update](#) to keep Microsoft Outlook® and other Microsoft Office programs up-to-date to help guard against virus intrusions.

Learn how to set security features. See "[Checklist: Check Your Settings](#)".

Install a firewall, especially if you use a high-speed Internet connection. See "[Checklist: Install a Firewall](#)".

Other good practices to follow:

Be cautious about visiting unknown or untrusted Web sites. Untrusted or disreputable Web sites can transmit a virus directly into your computer. Staying on the main routes of the information highway will help protect your safety.

Don't open e-mail attachments from anyone you don't know—and be wary of those from people you do. Some viruses spread by mailing themselves to contacts in an infected computer's address book. If you have any doubts about the safety of an attachment, check with the source before opening it.

By using discretion, keeping your antivirus software up-to-date, and erring on the side of caution, you can help correct and protect the health of your computer system. Prevention is often the best medicine.

THE COMPUTER USER'S REBOOT POEM

Don't you wish when life is bad and things just don't compute,
That all we really had to do was stop and hit reboot?
Things would all turn out ok, life could be so sweet
If we had those special keys Ctrl, Alt, and Delete
Your boss is mad, your bills not paid, your wife, well she's just mute
Just stop and hit those wonderful keys that make it all reboot
You'd like to have another job but you fear living in the street?
You solve it all and start a new, Ctrl, Alt, and Delete.

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Due to problems with the Data-base I again was not able to update the members list.

I really hope to get the situation fixed by next month

As much as we try, we do make errors. Please advise us if there is a mistake in your E-Mail address or if it is not included in this listing. Send E-Mail to editor@lcace.org with the additions and/or corrections. Thank you. **This listing last updated – April 1, 2002**

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NEXT MEETING

September 13, 2003

Grayslake Public Library

12:30pm—3:00pm

Meeting Room Opens at Noon

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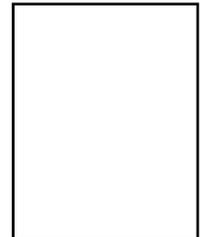
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