Orange County PC Users Group

nibbles & bits

award winning monthly newsletter for orcopug members

september program

google+

presented by

mike lyons

Google+

a preview

by Mike Lyons

First there was My Space, and then came Facebook and Orkut. And now the buzz is Google+. Just what we need, another social media ecosystem that wants to steal more time! I have a Facebook page in order to receive notices from a group I belong to, but quite frankly I don't get it. Your main page is "the wall" and everyone else scribbles over it. There's hardly anything on my wall from me.

One of the early jokes going around was that Google+ gave people what they wanted, namely a "Facebook that wasn't Facebook."

So why has Google+ garnered so much attention? The first thing you'll notice is its cleaner interface. Currently there are no ads. The privacy policy is clear and more palatable to most people, especially in light of Facebook's (although it recently changed its privacy policy to be more in line with Google+). Google+ lets you put your contacts into different Circles. By putting contacts into different Circles (like Family, Friends, Acquaintances, ORCOPUG, etc.) you can control which Circles of people see your posts. Facebook has an all-or-none contact setup.

One of my biggest complaints with Facebook was all the game nonsense that appears on your wall from game playing friends and family. Google+ has just added games but, thank god, games has its own stream and stays out of the main stream. Google+ also provides a Mute function to hide posts from being seen in your stream. It doesn't remove the posts, but you have to go to the profile of the sender to see the post.

The other big buzz is Hangouts. Hangouts are audio/video get togethers for up to ten people. I haven't participated in one of these yet, but I've heard that they work very well.

Google+ has been adopted by photographers in large numbers because of Google+ Photo. Photo allows you to post a better viewing image size and uses the Picasa engine. You can do some simple photo editing inside of Google+ and Google+ allows you to create albums so you can share a group of related shots. Getting photos into Google+ can be as simple as drag and drop.

Google+ is available as a browser destination and as a mobile phone app for either the iPhone or the Android phone.

It has several other features that we will go over time permitting. If you need a Google+ invitation let me know as I still have plenty left. Google+ requires users to have a Google Profile and one of the supported email services (Gmail, Yahoo mail and Hot Mail). Also, Facebook contacts can be imported into Google+.

feedback

JERI MCNEILL
PROVISIONING ENGINEER
CALIFORNIA

It (cloud computing) is generally not a problem for most people, and the cloud is convenient and ubiquitous. I just want to make sure that people understand that the term "cloud" is marketing.

There's two places to keep data: 1. On a machine you control; 2. On a machine someone else controls. Calling it the "cloud" makes it sound ethereal and like the bits in Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory where the character of Mike Teevee is transported through the air....and I hate marketing as a method of obfuscation.

Many of us in this industry try to remind people that data lives somewhere, and clouds are what bring rain not data. ;-)

KARL DUBOST
CANADA, VIA TWITTER

Do you have a linkedin account? Time for you to (un) check your settings, http://c8l. ca/1e6

(Digital Trends, http://bit. ly/qh1VEM, says LinkedIn opts 100 million members into sharing user information within advertisements.)

APPLE RUMOR: Two new iPhones will be coming in September: One, a less expensive version of the iPhone 4, the other, the iPhone 5, with a bigger touchscreen and a better rear-facing camera. http://huff.to/n0WoIQ

JON JONES, EDITOR
NCMUG, CALIFORNIA

The only thing it (the Apple rumor above) makes me think is that, possibly, the premiere phone expected for release might be set at a higher price point than the usual $199 entry for the lower capacity.

If that is the case, then of course, everyone will balk—but then Apple can turn around and say "But wait....we've also built an economy iPhone 4 for only $99"...which will still be the previous model at a lower capacity—which means it might not have many of whatever new features they'll be touting in the new phone (5 or 4S) they'll be releasing that day—expected by some to have an A6 chip, mirrored display capacity, 8 megapixel or higher rear facing camera, NFC, and "world phone" connectivity.

Still very difficult to say until Apple officially draws back the curtain.

NEIL LONGMUIR
WPCUSRGRP, CANADA

I think some of the members may be interested in this little utility. Kindle for PC, http:// amzn.to/qMsDoI, allows you to read more than 360,000 Kindle books on your PC—best part, no Kindle required.

I haven't bought an iPad or any other reader yet. I'm still mulling it over. For now I'm going to just sit on the fence.

Several friends have bought tablets and they do work to a degree but with what I've seen so far—I'm keeping my money.

We have been to Chapters (Canadian bookseller) which sells the Kobo and Blackberry Playbook. I tried playing with them but they were all DOA, so I cannot comment on how they work.
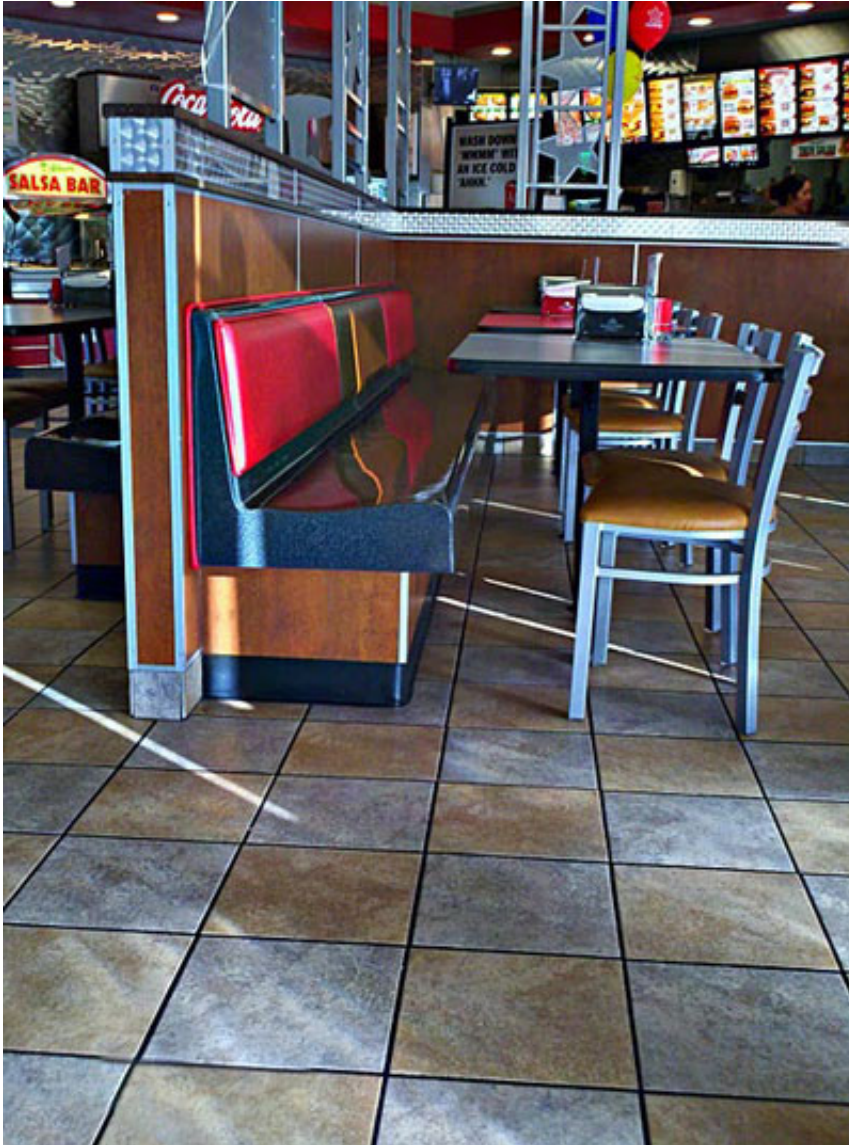
DARRY D EGGLESTON
DARRY D.COM, FLORIDA

Re: Facial recognition in advertising, http://lat.ms/ ooiOeC.

The power is in the hands of the user. If I can guess what you'll buy, and I can guess what cellphone you use and can tap it with texting, what limits would I have?

Favorite Shots
from a SmartPhone!

I've had my DroidX about six months now. It's an eight megapixel camera with a dual LED flash.

I used a new app called HDR Camera+ by Almalence. This program mimics the dSLR process. They also make a free version called HDR Camera which I tested first and liked it so much, I decided to support them (by spending $2.99).

Basically the app takes three images (one normal exposure, one over-exposed and one under-exposed) and combines them into a single image. It has a built in image stabilizer, so you don't have to be rock-solid for the three exposures. The three image composite has better tonal quality.

The restaurant shot is at Carl's Jr. taken while I was waiting for Charlie. The challenge on this shot was to get a good interior exposure and still not blow out the sun streaks across the floor.

Photos & Text by
Mike Lyons, ORCOPUG president

The second image, of the leaves, was shot in my back yard on a cloudy morning at 6 a.m. using the HDR Camera+ app again.

Once I had the final image, I ran another app called Camera 360 (they also make a "pro" version which is $3.99). I don't usually like gimmicks so I'm not sure how much I'm gonna use this one (but I did like how seamlessly this shot turned out).

Basically you take a shot (or select an image) and apply a "scene" to your image. I thought the female painting worked well. Notice that the Camera 360 image

flipped my original shot around to make it look more natural.

The female painter is like a layer in Photoshop, and Camera 360 drops your image into the canvas area without any work on your part. Camera 360 has all kinds of effects and Camera 360+ has even more. I have the two leading HDR (high dynamic range) Windows editing programs ($80 and $99) and I can't believe my apps compete well with them, especially since I don't have to do any work with the app.

windows 7 help

EJ: Can someone tell me what is Add/Remove called now in Windows 7 Control Panel. I open the Control Panel and don't see anything that looks like Add/Remove.

Terry Stockdale, TerrysComputerTips.com: EJ, at the top right-hand side of the Windows 7 Control Panel screen, there's a pull-down option to display as Categories (the default), Large Icons or Small Icons.

In the default Categories display, the bottom item heading is Programs. There's a displayed link "Uninstall a Program." In the Large Icons or Small Icons display, the icon you need to select is "Programs and Features."

Both take you to the same "Uninstall or change a program" dialog box, where you can uninstall a program, change it (if the program provides that ability), repair it (again, if the program provides that capability), and where you can turn some Windows features on or off.

ask the experts

compiled by Bob Goodwin,
Cajun Clickers

windows xp to windows 7

Sprague Pugh: If you are now using Windows XP and install Windows 7, will you be required to reinstall all other existing software that you are currently using?

Larry Braud: Short answer, yes! You cannot upgrade XP to 7—only Vista; and you should not do that.

Mark Lappin: If you do (or can do) an inplace upgrade, then you may not have to. To launch an inplace upgrade, you start the install while the computer is running; do not boot from the DVD.

However, any computer problems you have now, will carry over and you won't get that "fresh start."

Software and hardware with Windows 7 incompatibilitties will not work even if they were working before—particularly anti-virus, anti-malware, and some versions of Office packages. Programs with certain dependences on .NET 1.1 will need some coaxing to work; but you will have this even with a fresh install.

I usually recommend fresh installs. Yes, a little hassle to re-install programs; but in the long run, a lot less headache (and typically more secure).

Sprague Pugh: Thanks for both replies. I have a Windows 7 Home Premium disk. It would seem that I'd be doing a total install which would require that I reinstall all my software. I have to decide if it's worth go-ing through that in order to use Windows 7.
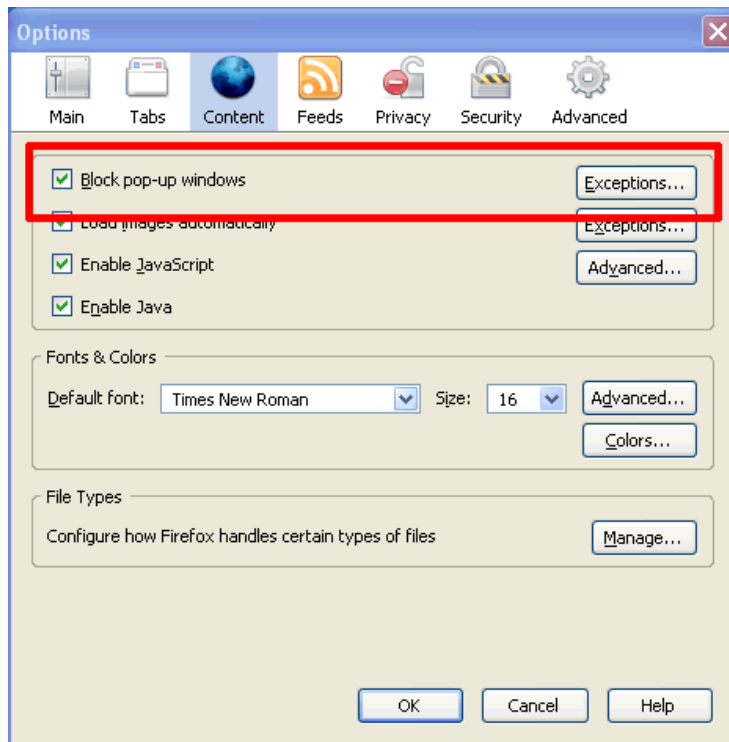
popups

William De-Pierri: Recently, the number of popups and the difficulty of closing them has increased dramatically the last few days. It has really gotten to be a nuisance. I am presently running Firefox 5. Are any of the other Internet browsers (Internet Explorer, Chrome or others) better in this regard? Your thoughts about this matter would be appreciated.

Larry Braud: Have you tried: Tools, Options, Content, Block pop-up win-dows?

William DePierri: Larry, thanks for your comment. I do have block popups set.

Russ Williams: Bill, run Malware-bytes on it. There is some malware that causes this problem; and it affects all browsers.

William DePierri: Russ, thanks for your comment. I ran Malwarebytes and it found a number of infections (about 50) which I deleted. I hope that this will cure the problem.

Firefox setting blocks popups

Ron Spruell: Bill, you also may want to look at the Firefox Addins NoScript and AdBlockPlus.

ethernet cable

Ron Spruell: I'm going to run some Ethernet cable in my attic. Should I use Cat 5, Cat 5e, Cat 6? Or Cat's meow? What's the difference? Does it matter?

Walter Scott: A quick Google search found this guide: www.broad-bandutopia.com/caandcaco.html. Sounds like mainly an issue of band-width. I suppose if you are running 10/100 like I am it won't matter, but if you want to run a gigabit, I think you should use Cat 6.

Larry Braud: I ran Cat 6 cable in *Turn to next page*

my new house to be able to have a wired Internet connection in my TV room. We ran it before the walls and ceiling were installed and then I connected the receptacles after. Everything works. All cabling in the house is the same except for TV, phone and Internet are Cat 6.

William DePierri: Ron, check out this link for an

ParetoLogic start screen

explanation of the properties of the various cable options: www.connectworld.net/syscon/support.htm

paretologic

Julian Honeycutt: Has anyone had any experience with ParetoLogic PC Health? It appeared on my desktop somehow, but I had not even heard of it previously. Is it harmful, useful, or what?

William DePierri: Julian, this link shows one item that came up with a Google search: http://tinyurl.com/3ddcbgh. There were several others as well.

Russ Williams: Julian, if you have XoftSpy installed on your computer, that's most probably where PC Health came from. If not, then it was installed when you did an update to another piece of software. Here is what Pareto-

Logic says about it. It's a freebie. "This innovative software boasts a comprehensive suite of tools to optimize, clean, maintain and even protect your computer. It easily fixes common errors that can plague your computer and clears away files that clutter and slow down your system. PC Health Advisor is no regular utility program." Look in Add/Remove and uninstall it.

Karen McClure: ParetoLogic is not generally considered helpful. If you didn't request or install it, find it and uninstall as soon as possible. Googling it, you will find nothing but complaints from users saying it made their computer slow and worse. If you use a web page ratings program like McAfee Site Advisor or WOT or Avast Linkscanner then you will see nothing but red marks meaning "*WARNING.*" Some even complain it is a Trojan. I have read how hard it is to remove. Use your antivirus scanner to clean it and remove it ASAP. If it won't remove, use Task Manager to stop it from running and try again or try removing it in Safe Mode.

Julian Honeycutt: Thanks, Russ, Bill, and Karen. I don't know where ParetoLogic came from, but I'm going to remove it.

internet explorer welcome screen

Sprague Pugh: Why does the Internet Explorer 8 Welcome screen keep popping up on my PC? I already have IE8 installed.

Ed Walker: Sprague, look carefully at the IE8 welcome screen. There should be a small box near the lower-left corner with text saying something like "Show this every time IE starts." Simply click on the box to uncheck it.

Sprague Pugh: Thanks, Ed. I did that and have not seen the welcome screen since.

Turn to next page

linksys router

Don Hammons: I just noticed that I cannot connect my laptop to my network. In fact, my network does not show up in the list of networks in the area. There is one very strong network that has the name Linksys and is unsecured that must be my network. My network was password secured. I also required MAC address

Reset button on the back of a Linksys router

security. I cannot log into my router with my password from my main computer which connects by wire. It asks for a password and will not accept the password that I had set for it. It seems to have been hacked or lost the info when the electricity crashed a couple of times recently. I hope someone can tell me how to get control of the router again.

Terry Stockdale, Terrys ComputerTips.com: Don, there's a reset button on the back of the router. It

may be a "stick the paper clip in the hole" variety. Press and hold the reset button for 10 seconds to reset the router to its factory settings.

Ron Spruell: You'll have to reconfigure the router after you reset it. Try the 15 minute deal first. Unplug it for 15 minutes. Plug it back in and wait a minute or two for it to boot. Then try connecting. If you can't connect, it may be time for a new router. I have

a Linksys that I have to reboot every time we have a power outage.

Russ Williams: Don, Try using "Admin" for the User Name and Password. Sounds like the router reset itself to the default settings. If that doesn't work, try resetting the router as Walter suggested.

Don Hammons: Thanks, Russ. The "Admin" password worked so I was able to enter and reset the security. Still have to get the list of MAC addresses and enter them—was

> Before resetting your router try the 15 minute deal first. Unplug it for 15 minutes. Plug it back in and wait a minute or two for it to boot.

able to change the entry password and the connection password and the network name. So, everything is back except the MAC list. But, I will take care of that when I find my list.

William DePierri: Don, you can get the MAC addresses for your computers that are on your network by going to the Linksys router setup page; I get to mine by typing 192.168.1.1 in my browser's address field. Then click on *Local Network* and then on *DHCP Client's Table*. This will provide you with the MAC address of all of the computers on your network that are connected to your LAN. If the computer is off (not connected) the MAC address will not be displayed until it is connected.

Don Hammons: Thanks, Bill. I only have one computer connected right now. The others are family members' that are only here occasionally; so, I'll have to wait until they come by since I cannot find my list. I have added computers by the method you suggest, it is the easiest way to do it.

smart computing *solves a problem*

by Frank Bollinger

S mart Computing magazine promotes technical support as a major benefit for subscribers. I recently tried their "...one FREE solution...." and was delighted to receive an answer to a problem that had been baffling me for over a year.

Installing iTunes completely disabled the DVD drive.

To provide some perspective, I made my living with computers and can usually solve PC problems without technical support. Here's the story about one time I couldn't:

A few years ago, I purchased an Apple iPod and immediately learned it required iTunes to load my audio (and later video) files. Since I use Windows computers, this introduced the issue of iTunes not working as smoothly as on a Macintosh. With my Windows XP computer, there were frequent nags to update either iTunes or the iPod software. I soon discovered that such updates often wiped out my iPod data, so declined most of them. This approach worked successfully for a few years UNTIL I bought a new PC with Windows 7.

Installing iTunes completely disabled the DVD drive. I could not read any CD or DVD with any software I owned. The only way I could regain use of the DVD drive was to completely restore the computer to its pre-iTunes condition.

After going through this hassle a few times, my "solution" was to keep using iTunes on the XP machine. Since none of my research identified a better alternative, I lived with this situation for over a year.

After being reminded about Smart Computing's "one free solution," I submitted my problem through their web site. One week later, I had an answer that worked. It involved removing two Windows Registry entries, so it's not something to do casually. After making the change, I now have both iTunes and the DVD drive working on this computer.
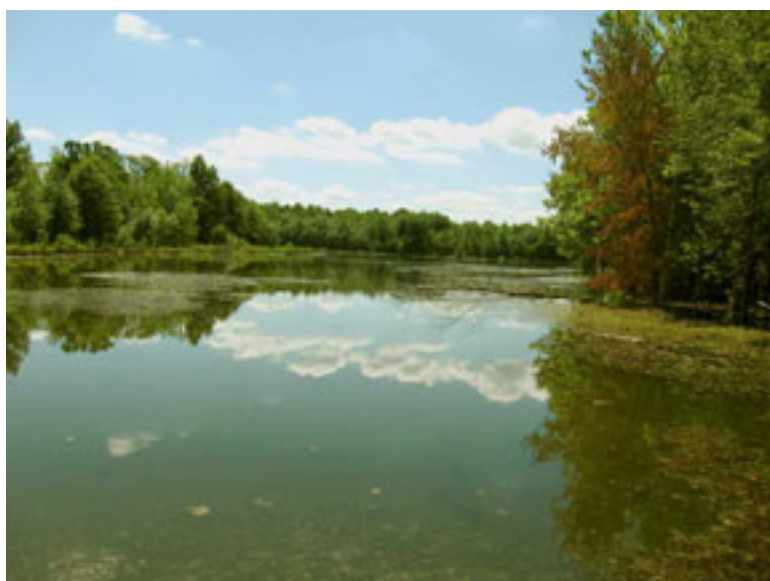
Why did I have this problem? iTunes assumes, during installation, that you will use it to burn CDs and/or DVDs. It makes the two Registry entries to facilitate disk burning through iTunes. As I understand it, these entries sometimes cause this problem. In my case, it was ALWAYS, not sometimes. Since I use other software to write disks, doing it with iTunes is not a benefit, and a dead DVD drive is a huge problem.

So, end of story? Unfortunately, not quite. Every time I start iTunes, it nags me about its inability to write disks and offers to "fix" the problem. Of course, I don't want it to, so have to keep saying no. Then there are the frequent offers to update iTunes. Although I don't know for sure, I suspect allowing an update will reinstall the two Registry entries. So far, I've been avoiding the updates.

Given the increasing frequency of malware in Apple's environments, I'll probably have to do an update one of these days. Thanks to Smart Computing, at least I'll know how to fix it if my problem returns.

raw photo format produces astonishing results

by Pim Borman

Moutoux Lake – Camera JPEG edited with Gimp

Moutoux Lake – Camera RAW edited with
Photoshop Elements

The other day I took a picture of Moutoux Lake that I had optimized from its original JPEG version using the Gimp. I always attempt to make photos of sunny landscapes look as if you'd have to wear sunglasses to cut the glare. It was the best I could do with the somewhat underexposed original.

I had my fairly new, small Canon Powershot S95 set to also store the image in RAW format. Today I processed that RAW image with Photoshop Elements 9 using its RAW editor. What a difference in the results! All I did after transferring the edited image to the Photoshop Editor was to reduce its pixel size. It is an excellent illustration why it pays to capture your photos in the RAW format, as well as JPEG for easier first views, if you want to achieve optimum results.

To my surprise PE9 at first could not open the RAW images from my newer Canon camera, although it had no problem with photos taken with my older Canon Rebel XTi DSLR camera; the images from both cameras were stored with the CR2 extension (Camera Raw). I had to download and install an update for PE9 that included an updated RAW editor.

I am super-happy with that little Canon S95 camera. In addition to a pretty good automatic point-and-shoot mode it also gives easy access to the most important shooting parameters, such as aperture or shutter priority, exposure value, and focusing pattern. It does so without having to plow through layers of menus, as with other simple cameras. And it optionally stores your photos in RAW format as well as JPEG. It also has a long list of special features that may come in handy at times, but I haven't had a reason to use them, and

it is easy to forget all those extras.

Of course, the S95 has a fixed zoom lens and no possibility of using filters, but because of its portability and excellent photographic quality I use it almost exclusively, and I am beginning to forget how to use the old DSLR!

I am sold on processing RAW pictures instead of letting the camera do it.

Now that I have learned about the tools provided in the Photoshop Elements RAW editor I find it just as easy to start with a RAW image and quickly optimize it before transferring it to the PE Editor for final finishing (mostly resizing and reducing the color channels to 8-bit depth).

The most powerful features, in my opinion, are the capabiliy of quickly adjusting the color temperature, adjusting the color histogram to make use of the full available width without clipping, adjusting brightness, contrast, clarity, vibrance and saturation.

The editor also has powerfull sharpening

Bonnie – RAW edited with Photoshop Elements

Garvin Lake lined with ragweed – RAW edited with Photoshop Elements

tools, including luminance and color sliders that remove artifacts introduced by the sharpening process.

The masking tool lets you limit the sharpening action to edges without affecting smooth areas.

The results are astoundingly better than what the camera presents as its default JPEG version.

All of this just from the first chapter of "Photoshop Elements 9 – Maximum Performance" by Mark Galer and Dr. Abhijit Chattaraj (Focal Press – 2011). I can't wait to work my way through the rest of the book!

ghostery

Ghostery, http://www.ghostery.com/, is a free privacy browser extension for Internet Explorer, Opera, Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, and Google Chrome that enables its users to easily detect and control tags, web bugs, pixels and beacons that have the potential to collect data on their browsing habits.
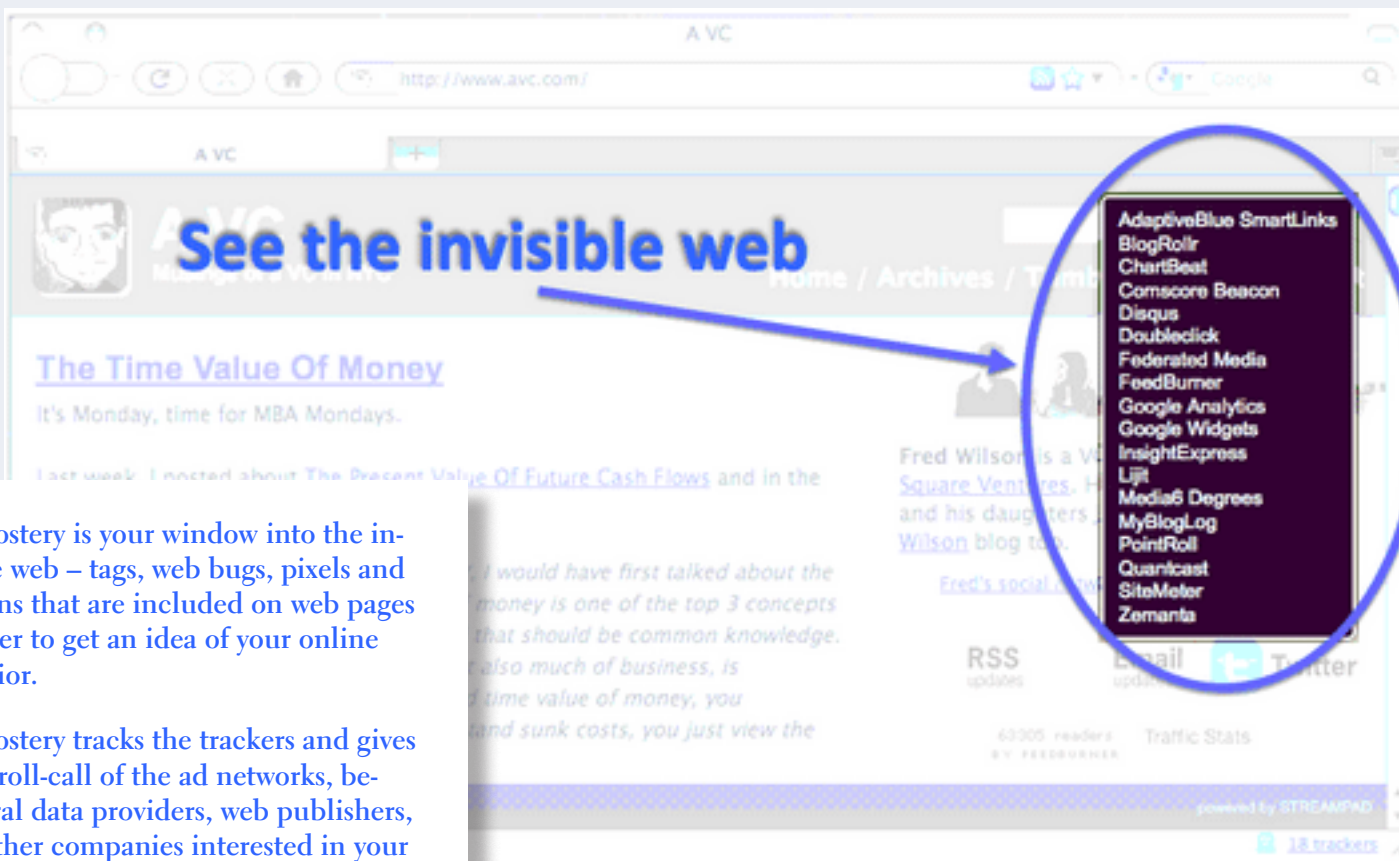
Ghostery also has a privacy team that creates profiles of page elements and companies for educational purposes. The Mozilla Firefox Ghostery extension has been downloaded almost 2,400,000 times.

Ghostery blocks HTTP requests according to their source address in two ways: Cookie Blocking, and Cookie Protection, which is experimental.

When Cookie Protection is enabled, if a cookie is selected from Ghostery's list, it is not accessible to anyone but the user and thus unable to be read when called upon.

In Internet Explorer, Ghostery can detect elements that are not in the page source, such as redirects and iframe contents, but these are detected after execution and cannot be blocked.

Ghostery for Firefox uses a separate engine from its "control" engine to scan the DOM of the webpages users visit and report the contents in a purple overlay inside the page DOM. Ghostery for Chrome, Safari and IE use the same engine for both controlling and reporting page elements. (Source: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghostery)

• Ghostery is your window into the invisible web – tags, web bugs, pixels and beacons that are included on web pages in order to get an idea of your online behavior.

• Ghostery tracks the trackers and gives you a roll-call of the ad networks, behavioral data providers, web publishers, and other companies interested in your activity.
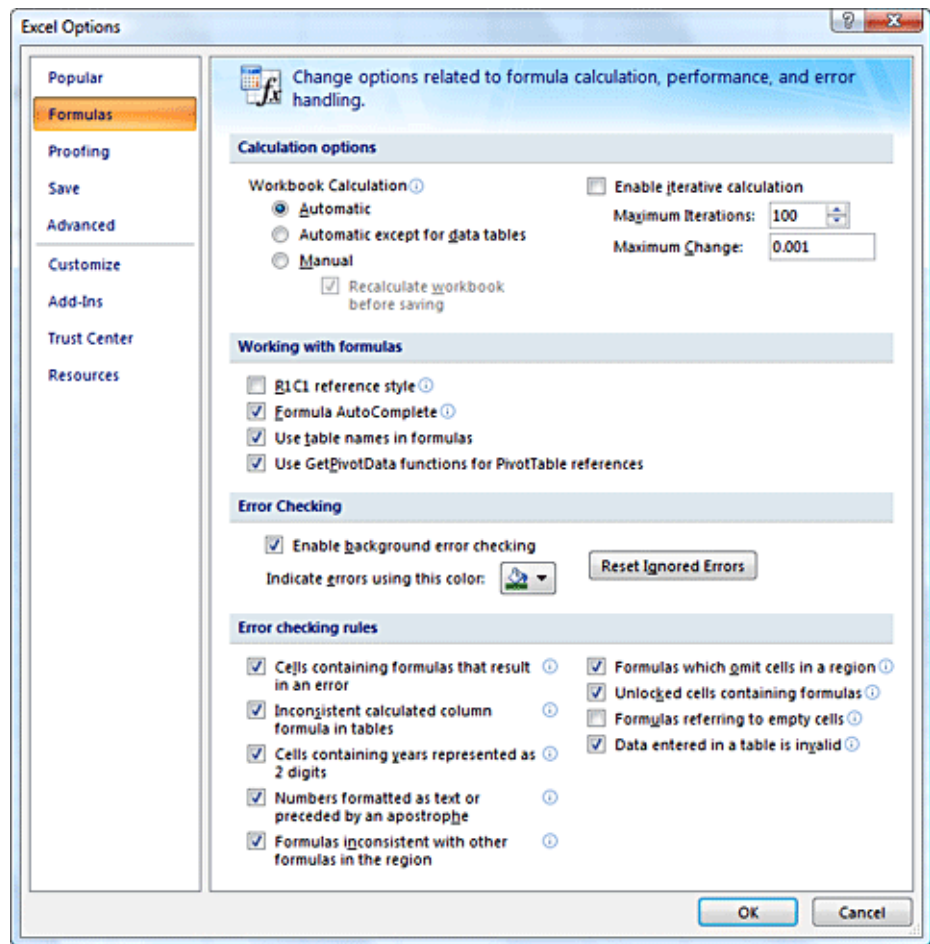
EXCEL
understanding manual calculation

When you change a value in any cell of a worksheet, Excel automatically recalculates all the other formulas within the worksheet. This means that Excel is always up to date, based on any changes you may have performed.

If you have an absolutely huge worksheet or a terribly slow computer (or both), then doing a calculation after every change can get very tedious. In these situations, you can actually spend more time waiting on Excel to finish calculating than you do on entering information.

The answer to this problem is to configure Excel so that all calculations are done manually. This is easy to do by following these steps:

1. Display the Excel Options dialog box—see image on right. (In Excel 2007 click the Office button and then click Excel Options. In Excel 2010 display the File tab of the ribbon and then click Options.)

2. Click the Formulas area at the left of the dialog box.

3. In the Calculation Options section of the dialog box, make sure the Manual radio button is selected.

4. Click on OK.

Now, Excel does not calculate your worksheet automatically. Instead, you must press F9 whenever you want to update the results displayed within your worksheet.

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repeating rows for a table footer

When working with longer tables in a document, you may wonder if there were a way to repeat rows at the bottom of a table that spans multiple pages, the same way you can repeat rows at the top of a multi-page table. The short answer is that Word doesn't provide such a capability. If you are willing to experiment a bit, you can try to come up with a workaround that may do the trick for you.

What you want to do is create a document section that contains just your table, and then use the page footers to contain the rows you want repeated from the table. Follow these general steps:

1. Just before the start of your table, insert a continuous section break.

2. Do the same thing just after the end of your table.

3. Select the rows you want repeated at the bottom of the table and copy them to the Clipboard.

4. Choose View | Header and Footer to display the headers and footers of the document. (If you are using Word 2007 or Word 2010 display the Insert tab of the ribbon, click Footer in the Header & Footer group, and then click Edit Footer.)

5. Switch to the footer. (You don't need to do this in Word 2007 and Word 2010, since you are already editing the footer after step 4.)

6. Make sure that the Link to Previous option is turned off for the footer.

7. Select anything that already exists in the footer.

8. Press Ctrl+V to paste the copied rows into the footer.

9. Use the controls on the Header and Footer toolbar or, in Word 2007 and Word 2010, the Design tab of the ribbon to advance to the next section. (You should be looking at the footer for the section following the section in which the table resides.)

10. Turn off the Link to Previous option for this footer.

11. Delete the table row from this section's footer.

12. Close the Header and Footer toolbar (click Close) or, in Word 2007 and Word 2010, click Close Header and Footer in the Close group.

You are now ready to place the final touches on your workaround. Position the insertion point somewhere in your table, then use the various tabs in the Page Setup dialog box to adjust the relationship between your table and the footer. You'll need to play with the settings on both the Margins and Layout tabs to position the rows in the page footer, and you'll want to make sure that the Apply To drop-down list applies the changes to only the current section (the one with the table in it).

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is there such a thing as
streaming video
on an ipad?

story by Linda Gonse, ORCOPUG and research by Jon Jones, NCMUG

Recently an iPhone Life blog touted Boxee for the iPad. The headline read, "Boxee for iPad — free app lets you watch free streaming."

For people who wonder what streaming actually is, a definition from UnifiedCommunications.com, http://bit.ly/nXSsul, explains it simply. "Streaming video is content sent in compressed form over the Internet and displayed by the viewer in real time. With streaming video or streaming media, a Web user does not have to wait to download a file to play it. Instead, the media is sent in a continuous stream of data and is played as it arrives."

The iPhone Life blogger, Jim Karpen, said *"I really enjoy Boxee's free streaming video service. I have a laptop connected to my HDTV and pretty much exclusively watch streaming video from Boxee: The Daily Show, CNET videos, TV shows, movies. There's a lot of free content, as well as on-demand HD movies from Vudu. And Boxee apps give you access to even more content. Plus, it works with the remote that came with my Mac. Now there's Boxee for iPad (free). It gives you access to featured*

The blog headline that started the questioning! http://bit.ly/nasKvp

videos and to any videos that you've saved for later in your regular Boxee account. And it also gives access to videos posted by your friends in Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. In addition, you can use the app to stream any videos to your iPad that are on your Mac or PC. I highly recommend Boxee service and app."

The headline pointed to the iPad as having the ability to stream video. But, toward the middle of the review a different description of the iPad app is given. It doesn't sound like the streaming video I had in mind from the headline. I don't have an iPad, though.

So, I asked Jon Jones, a member of NCMUG and president of a digital media production facility, what he thought of this new app's claim and the iPad's capability.

Jon is also the proud, happy owner of a new iPad.

Jon said he went through the FAQ on the Boxee site, http://www.boxee.tv/, to learn things that weren't indicated in the app's description. "Evidently, the app can operate as a standalone streamer, and while it was intended as an option to stream from your PC content, apparently that part isn't working right," he said.

"Additionally, the current version is getting a ton of 1 star reviews (at

iTunes) stating that the audio is not functioning."

Jon downloaded the app from Boxee and set up an account to take a closer look at it on his iPad. He also sent a link to me of a Youtube video demo by its developer, Cord Cutters, so I could see what the app has to offer. (Take a look for yourself at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7OVz84lPSI)

Jon said, "It works as a standalone app, but is limited on its own. It definitely doesn't let you stream live TV — and I admit, the very basic info from iPhone Life seemed to indicate that maybe it could…but it can't. When they say 'watching tv on your iPad,' well…it's not really that," he added.

"Basically, the app shows you three rows of aggregation.

"Row 1 lets you set up your app with your social media feeds (Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr). When your feed references a video, they show up in that row.

"Row 2 syncs to your desktop machine, and shows vids tagged in your desktop browser to 'watch later' via the app. They will then show up in the 2nd row.

"Row 3 shows a limited selection of generic content aggregated by the staff at Boxee. I saw a two-minute clip of a Sagan series from NASA TV.

The footage looked beautiful. I'm glad it was free.

"Evidently, you can download the Boxee software on your desktop, and although this app cannot sync with it, you can also download something called the Boxee Media Manager that lets you download content to your desktop, and then stream it to your iPad through the Boxee iPad app. In this instance, the iPad is no longer a standalone device, and it still is not playing 'live TV' — which is so far mostly a non-starter in the 'Cord Cuttersphere.'"

With this information, the gleam left my eyes and I realized that this was a "not *even* ready for Prime Time" app and use for the iPad. But, these answers should be useful to anyone who reads this, because you are bound to see more headlines and apps about streaming video that can, purportedly, be viewed on your iPad.

Don't rush to get this or similar apps, yet. But, don't lose hope for live streaming on your iPad, either. Jon predicts that changes and innovation by cable companies are coming.

"One of the larger cable carriers in the country recently started porting live TV over mobile networks in recent weeks as a test to see if the infrastructure can handle it," Jon said.

"My guess is that if it retains viability, other carriers will start porting such functionality through their own dedicated apps within the next two years. Then we will start enjoying REAL live TV on our mobile devices. Until then, I think we're limited to 'almost live' streaming content bursts from specific news and entertainment outlets—not quite live tv, but close."

ask computer tutor
by Pamela Tabak

Why can't I see background colors on web pages?

QUESTION: The background color of all web pages that I access is white. Is there something wrong with my monitor or is there a setting that needs to be changed?

ANSWER: In all probability there is a setting that needs to be changed and I would go that route before throwing out your monitor. Follow the steps below to see if this solves the problem:

With Internet Explorer open:
- Click on TOOLS
- Click on INTERNET OPTIONS
- Click on the ACCESSIBILITY button.

You can then uncheck the appropriate checkboxes, most likely to be *IGNORE COLORS SPECIFIED ON WEB PAGES.*

QUESTION: I have blank pages at the end of my Word document that I cannot delete. Please help!

ANSWER: You can delete a blank page in a Word document by deleting the page break which is the point at which one page ends and another begins. Microsoft Word inserts an "automatic" page break for you, or you can force a page break at a specific location by inserting a "manual" page break at the end of the page. You can also combine two pages by deleting the page break between them.

Make sure you're in NORMAL VIEW which is a view that shows text formatting and a simplified page layout. Normal view is convenient for most editing and formatting tasks.

On the VIEW menu, click NORMAL. If nonprinting characters, such as paragraph markers (¶) are not visible, click SHOW/HIDE on the Standard toolbar, and then do one of the following:

To delete a page manually

Select the page break at the end of the page, and then press DELETE. You may need to hit the DELETE key a couple of times before the page disappears.

Turn to next page

To delete a blank page at the end of the document

Select the page break or any paragraph markers (¶) at the end of the document, and then press DELETE. You may need to hit the Delete key a couple of times before the page disappears.

To delete a page break placed before a specific paragraph:

Click the paragraph, and then on the FORMAT menu click PARAGRAPH. Click the Line and Page Breaks tab, and then clear the Page break before check box.

QUESTION: How can I format a column in Excel 2007 to show the date the way I want it instead of the format that is offered?

ANSWER: There are many date styles offered in the FORMAT menu of Excel 2007 but if you want one that is not listed follow the steps below:

• Select a cell or column to be formatted in specific date format.

• Right click and choose "Format Cells".

• In the "Number" tab select "Custom" and type the format you want. For example: dd.mm.yyyy

• Click "OK" button.

• If you want to choose a date format that is listed:

• Select a cell or column to be formatted in date format

• On the NUMBER tab select DATE.

• Select a style of date from the TYPES list.

You can also perform the same function from the RIBBON on the HOME tab by clicking on FORMAT CELLS.

QUESTION: I discovered that I have a line of "red ants" running around the words on my WORD documents. Can you explain what these are and how I can get rid of them?
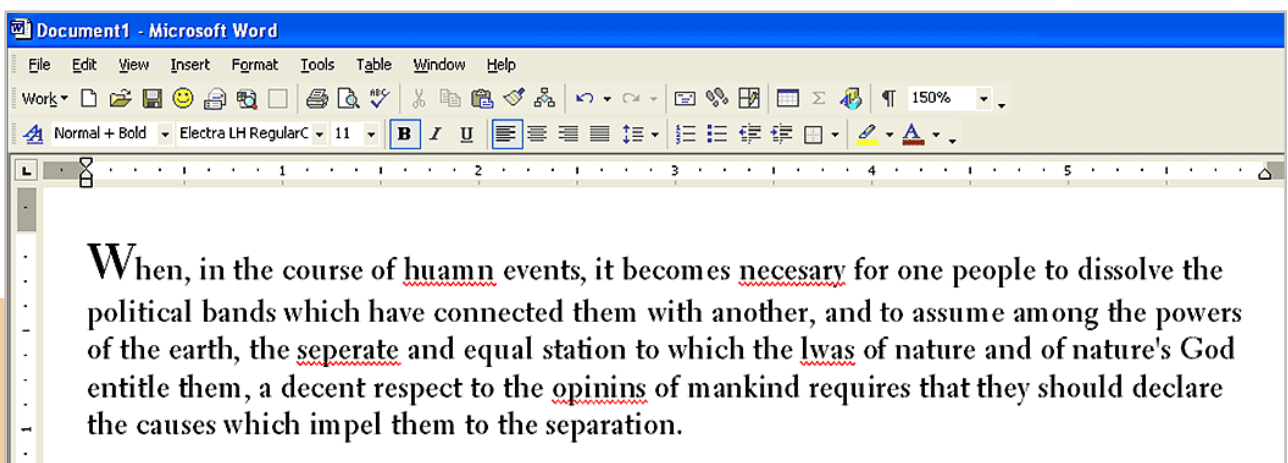
ANSWER: The "red ants" that you see running around the words in your Word document is a formatting feature found in TEXT EFFECTS.

This is just one of several text effects that you can use to emphasize words in your document. The remedy for getting rid of your "red ant" problem is very simple. Please follow the steps below:

• Open a Word document
• Click on FORMAT
• Click on FONT
• Click on the TEXT EFFECTS

In the list that appears you can turn on and off any of the text effects.

Pamela invites members to e-mail computer-based questions to http://computertutorinc.net/pge/computer_questions.htm You will often receive an answer within 24 hours.

What are these "red ants" in my Word documents and how can I get rid of them?

This article started out to be something rather simple. Explain why standard "Secure Erase" procedures don't really work on a Solid State Drive (SSD). However delving into the technology of these devices was an exercise in peeling layers off an onion. Answering one question raised another. So without further ado, here we go.

more than you ever wanted to know
about solid state drives

by Ted Wirtz

flash memory

Flash memory is showing up almost anywhere in today's electronic devices. Cell phones, tablet computers, gaming consoles, digital camera memory cards,etc. As manufacturing costs for memory chips continues to fall, it is now economically feasible to assemble large numbers of flash chips into logical arrays that can be made to look like and act like hard drives. When I say economical, I don't mean to imply they are the same price as a standard hard drive. They can cost anywhere from two to four times as much as a standard hard drive, and are not available in terabyte sizes (yet). Yet they offer several advantages over a standard disk drive.

basic design of a solid state drive

Almost all solid state drives make use of a memory technology called "Flash." It has the unique property of retaining any data written to it while power is removed, making it ideal for permanent (or semi-permanent) storage. The memory consists of thousands of special memory cells designed with two gates per cell. The floating gate is a microscopic piece of conductive material

Turn to next page

insulated on all sides by an extremely thin layer of pure silicon dioxide, which in layman's terms is simply pure quartz glass, an excellent insulator. The floating gate is in a sense a small storage capacitor. Figure 1 shows the design of a single gate.
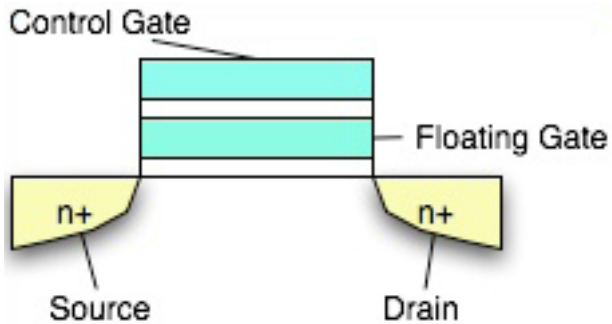

Figure 1

Source: Wikipedia

When an appropriate voltage is applied to the control gate, current will flow between the source and drain connections. However, if the floating gate has been previously charged with electrons, the charge opposes the voltage of the control gate, and current does NOT flow. Storing electrons (or not storing) electrons on the floating gate is part of the "Write" process. Once electrons are stored on the floating gate they cannot dissipate because they are completely surrounded by insulating material. Storing electrons on the floating gate involves a process called "hot electron injection", and removing electrons involves a phenomenon called "electron tunneling",which is one of the effects of quantum mechanics and the particle-wave duality of matter. At this point I'm in way over my head. Feel free to research quantum mechanics on your own.

A simple (but incorrect) analogy of electron tunneling is to visualize rolling a small ball on a carpet that has a large wrinkle in it. If you roll the ball slowly, when the ball reaches the wrinkle it does not roll over it, but instead rolls back, unable to cross the barrier. Roll the ball faster, and it will roll over the barrier and reach the other side. The ball does not destroy or alter the barrier, it simply does or does not roll over the barrier, dependent

on its velocity. Stretching the analogy a bit (a whole lot actually) to our memory cell, the carpet wrinkle is the insulating material. But in quantum theory the ball doesn't roll over the wrinkle, it rolls THROUGH the wrinkle without destroying or altering it, hence the term "tunneling electron".

Erasing a cell removes the electrons from the floating gate setting the cell to a logical "1" state. Writing to a cell adds electrons to the floating gate, changing its state to logical "0".
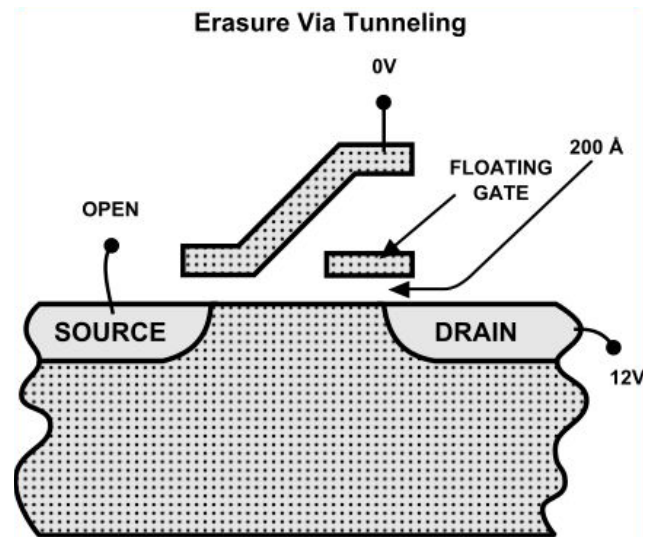

Figure 2

Source: Wikipedia

Figure 2 is an example of a cell being erased. Any electrons on the floating gate tunnel through the insulating layer to the drain connection, leaving the cell in a logical "1" state.

Figure 3 illustrates how a cell is set to a logical"0" state by injecting electrons onto the floating gate. The voltages shown in these figures will be somewhat different depending on the chip manufacturer. Sometimes the voltages needed to erase or write a cell may exceed the voltage available from the basic power source (such as the battery power in a digital camera) so in this case the controller chip will be designed with

Turn to next page

tiny power converters on the chip called "electron pumps". These "pumps" provide the voltages needed.
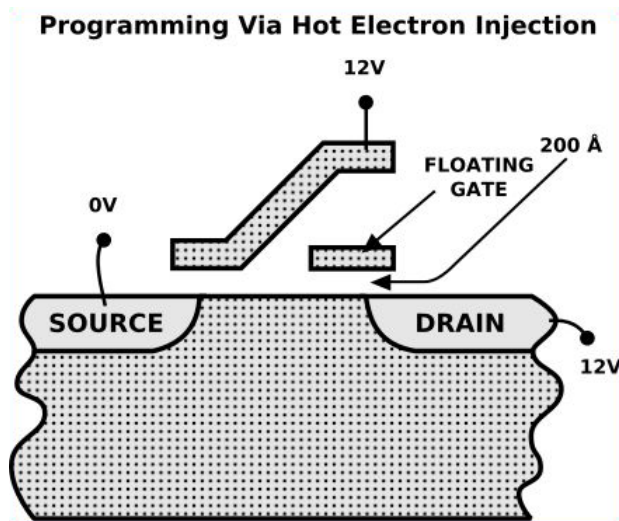

Figure 3

Source: Wikipedia

slc and mlc

All discussion to this point had been based on Single Level Cell (SLC) technology. That is, a single cell contains a single bit, either zero or one. However there are a number of manufacturers who are now producing Multi Level Cell (MLC) memories where a given cell contains more than a single bit of data. The concept is based on the idea that the level of charge placed on the floating gate can be varied during the write cycle. In theory, the concept could incorporate many bits into a single cell, but at this point in time a typical MLC carries information for two bits. The state of a completely erased cell is "11". Then depending on how the write potentials are controlled, the cell can also contain "10", "01" or "00". When the cell is read, the controller detects how much current the cell permits to pass. Either "no current", "low current", "medium current" or "high current" represents the four possible states. Although

this increases the complexity of the controller chip, the same memory capacity can be achieved with just half the number of memory cells, a significant advantage to the manufacturer. This advantage gets passed on to the user in a lower cost device that performs just as well as SLC. Many of the newer SSD's use MLC technology.
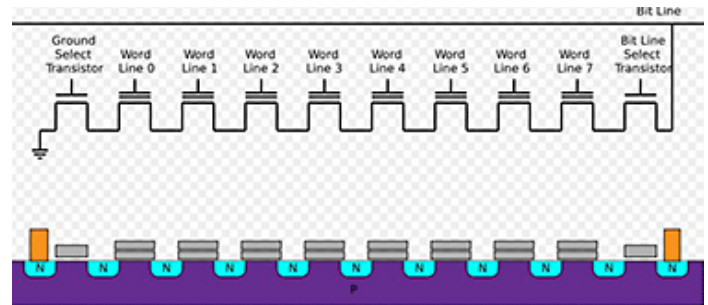

Figure 4

Source: Wikipedia

Figure 4 shows how individual cells are interconnected into rows to form eight bit "Words" which share a common layer of semiconductor materials. Sequentially strobing each of the word lines will result in a serial stream corresponding to the data written into each cell. The design results in an inversion of voltages and logical state, so the array is know as NAND (NOT AND) flash.

NAND memory arrays can be very compact as compared to other structures such as NOR gates, and require a minimum of connections to or between cells. This allows more memory to be designed into a given area of silicon, increasing yields and reducing costs. A by-product of this design is that although "zeros" can be written to individual cells, writing a "one" cannot. The entire block must be "erased" to an all "ones" state before it can be written to again.

memory controller

The memory cells cannot control themselves, they are simply storage. To make the device useful it also requires a "controller" which performs multiple functions. First, it

Turn to next page

makes the memory array appear to the operating system as if it is a disk drive, and secondly it translates the read and write commands from the operating system to a form that the NAND flash can use. It also contains a small amount of read/write cache for temporary storage, and can also perform block erasures.

memory organization

The memory is arranged into "pages" and "blocks". The smallest increment is the "page" with multiple "pages" being combined into "blocks". Both page and block size can vary in order to provide the total storage capacity being designed into the device. Some typical configurations are shown below.

- 32 pages of 512+16 bytes each for a block size of 16 KB
- 64 pages of 2,048+64 bytes each for a block size of 128 KB
- 64 pages of 4,096+128 bytes each for a block size of 256 KB
- 128 pages of 4,096+128 bytes each for a block size of 512 KB

The most commonly used configuration uses 256 KB blocks with 4 KB pages, but as seen above a given manufacturer may choose another configuration. In the manufacturing process it is recognized that not every cell will be perfect, so additional cells are included, as shown in the table above. The extra bytes are used to mark bad pages and also incorporate error detecting bits that are accessed by the controller during read/write operations. If an error is detected, the page is marked "bad" and will not be used again. In better devices the error code configuration can correct single errors and detect double errors. Extra blocks are often included in the device which can be "swapped in" to maintain the designated capacity as blocks fail over time.

Note that the page and block structure of the memory device is totally different from the sector-cluster-track organization of a rotating hard drive. The controller "translates" the page-block structure into sector-cluster-track and vice versa so the operating system sees the device as a hard drive.

(Next month, Part 2 begins with Flash (or Thumb) Drives.)

do you want to tweet?

by Linda Gonse

Many more people are turning to Twitter now that they realize using it is more than announcing your breakfast menu and where you shop for your socks.

So, if you are thinking of joining in on this real-time, constantly changing, global communication, but are unfamiliar with some of the jargon, let me help get you started.

When a person writes 140 characters or less in their message box on Twitter and presses Send the message appears in their "timeline" and in the timelines of all the people who have chosen to "follow" that person. The message is called a tweet. You send tweets, get tweets, and read tweets.

When referring to other people on Twitter, the terms "tweeps" or "peeps" are used. I have seen "Twitterers" but that has too many letters to be used much. (No one uses "twits" which would be a negative term not linked to Twitter.)

All of Twitter has been called the "Twittersphere" but again, too many letters to refer to it in a tweet, unless it's in a short tweet.

Tweets that you read and enjoy can be forwarded to people who follow you. Forwarded tweets are called Retweets. You can also flag a tweet you write with a hashtag which looks like a pound (weight) symbol. The # symbol plus wordorwordswithnospaces is inserted in a tweet, usually at the end. It allows that tweet to be seen by everyone who searches for that subject; for example: *#twitterhumor*

Hashtags have other purposes, too, but are not ever necessary to use in a tweet.

I often get breaking news from subjects that "trend" -- this is where a multitude of tweets are sent about the same time and the same subject. These tweets may or may not be marked with hashtags. Among trending subjects recently were the Indiana State Fair and Hurricane Irene.

"People will now know that personal computers are not a fad or a flash in the pan."

first ibm pc unveiled 30 years ago

by Linda Gonse

Thirty years ago, on August 12, 1981, IBM's 5150 model personal computer was unveiled to customers. Although it was the first PC for IBM, other personal computers were already on the market by Apple and Radio Shack, which together had a 39% share of the personal compuer market.

But, as Larry Magid, former editor of PC magazine, says, "It wasn't until IBM joined in that businesses and even most consumers started taking personal computing seriously. Up until that time, personal computers were mostly for hobbyists and those willing to live on the 'bleeding edge' of technology."

Magid also said, "The first PC came standard with 16 kilobytes (KB) of memory at a bare-bones price of $1,265 without a monitor or a diskette drive. A full-blown system with 64K of memory, two floppy drives, a display/printer adapter card and a monochrome screen cost $3,735 in 1981 dollars. Adjusting for inflation, that's $9,275 today." Also, in his August 2011 Huffington Post column, http://huff.to/r9VZKH, Magid presents a chart from an article he wrote for PC magazine that shows costs of a PC bought at retail and compares it to the costs of assembling a PC by the consumer.

PCW wrote a world exclusive review of the very first IBM PC in 1981. You can read an abridged, but still detailed, version at http://bit.ly/noMKMI. Prospective computer users learned they could buy an IBM monitor or use a television. But, "to use your TV you'd have to buy an RF modulator."

On the other hand, "The IBM monochrome monitor is a very high-quality 11.5 inch green phosphor device with an antiglare screen.

"It gives a rock-steady display with no trace of flickering or that high-pitched whistling that sometimes occurs. The steadiness is achieved by using a high-persistence phosphor coating that takes a fraction of a second longer to clear than most screens…."

Overall, the reviewer seemed to be impressed with the PC. He said, "The whole design is very pleasing and all the parts clearly belong together. Everything is designed with a first-time user in mind. IBM has gone overboard to make the system as easy as possible to configure and use."

The New York Times ran an article in its Business Section on August 13, 1981, http://bit.ly/nARf5M, that quoted the president of Computerland, a chain that marketed the IBM

Photo by Majestic, Wikipedia
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IBM PC 5150 with keyboard and green monochrome monitor (5151), running MS-DOS 5.0

PC saying presciently, "People will now know that personal computers are not a fad or a flash in the pan."

the *Joys* of texting

by Claudia Horack Bristow, HHICC

In what seems like a relatively short period of time, cell phones have become ubiquitous. There are no age limits for cell phone users. Seniors and more senior seniors use them. Our children and grandchildren seem never to be parted from their phones, which is frequently a good thing. Not only is it fun to chat with the grandkids, calling a grandchild is sometimes the only way I can reach my son!

Some people can't bear to be away from their phones; others only want them for emergencies or travel. Many people I know, and most of my kids, have foregone landlines in favor of cell phones. Some uses are appropriate; others are inconsiderate or dangerous.

Since my kids always have their phones with them, I figured I would be able to reach them more easily. Nope! Kids don't answer their phones these days. However, all is not lost. They respond well to a text message.

Following the principle "if you can't beat them, join 'em," I purchased a cell phone with keyboard. The results have been very gratifying but there IS a problem. It is all those abbreviations my son uses. Half the time I didn't have a clue what he meant. Some were fairly obvious, like LOL ("lots of love") but wait, it turns out that LOL can, and usually does, mean "laughing out loud." So much for a mother's feel-good interpretation.

As the texting continued, the use of texting slang increased. At first I just asked my son what the acronym meant. But then it occurred to me that I was ruining my "cool" texting image by revealing my ignorance of the language. I began Googling unknown "words." Through Google I discovered that ROFL stands for "rolling on the floor laughing;" BRB stands for "be right back;" BTW is "by the way;" IK is "I know;" AMOF is "as a matter of fact;" and HTH is "hope this helps," to name just a few.

By far the quickest way to interpret texting slang is to Google the word but there are also online texting "dictionaries" and articles that are fun to browse. Here are a few texting slang sites. Check one or two out: http://www.webopedia.com/quick ref/ textmessageabbreviations.asp, http:// textingabbreviations.blogspot.com/, http://www.yourdictionary.com/ dictionary-articles/texting-slang.html.

Pick out a few of the interesting ones, slip them in your next text, and WOW your kids and grandkids. GL and HF.

email addresses
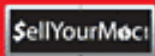
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Wirtz, Ted
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time for renewal?

JUNE 1— Terry Schiele (3 mos. exp.)

OCTOBER 1— Ann Carnahan, Larry Klees

NOVEMBER 1— Bill McGraw

DECEMBER 1— Dan Gonse, Bob McDonald, Carl Westberg

JANUARY 1— Joe Gionet, Linda Gonse, LeRoy Kaump, Ted Wirtz

submitted by Charlie Moore

august raffle winners

Stardock War of Magic	**Value $39**
Carl Westberg	Winner
Aquazone Screensaver	**Value $19**
Sid Liptz	Winner
Vipre Antivirus	**Value $39**
Ann Carnahan	Winner
Mixcraft 4	**Value $29**
Lloyd Boutwell	Winner

Mixcraft 4	**Value $29**
Terry Terrazas	Expired
Stan Leese	Not Present
Don Ogden	Not Present
Terry Schiele	Expired
Linda Gonse	Not Present
Ken Sineri	Expired
Bill McGraw	Not Present
Lothar Loehr	Winner
Vipre Antivirus	**Value $39**
Gary Covington III	Expired
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Charlie Moore	Winner
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Mixcraft 4	**Value $29**
Tony Loechner	Expired
Frank Bollinger	Winner

submitted by Charlie Moore

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For about $2 a month you can belong to our user group!

justice opposes **at&t takeover of t-mobile**

On August 31, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a civil lawsuit to block AT&T Inc.'s proposed $39 billion acquisition of T-Mobile USA Inc.

The DoJ said the deal would "substantially lessen competition for mobile wireless telecommunications services across the United States, resulting in higher prices, poorer quality services, fewer choices and fewer innovative products for the millions of American consumers who rely on mobile wireless services in their everyday lives."

"Consumers across the country, including those in rural areas and those with lower incomes, benefit from competition among the nation's wireless carriers, particularly the four remaining national carriers," said Deputy Attorney General James Cole. "This lawsuit seeks to ensure that everyone can continue to receive the benefits of that competition."

"T-Mobile has been an important source of competition among the national carriers, including through innovation and quality enhancements such as the roll-out of the first nationwide high-speed data network," said Sharis Pozen, acting Assistant Attorney General in charge of the DoJ's Antitrust Division. "Unless this merger is blocked, competition and innovation will be reduced, and consumers will suffer." http://trap.it/tbuF2S

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pc Magazine (digital, 12 issues/year)	$14.95	$24.95	$35.95
pc World	$16.95	—	—
Readers' Digest	$16.95	—	—
Saturday Evening Post	$11.95	—	—
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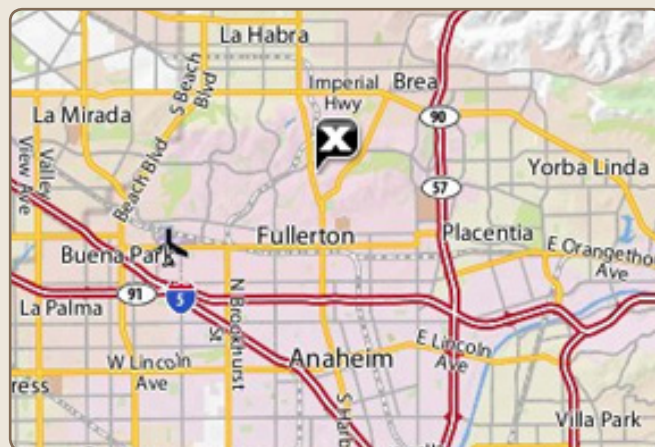• contact information • membership application • Members' Only! page

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User groups represent the spirit of the frontier, a community getting together to do things that no individual ought to have to do alone. The pioneers of the American west got together for barn raisings, cattle roundups, and the occasional party. The pioneers of new technology get together for installfests, new user training and support, and just plain fun. Being part of a user group is the best way to get more out of your computer, and lets you make friends while you're at it.

Tim O'Reilly, President
O'Reilly Media

where are the meetings, when are they held?

next meeting: tuesday, september 13, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. — north orange county ymca, fullerton

Regular meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the North Orange/County YMCA, 2000 Youth Way, Fullerton, CA 92835. Call 714-879-9622, for information. Meetings are free and the public is welcome!

Planning meetings *are held the third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at Downey Savings & Loan, one block east of Harbor at Bastanchury in Fullerton. All members are welcome to attend planning meetings!*

See online map at http://bit.ly/orcopug