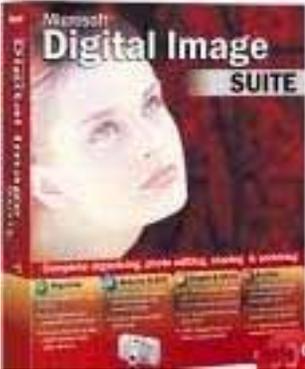


## Microsoft Digital Image Suite 9

Review by Rose Maschek



Microsoft Digital Image Suite 9 consists of two programs: Microsoft Digital Image 9 Pro, and Microsoft Digital Image 9 Library.

Digital Image 9 serves as a photo editor and project generator. It may be purchased as a stand-alone program for about \$50.

Digital Image Library is available only in the full Suite, which sells for around \$100. The Library is used to organize and categorize photos.

After using the program, I think it is best suited to be used by someone with at least a little experience with photo editing. It is great for someone who has lots of photos and wants to edit them, categorize them, and use them for projects.

### System Requirements for the Suite:

- Hardware: Multimedia PC with Pentium 700 MHz processor
- Operating System: Microsoft Windows 98, Windows ME, Windows 2000, or Windows XP
- Memory: 256 MB of RAM
- Hard Disk: 400 MB of available hard disk space
- CD-ROM or DVD-ROM: Quad-speed CD-ROM drive or higher
- Video Memory: 1 MB of Video RAM
- Input Devices: Super VGA monitor (800x600, 16-bit color or better), Microsoft mouse or compatible pointing device
- Other: Microsoft® Internet Explorer 6.0 software required and included. Up to an additional 60 MB of hard disk space may be required for Internet Explorer upgrade. This installation will not replace your primary browser.
- Optional: Modem (33.6 kbps or faster recommended), and Internet access for Internet functionality. Some Internet functionality requires a

Microsoft. NET Passport.

- Compatible with: Most digital cameras, scanners, printers, and storage devices JPG, MIX, PNG, TIF, BMP, GIF, FPX, and more image file formats.

The full Digital Image 9 Suite comes with 2 CD's, one with the programs and the other with many templates for projects. It is only necessary to install the program CD. The second CD may be inserted as needed to conserve space. The suite installs in the default folder, Picture It!9.

There are enough features that make the program easy and fun to use, and plentiful well-made templates for a variety of projects. I didn't like everything about the program, but overall found it quite worthy. For the money, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Digital Image 9 Pro as a stand-alone program, especially for beginners and intermediate-level users. Are you an avid photographer who needs a way to both photo-edit and organize pictures? Purchase the entire Microsoft Digital Image Suite9, and it will serve you well.

Many Users Manuals don't deserve any awards. This one does. It is a valuable tool for using the programs and a very good reference on various photo-taking topics.

### Digital Image 9:

One of the best things about Digital Image 9 Pro is its ability to handle multiple photos. On opening the program, you can choose to open just one photo or many photos at once. Select a group of photos and you will be able to rotate them in a single click—or automatically adjust the levels, then fine tune each individually.

The "Remove Spots or Blemishes" function neatly fixes small undesirable areas of a photo with just one click. Similarly, the "Smart Erase" function replaces somewhat larger areas with a pattern similar to its surrounding pixels. The function often requires more than one application, but "Smart Erase" can be a little faster than cloning.

Levels auto fix works somewhat better in this program than in some others I've used. Though it sometimes over-corrects, giving a harsh result, the user interface makes fine tuning easy. An experienced photo-editor is more likely to use other tools, but auto fixes are worth the try just to give an idea what an edit might do to change the appearance of a photo.

*(Continued on page 3)*



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(Continued from page 1)

The Users Manual is better than most. In addition to describing how the program works, it also contains useful information on photography basics, taking better photos, winter camera care, scanning, and adjusting monitor settings... a definite thumbs up.

Instructional Videos, which can be selected on the Help menu, are useful introductions to the program. They do play a bit quickly, however, and a few more pauses would eliminate the need to replay them.

There are over 200 filters available in the program. They were easy to use and worked quickly. It was not necessary to undo one before applying another to see which worked best for a certain photo. I did not care for the icons representing the filters, as they did not adequately portray what each filter did. Nor did I like having to pass the cursor over the icons in order to see their full titles. To me it would have been preferable simply to access a text list of the filters, arranged in their present categories (chalk, watercolor, pencil, etc.).

The crop tool is accompanied by Rule of thirds guidelines... a nice way to position photo elements in a pleasing composition. The crop tool places a filmy effect over the photo until the crop selection is made. The selected part is then revealed in its true color, while the unselected portion remains filmy. This makes it easy to determine what the final selection will look like, and easy to see if including more of the photo would be desirable.

The Straighten Picture function simply requires the user to identify a line that should be straight in the photo, click both ends, and the photo is lined up and even cropped automatically... a nifty tool for photographers who tend to tilt the camera.

The Remove Wrinkles does remove them. Care needs to be taken to choose the right size brush. Overuse of the

tool flattens an area, causing a distorted and unnatural appearance.

I like the many design choices for Frames, labels, calendars and other projects. You can print multiple photos of standard or custom sizes with ease.

It was fairly easy to make flip books and animations, though there were times when I had to guess what to do next in the process, or figure out why things didn't work as expected.

#### **What needs changing:**

In using the program to create a project, I sometimes wondered what the next step was, and would have liked an on-screen tip to help finish the project. For example, I created an address label, but I didn't know, and had to guess what to do with that single label to get it into the format that would create a whole sheet of the same label. I couldn't figure out why an animation I tried to create when using the step-by-step guide didn't work. Guesswork finally solved my problem.

There was not an erase tool, specifically labeled as such, and that would have been handy. Other functions served the same purpose, but with more mouse clicks.

I had to hunt to find certain functions. For example, if I wanted to see the options available for the marquee tool, it was necessary to go to View/Selection Options. It would have been more convenient to simply right-click the Marquee Icon. A little thing, for sure, but convenience and speed are the way we want it.

I would have liked a "Select None" tool or command as an easy way to get out of unwanted selections.

As mentioned before, the filters are very good, plenty of them to enjoy. However the filter names are not fully visible without a mouse-over, an annoyance.

The default installation into a folder called Picture It!

(Continued on page 9)

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mona.html is a long URL but a short cut to fun.

Perhaps you'd rather create your own field of dreams, Wrigley Field. You can do it out of paper. <http://papertovs.com> lets you print, cut, fold & glue. Not a Cub fan, there are others such as the huge home of Bill Gates, Bill who?

For daily computer information I read [steve@worldstart.com](mailto:steve@worldstart.com). His Computer Tips & Techniques are presented in a breezy conversational style. Each one has Quick Tips, Announcements (low power sales pitches, all low priced with free shipping), Computers 101 in which we get instructions with illustrations of the SW in action, Tip of the bay, Today's Feature, Amanda's Cool Site, New Arrivals in their SW Store and free monthly wallpaper. Frog on a Log is one of two current choices, both free.

PC Mag has their top 100 websites (sorry, we didn't make the cut). Categories are Fun & Games, Computing, Internet, Consumer Electronics, Entertainment, Information, Jobs/Money, Lifestyles, Politics, Reads, Search & Learn and Travel - what more can one want from life? For a 2Letter Mug Title we get a long [www.pcmag.com/category2/0.1783.7488.00.asp](http://www.pcmag.com/category2/0.1783.7488.00.asp). For those who REALLY want the inside news of the day

[www.thememoryhole.org/memoryblop/](http://www.thememoryhole.org/memoryblop/) is the place to be. Photos of the capture of Saddam taken by his captors (as each soldier had his own camera) were posted there. Now taken down. Many other amazing stories & photos as well. I can only imagine what we learn from the latest from Iraq. Our own weblog is up & running. <http://elseeace.bloghorn.com> is ready for our members to read & write. Any problems e-mail me at [olishal@aol.com](mailto:olishal@aol.com).

We get the words out about our group to everyone in the world who has access to computers. I've invited the locals to join us.

And to close this out: Pete Townsend (of the Who) wasn't the first person to distribute quantities of smallpox vaccine, I'm talking about my Jenner ration. This groaner from BigPuns.com.

June 2004

# Smart Computing Smart Computing User Group Newsletter

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Editing shortcuts. Within a word processing document or text environment, press CTRL-C to copy, CTRL-V to paste, CTRL-X to cut, and CTRL-A to highlight all text. Press and hold the SHIFT key and use the arrows to highlight just a portion of the text. Once you select a section of text, press CTRL-B to make the text bold, CTRL-U to underline the text, and CTRL-I to italicize the text. You can use CTRL-S to save a file, CTRL-O to open a file, and CTRL-P to print a file.

\* Get Closer: Ask any professional photographer what amateur photographers do wrong, and the answer will almost always be the same: They take pictures from too far away. Most of us try to place the subject in the middle of the viewfinder (or LCD), taking care to include the surroundings to give the picture a good context. The

(Continued on page 6)

## FlipAlbum Suite 5

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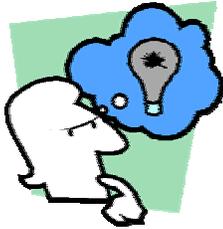
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# E-mail is 32 Years Old

By Jim Smith, President, Business and Professional Microcomputer Users Group, Inc. (BPMUG), Connecticut



Spring has finally arrived and the winter weather is starting to give way to warm, sunny days. March was the anniversary of Email. Yes, in March of 1972 the very first basic e-mail program was written and the "@" sign was chosen for its "at"

meaning. Here it is 32 years later and email is a mainstream means of communication and an normal tool for most businesses and for personal use.

Naturally with this handy mainstream concept comes those wanting to abuse it. I would hope that most of you are aware of some of the tricks and hoaxes that can be offered via email. For the others, I'd like to review some of the more common ones so you won't be tricked.

First, there are the obvious scams trying to get you to buy endless supplies of gimmicks that promise to make many of your body parts larger or somehow enhanced. Less obvious are sites that promise prescription drugs for bargain rates and ones with Hormone Growth solutions, or great mortgages on-line or credit repairs and many others.

Much like the snake oil sales team of yesteryear,

most of these are scams. The occasional one that is legit should also be considered suspect since anyone desperate enough to jump on the wagon with the snake oil sales team is not likely to be around for long enough to deliver anyway. Businesses that use unsolicited commercial email (spam) to sell their products should be viewed with great caution.

Then there are hoaxes that alert you to something that request that you spread it to everyone in your email address book. Any time you get an email that tells you to spread it around, think about it first! Most likely it is a hoax. The most recent one I've seen is the one that asks everyone to not buy gasoline from the big producers in order to prove a point.

Searching on-line will give plenty of reasons why this is a farce but it still doesn't stop people from continuing to send it around. Of course there are plenty of hoaxes around about viruses that will eat your computer unless you send it along to everyone else you know. There are jokes that beg to be sent to everyone and there are emailed chain letters that promise doom and gloom for breaking the cycle. Don't continue to clutter up the email system with these.

Here's something to consider -- if you do what you are told and send these to everyone in your address book, and they turn around and add the addresses from their list, and it goes through that for a while, eventually it will likely land in the hands of someone that will sell all of those email addresses to junk e-mailers who will delight in sending a huge assortment of get-rich-quick and

*(Continued on page 6)*

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Smart Computing or CPU?

(Continued from page 5)

body enhancing scams to everyone listed. I get enough of those spams without friends adding my email address to those lists.

The other popular email hoax is the endless variation on the Nigerian widow with too much money from her late husband and looking for a trusting American with a bank account ready to enter into a business deal in exchange for a percentage. These scams have been around for longer than email has but, rather than using US Postal Service and phones to deliver the pitch, email is a much cheaper way to fish for unsuspecting victims.

Speaking of fishing, there is another hoax that is known by its variation, "Phishing". Phishing is when someone tries to get you to divulge credit card or passwords by pretending to be legit. If you get an email from PayPal asking you to "Click Here" and confirm your account info or from Citibank asking you to verify your credit card number, or from EBay asking you to type in your password so they can keep your account active, these phishing trips are hoaxes! Do not fall for them no matter how legit they appear to be. If you are not sure of something like that, be suspicious. Assume first that it is a phishing expedition rather than assuming it is legit. With a

keen sense of skepticism, many of these hoaxes will become obvious.

They prey on our not thinking too much but just doing as we are asked.

Most people that fall for them are thoroughly embarrassed after it is over because they realized that if they had stopped to think about it they would have realized the absurdity of it. Don't be hooked in a phishing expedition!

So with 32 years of emailing behind us, there are many wonderful things about email and some things to watch out for. I've given you a few of them... it is up to you to stay alert to many of the other ones that are out there. BPMUG is a great resource for those wanting to find out whether something that sounds too good to be true, is true or not. Don't be taken in. Stop to ponder it first and then verify it. Then if you find an amazing deal to get rich quick that you just know will work... don't share it with me. I probably won't believe it anyway.

Now get out from behind your computers for a few minutes and have a wonderful Spring!

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

# Happy Birthday

*July*

**Terri Hanlon**

**Danis Zingler**

**Jack Frost**

**Lew Sidenberg**

**Howard Shaughnessy**

**Rodger Ehlert**



(Continued from page 4)

resulting picture almost always disappoints because it's too much context and too little subject. From now on, get closer-much closer. As a rule, as soon as you think you're too close, cut the distance in half, until you can barely stand what your viewfinder tells you. Take your picture and move closer still, and then print some of the shots and see the difference. Immediately, your pictures will have a far stronger personality.

\* Excel Tip: To hide a column, point your pointer at the right edge of the column header and drag it to the left until the column vanishes. To retrieve the column, click just to the right of the leftmost side of the column header that replaced the original and drag to the right. To hide a row, point your pointer at the bottom edge of the row header and drag it up until the row vanishes. To retrieve the row, click just below the top of the column header that replaced the original and drag downwards.

**"Members Helping Members"**

# Review

## Epson Perfection 3170 Photo

by Gypsy D. Katz

I recently took on the task of digitizing and archiving hundreds of family photos & slides. These include b&w prints since 1910, lots of 9 x 13 color prints from 60's & 70's, slides from 70's to this date and of course plenty of modern 10 x 15 prints.

I'd been looking around for a while a device to handle all this and while having convinced myself that with 35 mm negatives & slides a dedicated film scanner would give the best result, they still cost a small fortune and handle only one format. I had in my hands such a variety of formats that I decided to give a shot for an all-round device. So I bought the Epson 3170, with some second thoughts how it would fare, but since I needed a flatbed anyway, this was the way to go. There are few scanners that promise what the Epson 3170 does. An outstanding 3200 dpi resolution, 48 bit color, prints, slides, negatives, both 35 mm and medium format and for all this, it's dirt cheap. Street price for the 3170 hovers around \$200. It comes bundled with Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0, which is worth something itself, especially if you don't have post-processing software.

### *What's in the box*

In addition to the actual scanner there's the power cord with an attached transformer. This unit works either on 220 or 110 volts depending where you buy it. There's high-speed USB 2.0 cable as well and two CD's. One contains Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0 and the other Epson Scanning software plus various other utilities.

### *Software*

To make it brief, the proprietary Epson scanning software isn't the most sophisticated piece of software, but it'll get the job done well enough. The package includes a variety of stuff in addition to Photoshop Elements but

the one you'd use for scanning images is *Epson Scan*. Once you start the software you can pick from three scanning modes, "full auto", "home" and "professional". I think the names speak for themselves. I ended up using the professional mode almost all of the time. The first two offer a variable degree of automation while the professional mode lets you adjust all settings yourself.

### *Color prints*

Scanning color prints is fairly straightforward. You put the images on the scanning table and press the preview button. In home mode the scanner will crop the images automatically but in professional mode you have to for some reason to do this by hand. Whether this is more "professional" I'll leave up to you. In both you can manually set resolution, apply USM and descreen filter and use automatic color correction. Professional mode also lets you set color depth and adjust histogram for each color separately.



Scanning speed at 300 dpi is blazingly fast, at 600 dpi still very fast, although I find it hard to justify the use of 600 dpi, as there seems to be very little to gain in terms of resolution especially in older color prints. Printing technology has come a long way from the 70's, but still, most minilabs print their stuff at 300 dpi.

It's worthwhile to notice that while Epson color correction works fine, it tends to overcorrect a little towards blue, while Photoshop is more like what it should be. Descreen filter is useful in removing the small regular grain, which actually is real bumps in the paper.

After several dozen scans I understood that the you won't get into trouble with the 3170 when scanning prints. These days it takes some effort to find a flatbed scanner that doesn't do this well. For those on a tight budget the 3170 may be overkill if you're scanning only 10x15. But for \$200 you will get more...

### **35 mm color negative film**

Where the 3170 truly comes to its own is the *ease* of scanning 35 mm film. After inserting two strips of film (usually 4 or 6 frames in each) to the film holder and

*(Continued on page 8)*

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pressing "preview", you'll get 8 or 12 cropped thumbnails in just half a minute. Upon this you can adjust the scanning parameters (orientation, color depth, histogram, color restoration, USM, dust removal) for each image separately or for all at the same time. Again, there's the full auto and home mode available, but I tend to use professional at all times.

The actual scan takes around 3 minutes per frame. Reasonably fast, but still not fast enough to sit next to it. So it's coffee time after you press the "scan" button. USB 2.0 is supposed to be considerably quicker, but I didn't have the chance to test this. The amount of time the scan takes also depends also on the post-processing. Dust removal slows things down as does color restoration. This is how it works:

- preview scan 33 seconds (8 frames)
- single scan 2 minutes 45 seconds
- single scan w/unsharp mask 2 minutes 50 seconds
- single scan w/dust removal 3 minutes 20 seconds

I found that while being a little crude, the Epson USM works well enough to be automatically applied to what negatives I scan:

The 3170 comes with a software-based dust and scratch removal. Having seen what an IR-based system can do, this one didn't really impress me. It works to a degree, but when set to high it can produce nasty artifacts (not visible below). If your negative weren't in really bad shape, I'd pass this one and manually fix the worst scratches in Photoshop.

The 3170 falls short of its film-only competitors. With due post-processing you can save a lot, but not quite match the quality of PhotoCD. I must however say that this kind of slide with a mixture of sunlit and shadow details is really as bad as it gets.

With an image easier on the dark end the difference isn't that big any more. Resolution seems to be on par with the PhotoCD. Again, color isn't really right in either one of the images. With a minute in Photoshop this is what you'll get:

What can you say? Clearly the 3200 dpi isn't there and the images do need some post-processing, but to be honest I didn't expect the 3170 to do this good. If you really want to pick on the details, the 3170 resolves less shadow detail in the road passing being the building. I could've pushed this a little more in Photoshop but I didn't want to increase noise (which is clearly visible in the PhotoCD image.)

## Afterwards

What the 3170 really does well is scanning multiple prints or negatives at the same time. And it's pretty quick doing it as well. While scanning prints the quality leaves no doubt. It also has an option for an automatic sheet feeder, should you ever need to digitize your manila folders.

The image quality with transparencies is a little more difficult to judge. I would equally assume that a lot of people would look down at the 3170's images as being soft, out of focus and out of color. Some may just be frustrated with the software. It so much depends what your personal criteria and needs are.

But for \$200 it's hard to go wrong. For what it does, this thing is cheap. Period. If the image quality is not up to your standards, you can always upgrade and lose very little. I'm sure a film scanner or the new flatbed that's in the works by Epson (and probably all other manufacturers as well) will surpass this in six months or so, but for now, it's a definitely worth all the money you spend on it.

## Letter to the Editor:

In our May L.C.A.C.E. News-Journal and at our May meeting, Mike McEnery thanked many people for their hard work on behalf of our club. Unfortunately, we all forgot to thank Mike for serving as our club vice president, chairing our wonderful Christmas party, and, most of all, for editing our newsletter. We can all help Mike by writing a newsletter article occasionally. You must have a favorite piece of software, website, or other bit of computer info that you can share with the rest of us. If we all submit articles, Mike's job will be easier, and our newsletter will have greater variety. Try it! You may enjoy seeing your articles in print.

Robin B. Seidenberg

*Editor: Thanks Robin*

## Thoughts

Just a quick thank you to J.J. , Marshia, Howard, Zak, and Jim for a very good meeting last month. I think the Special Interest Group kick off went very well.

As you all know we don't have a meeting in July. I will be looking for volunteers for the Holiday Party committee in August. Start thinking of some ideas of what you would like as the First and Second prize for the raffle. Until next time.....

(Continued from page 3)

9. I'd prefer a more logical folder name, such as "Digital Image 9," rather than a fall-back to a previous edition.

In making a project, such as an album page, the guided screen steps leave out steps for replacing text. If you forget to erase "Your text here" it prints out when the project is printed. A beginner needs some on-screen tips on how to do that. Someone with experience knows the procedure, but if the program is to appeal to beginners at all, those tips will need to be inserted.

One of the most commonly used tools is the clone tool. Yet it is not on the common tasks toolbar column. I think it should be.

### **Digital Image Library**

Digital Image Library is a program that stores information about your photos, including thumbnails of each picture, and information about each: date taken file size, image size, and the folder in which it is stored. The user can assign one or multiple key words to any photo as a way of classifying and searching for them. Any photo that is in the My Pictures folder on your computer is automatically added to the Library. Photos from other sources can be added manually.

After photos have been placed in the Library, you can easily sort them by keyword, day, month or year taken, file size or type, rating you've assigned, or by folder. The more photos you take and work with, the more useful this part of the Suite will be for you.

A thumbnail slider allows you to increase or decrease the size of the thumbnails, allowing you to view more detail or more photos per page respectively.

Digital Image Library contains an Archive Pictures Wizard which can be set to remind you to save your pictures to CD's or other media. Doing so will protect your photos from being lost due to computer failure.

From within Library you can open photos in a photo editing program of your choice, and then return to Digital Image Library.

One improvement I'd like to see is the ability to keep notes about photos, such as a narration about where you were when the photo was taken, or an anecdote to make the photo more memorable.

### **Summary and Recommendations:**

Microsoft Digital Image 9 Suite has many useful features and a few annoyances. The ability to handle multiple photos efficiently, well-designed templates, a good Users Manual, and ease of printing multiple photos in a variety of configurations make this program worth the purchase price of about \$100.

The user interface is somewhat confusing and aggravating at times. I had to search to find certain tools, and guess at how to complete some procedures.

After a bit of hunting and trying, the annoyances be-

came more tolerable, and I found myself using this program over others I formerly favored.

If you don't need to categorize your photos, I would recommend purchasing only the Microsoft Digital Image 9 Pro as a separate program—a bargain for all of the functions it performs. If you think that you'll be taking many photos (and that doesn't take long), it would be better to purchase the entire Digital Image 9 Suite: not only will you have photo-editing tools; you'll have a way of keeping information about your photos, and be able to set up a way of searching and categorizing your collection.

Rating: 4/5



## **Digital Corner**

### **New Rentals**

This month we have added several new titles to our rental library. If you want to know more about Photoshop Elements 2 then check out one of these books: Photoshop Elements 2 Restoration and Retouching, Teach Yourself Visually Restoration and Retouching with Photoshop Elements 2.0, How To Do Everything with Photoshop Elements 2, Adobe Photoshop Elements 2 – One-Click Wow! And Photoshop Elements 2: 50 Ways to Create Cool Pictures.

And on DVD we have: Photoshop Elements for beginners, and Photoshop Elements for photographers.

# 2004

# AGENDA

**12 June – Paint-Shop Pro**

**10 July – NO MEETING**

**NEXT MEETING**

**AUGUST 14, 2004**

# Digital Corner

## Marking Your CDs: Handle With Care

*BEWARE! Your digital images on CD could be at risk, depending on the type of marker and/or adhesive label you've used.*

It has recently come to my attention that all of that magic marker and adhesive labeling we are doing to our photo CDs may eventually render the data (i.e. your images) on them unreadable. While I'm not trying to panic you into thinking all of your CDs are in peril of becoming coasters, there are a few things you should be aware of to avoid damaging your precious memories after you've burned them all to CD.

Let's look at the markers first. Apparently, the ink in many of these magic markers is very acidic and/or contains solvents that over time can bleed through to the other side (the data side) of a CD. If the disc does not have a special "printable" surface, the ink can eventually damage the lacquer protective coating and start to wreak havoc with the data. This is not as much a problem with CD-Recordable discs that use 24K gold reflective layers since the gold won't corrode. But, aluminum discs are the quickest to see damage.

As for adhesive labels, this was a more serious concern a few years back as the glue on some labels was also overly acidic and could eventually cause a problem. The bigger concern was the possibility of users attempting to peel off old labels and subsequently pulling some of the disc's protective coating, metal and dye off with the label. Of course, repeated use and/or harsh conditions (extreme heat) can cause a label to come off as well.

The other major concern with labels is the possibility that they may be placed off center on the CD, causing what is called "perturbation" in the disc rotation. This can lead to read errors and eventually even damage to a CD drive. Solutions? Well, on the marker front there are a few. First off, you can purchase pens that are specifically designed for use on CDs. Ask about them next time you pick up a pack of CDs, since many computer and office super stores carry them. They contain lower levels of the aforementioned damaging solutions.

Next—and perhaps this one is obvious—only write on the clear inner diameter or designated label area of your CD. You might not be able to mark the CD with as detailed a title as you'd like, but you'll learn to mark your CDs in just a word or two. It's in the name of saving the data af-

ter all.

On the adhesive-label front, use only labels with high-quality adhesive designed not to corrode the reflector layer of the disc. Secondly, be sure to apply it properly. As we mentioned earlier, labels applied off-center or with ripples can harm your CD drive. A full-circle or "doughnut" label applied with a tool to center it perfectly eliminates any potential danger of imbalance. And, a full-circle paper label provides a small measure of protection against minor scratches on the delicate top surface of lacquer-only coated CDs.

Lastly, and perhaps most important, handle your CDs with care. All of the above will be rendered meaningless if you're constantly careless when handling your discs. Handle the disc only by the outer edge to prevent fingerprints and smears on the surface. Avoid touching the recording surface (unlabeled side) or placing it down on rough or rigid surfaces.

## The Cook's Corner

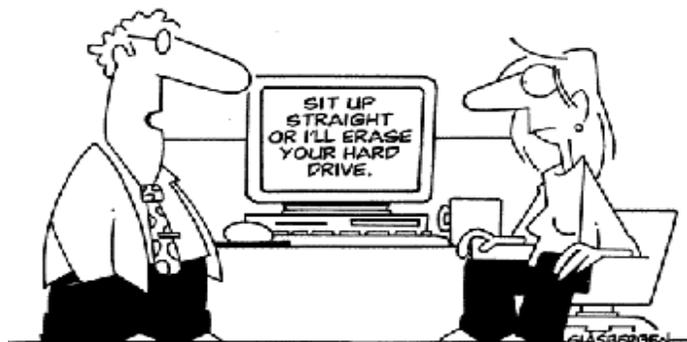
### Texas Caviar

- 2 Cans Hominy—1 white, 1 yellow drained
- 2 Cans Black-eyed peas (No bacon) drained
- 4 Plum tomatoes chopped
- ½ Yellow pepper chopped
- 1 Red pepper chopped
- 3 - 4 Jalapeño peppers chopped
- 1 bunch of green onions and some stems chopped
- Garlic to taste
- 2 pkgs. Of Dry Goods Seasonings,  
Italian dressing (make according to packaging)

**Mix all veggies and pour dressing over mix. Serve with blue corn chips.**

*Editor: I tried this and it is very good!*

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**"It's called Ergonomics."**

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**What People Are Searching For:** Do you like reading lists? Well, we found the mother of all Internet lists: The Lycos 50 (<<http://50.lycos.com>>). This handy list, published every Tuesday morning since August 1999, specifies the top 50 search terms that Internet users entered into the Lycos search engine. It serves as a cultural barometer of what's hot, and by inference, who's doing the searching. For example, the fact that the kids' animated shows "Dragonball Z" and "Yu-Gi-Oh!" are on the list either suggests that there are a large number of kids on the Internet or indicates that parents are trying to find out more about their kids' interests. To supplement this list, Aaron Schatz (whom Lycos describes as the "sultan of search") writes a daily report analyzing the list.

**Buy Ink & Paper Designed For Your Printer By Your Printer's Manufacturer:** Yes, you can often get cheaper materials for your printer, and yes, the manufacturer of those cheaper materials (and most store clerks) will tell you that it makes no difference. But inkjet printers are complex machines, and the manufacturers know the secrets that unlock that complexity better than anyone else. If you find that the paper you're using tends to smear or makes your photographs look ragged, or that the printed colors just don't look as good as they did when you first bought the printer and set it up, try switching to manufacturer-approved supplies. Although this may not solve the entire problem, it'll almost certainly resolve some.



## Tip for May

Larry Gobble

President, [www.tlcug-ark.org](http://www.tlcug-ark.org)

I am the only user of my computer, and I always boot directly to Windows XP. But recently, I began getting the Welcome screen requiring me to sign-in by clicking on my icon. This is a very irritating problem, so I did some research, found it to be a common problem in Windows XP and wanted to share details of the cause with you.

This can be caused either by creating a second user or you

can get a virtual (invisible, hidden) user from a Windows update. Either way, the problem is easy to fix. Windows XP allows you to set up your system for multiple users. Its account system permits good security, because the users can't get into one another's files. User accounts are set up through Control Panel. To do that, click Start> Control Panel. Double-click User Accounts. Click "Create a new account." You can create either administrator or limited accounts. But when you have more than one user, you have to stop at the Welcome screen. If you need this, its a great feature. If only one or two people use the computer, its a pain.

So, here's the question: When you get the Welcome screen, is yours the only icon? Or is there a second icon there, for an account that you set up? If a second icon appears, you can delete it. To do that, click Start> Control Panel. Double-click User Accounts. Click the account. Select "Delete the account." Follow the wizard.

If yours is the only icon on the Welcome screen, you may have picked up a virtual account, courtesy Windows update. When you run the Windows update scan, you get three groups of downloads: Critical Updates and Service Packs, Windows XP, and Driver Updates. The second group is often recommended but never critical. Among that second group is an update entitled, "Microsoft .NET Framework version 1.1." This is intended for developers. Everyday users don't need it.

If you download it, it will install a virtual user account called "ASP. Net." However, you won't see this user at the Welcome screen. Only your icon will appear there. But it is in the system, and will force you to stop at the Welcome screen to sign in. You can find if the ASP. Net account exists by double-clicking User Accounts in Control Panel and delete it if present. It may also be necessary to remove the Microsoft .NET Framework update from your computer. To do that, click Start> Control Panel. Double-click Add or Remove Programs. Find the update in the list and click Remove.

There is another way to solve this. Go to the Microsoft Web site at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/downloads/powertoys.asp>

In the right panel, download TweakUI.exe. This is part of Microsoft's PowerToys. Once installed, click Start. TweakUI will be part of the Start menu. Click it. With the window open, double-click Logon and then click Auto logon. Check the box next to "Log on automatically at system startup." Click Apply>>OK. That will ensure that you override other accounts.

“Members Helping Members”

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