

Orange County PC  
Users Group

# nibbles & bits

## FEBRUARY MEETING WILL BE DARK

- **Due to construction at the YMCA, our meeting room is unavailable.**
- **No meeting will be held in February.**
- **The March meeting is being arranged. Details to come.**

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## secret keyword raffle!

The secret keyword raffle will have two prizes in March! Audio Zone 2.0 computer speakers and Big Losers Secrets book. The keyword will be hidden in this newsletter or on our website the Saturday before the March meeting.

## thank you newsletter contributors!

Art Lewis, Bob Goodman, Charlie Moore, Darry D Eggleston, Frank Bollinger, Greg Skalka, Herb Goodman, Ira Wilsker, Jon Jones, Judy T aylour, Keith Nallawalla, Linda Gonse, Lorene Romero, Mary Burton, Mike Lyons, Neil Longmuir, Pim Borman, Ron Hirsch, Ron Ingraham, Sharon Parq Associates, Steve Costello, Tim O'Reilly, Tony Lake, Wil Wakely

April Deadline  
MARCH 17

## thank you to our 2011 vendors!

Thank you Acoustica Software, cemOmax, Corel, Help Me 2 Learn, MGI, McGraw-Hill, Microsoft Press, O'Reilly, SmithMicro, Stardock Systems Inc., User Group Relations, and Wacom Technology Corporation for generously donating your products to our 2011 fundraising raffle!

## net neutrality may be a hot topic in 2012 election year politics may play a role

Now that the FCC regulations on Net Neutrality have been published, the lawsuit challenges have been filed.

Verizon filed suit saying, "The net neutrality rules are arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion of the Administrative Procedure Act, contrary to constitutional right and otherwise contrary to law."

The Free Press, a media reform group, also filed a lawsuit less than a week after the FCC finalized its rules on September 23, 2011. The organization wants to challenge the "arbitrary nature of rule provisions" that provide less protection for mobile wireless Internet access than they do for wired connections as part of the FCC's net neutrality proposal.

"When the FCC first proposed the Open Internet rules, they came with the understanding that there is only one Internet, no matter how people choose to reach it," said Matt Wood of the FreePress.

Although the political climate in Washington means Net Neutrality will not be legislated in 2012, as the issue winds its way through the court system, it will undoubtedly be followed with great interest by members of both parties.

(More details here: <http://bit.ly/xF5EP3>)

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	1	2	3
	Y	A	S
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Maximum pc	\$ 9.95	\$18.95	\$27.95
Microsoft System Journal	\$21.95	\$39.95	—
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	—	—
Videomaker	\$11.95	\$21.95	—

Revised October 2009



# Favorite Shots

PHOTOS BY LORENE ROMERO, NCMUG, CALIFORNIA

*I*n Prague, Czech Republic, people have attached small locks on the gate over the canal. Legend is that when you find your true love you carve your names on a lock and lock it onto the gate. You then throw the key into the canal.

(If you find these Love Locks fascinating, here's a Flickr slideshow of more – <http://bit.ly/x6pyOX>)



*A* sea of bicycles parked at an Amsterdam, Netherlands, train station make one wonder how anyone can find their own bike. “In Amsterdam, they have 7 million bikes and people personalize them so they can find them in that sea,” Lorene explained.

Lorene took the photos in 2011 while she was hosting a European tour.



# feedback

## **MIKE LYONS, PRESIDENT** **ORCOPUG**

**G**imp (Graphical Image Manipulation Program) is an open source program that has the power of Photoshop, but isn't as easy to use.

Adobe is struggling financially, but I think if they continue down this path, there will be a lot more competition and people will jump to alternatives.

Here is a new user interface for Gimp that makes it look more like Photoshop. <http://bit.ly/zcsdoJ>

## **ART LEWIS, TREASURER** **CIPCUG, CALIFORNIA**

**I** am interested in trying LDOSBox to look again at "Are We There Yet," one of the better educational games I used with my grandsons back in the DOS days.

## **JON JONES, EDITOR** **NCMUG, CALIFORNIA**

**I**'m a fan of the ZAGG Shield and have been for many years. While their video demonstrations do appear comically extreme (no doubt emphasized by the dramatically epic music) I think of it in context of what would happen to the device after a couple of years in someone's pocket or purse.

As a certified nerd, I usu-

ally carry a bunch of extra things jumbling around in my pocket with my iPhone, including keys, coins and a pocket knife clipped to the pocket liner. At times, I've had other things in my pockets for a short time that have been pretty scratched up by these other things, and I'm always happy to find that the iPhone still comes through each day looking great.

I put one on an iPod years ago, and the device developed a technical problem after about 5 years, and could no longer charge (something fried in the charging port) so I took it back to the Apple Store to see if they could diagnose it. (I removed the Shield before taking it in) and they quickly swapped it out for a freshly refurbished match (that model was so out of date that there were no corresponding matches currently in production) because they told me it still looked brand new, so I had obviously taken very good care of it. I put the Shield on my refurb immediately upon getting home, and still use that iPod every day.

## **LINDA GONSE, EDITOR** **ORCOPUG**

**H**ere is a "List of Software Installers That Bundle Unwanted Addon / Toolbars." It is at <http://bit.ly/woOuZt>.

## **NEIL LONGMUIR** **WPCUSRGRP, CANADA**

**W**ell I'm entering the tablet world with a 32 gig iPad2 with WiFi. I ordered it through my airmiles collection card. The iPad cost me no cash. When it arrives, I will let you know how it's going. It's going to be a new world for me because I'm not a Mac user.

## **STEVE COSTELLO, PRES./ED.** **BRCS, FLORIDA**

**I** have some links to get free Western ebooks that might be useful: <http://www.memoware.com>, [http://www.manybooks.net/\\_scripts/categories.php?code=WES&s=1](http://www.manybooks.net/_scripts/categories.php?code=WES&s=1), <http://www.westernebooks.com/>, and <http://free-online-novels.com/western.html>

## **TONY LAKE, RET. MEMBER** **ORCOPUG, UTAH**

**O**ne of the programs hosted by Leo LaPorte and Sarah Lane is called "iPad Today," and it can be viewed at <http://twit.tv/show/ipad-today/75>

This and other videos stream live over the Internet every Thursday afternoon. All the

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# feedback

programs have been archived, including the show notes.

Leo has been broadcasting these 'iPad Today' netcasts for more than a year now for a total of 75 one hour long episodes.

Another helpful video, created by GeekTeks, <http://geekteks.com>, is titled "How to burn any video file (including YouTube) to disk using DVD Flick," and it can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/yj1DCW>

**DARRY D EGGLESTON**  
**DARRYD.COM, FLORIDA**

I've purchased Photoshop Elements (PSE) 10. I've been using it for about 3 weeks. While it offers advantages, I wouldn't buy it if you own PSE9.

I create most of my graphic art using PSE although some individual's logos are created using WordPerfect's Presentations.

The chief benefit of Photoshop Elements is building of "layers" so that each element of a graphic is on its own level — unaffected by what is done to any other level. Think of it as drawers in a dresser. Each drawer's contents can be changed without affecting the other drawers; but, taken together, it's a complete unit.

Here are some websites where you can get more info:

- My free lessons on Photoshop Elements. <http://darryd.com/PSE>
- PSE 10 versus Other Versions <http://bit.ly/Ax39of>
- PS CS5 vs Elements 10 vs Lightroom 3 <http://bit.ly/whVSYh>

**RON HIRSCH, TECH WRITER**  
**FLORIDA**

I read the article on the new MagicJack (January 2012 N&B), and I have some feedback on that device.

I have (had) a contact there, who is the head tech support guy. And I wanted to do a full review of the new unit which does not require a computer to use, but can connect directly to the network. I bought a unit, and it was not functional, so I returned it, and got a replacement. The original release date was delayed for many months, due to tech problems at their end. And when released, it did not have the wi-fi capability, which had been promised earlier.

The second unit seemed to work OK, but then I noted that it would work for a few hours — up to a day or so, and then quit. I changed everything I could — location, connection, network cables, et al. I could get it working again, but only for a day or so.

Then I discovered that all that was needed was to unplug the power module for the unit, and then plug in back into the 120 vac (essentially rebooting it), and it immediately started working again. Tech support stopped talking to me, so I went on the forum. There I saw lots of posts about similar problems. Apparently the unit has issues with lots of the routers out here, including my Linksys unit. And in the use of directly connected to the network, it is a big flop, as far I can see. Suggestions included playing with one's router, updating firmware, etc.

But there's no way I'm going to start playing with my network. I worked very hard some years back getting it running perfectly, and I wouldn't risk changing that for a poorly designed product such as the MJ plus.

After my several years of dialog with MJ's head tech guy, and the results I've seen on the MJ Plus — I have to give them a thumbs down.

Also, MJ supplies no instructions or other info for the unit, except for a paragraph or two on the box it comes in. So when my year is up — MJ is history with me.





# reinstall windows xp/7

## *without losing sleep and your programs*

*Compiled and edited by Linda Gonse*

A few years ago in Information Week, Fred Langa told us how to completely rebuild, repair, or refresh an existing XP installation without losing data, and without having to reinstall user software, reformat, or otherwise destructively alter the setup.

Similarly he has revealed similar information about Windows 7 in Windows Secrets, an online newsletter.

In the article about Windows XP, Fred begins by saying, “It’s one of those software design decisions that makes you scratch your head and wonder, “What were they thinking?”

The “it” in this case is XP’s most powerful rebuild/repair option, and yet Microsoft chose to hide it behind seeming dead ends, red herrings, and a recycled interface that makes it hard to find and (at first) somewhat confusing to use.

But it’s worth exploring because this option lets you completely and nondestructively rebuild, repair, or refresh an existing XP installation while leaving already-installed software alone (no reinstallation needed!). It also leaves user accounts, names, and passwords untouched and takes only a fraction of the time a full, from-scratch reinstall does. And unlike a traditional full reinstall, this option doesn’t leave you with two copies of XP on your hard drive. Instead, you end up with just the original installation, but repaired, refreshed, and ready to go, Fred continued.

We’ve saved this technique for last in our discussion of the various XP repair/rebuild options because the fixes we’ve previously discussed are like first aid—the things you try first. (Read the entire article at <http://bit.ly/vZscLF>)

And, in the past year Fred has

written about “Windows 7’s s no-reformat, nondestructive reinstall.” Similarly, he tells us that we “may never have to do a full, from-scratch reinstall again, even when your system is misbehaving so badly that a full reformat-and-reinstall seems the only answer!”

Fred says, “As I’m sure you know all too well, from-scratch reinstalls are ordeals. They take hours. And when a reinstall is done, you still have to recreate all your settings, reinstall all your software, and so on. It can take days to fully recover from a total reformat/reinstall.

Windows’ little known, in-place reinstall takes only a fraction of that time and effort and yet completely rebuilds, repairs, and refreshes an existing Windows installation. It leaves your other software alone (no reinstallation needed!) while also leaving user accounts, names, and passwords untouched.

Fred assures us that when you’re finished, your Windows installation is just as it was before, except that all the system files are fully repaired, refreshed, and ready to go.

This nondestructive-reinstall ability has been in Windows since XP. But — for reasons unknown — Microsoft has never made nondestructive reinstalls an official repair. In fact, it’s not even listed in Win7’s System Recovery Options (on the Help & How-to page).

By the way, the nondestructive reinstall process for Vista is nearly identical to that described in the rest of the Windows 7 article at <http://bit.ly/z3MrGO>



Intricate, one-piece plane models came out of NYU's 3D printer.

pint water bottle. The narrator said it took about three hours. I'd say price isn't the only factor that will affect wider use.

The program guide said this episode first aired in January 2011, so the information is pretty current.

I don't specifically remember the article, but have read about something like this in one or more of my magazines (Possibly BusinessWeek). The video was more tangible by showing the output tool actually being used. I think calling it a printer downplays the accomplishment. The description accompanying the video mentions using it to create prototypes. It looks like it would be very good for that. I wonder if anyone expects

*Turn to next page*

# WHAT IS 3D PRINTING?

*Compiled and edited by Linda Gonse*

**T**hree dimensional printing is one amongst a number of subsets of Rapid Prototyping (RP) technologies, such as stereolithography (SLA) and selective laser sintering (SLS). In 3D printing, a computer program divides a model into cross sections, which are then built with many layers of powder selectively bonded by a liquid adhesive that is precisely dispensed from an inkjet printhead.

More details on each step of the process and New York University's Spectrum Z510 3D printer are at <http://bit.ly/A8j13b>

We discussed the 3D printer with Frank Bollinger, ORCOPUG member; and Mary Burton, a surgical nurse. Here's what they said:

**FRANK BOLLINGER, ORCOPUG member**

I saw a 3-D printer in an episode of the History Channel's Modern Marvels program. The program was about packaging and we saw the printer being used to create a prototype of a plastic bottle that looked about the size of a one



Spectrum Z510 3D printer



to produce end user products this way?

I'm amazed that it's already being used for prosthetics. (Possibly because I tend to get intrigued by the technology and how it works, so don't think of all the uses.)

When thinking of the name, the first thing that came to mind was the Star Trek Replicator. I quickly discarded the name because it would probably create unreasonable expectations. I think of it as a fabricator. As long as it's used within an industrial or scientific environment, such a name would probably work. If it became a consumer product, I expect something more user friendly.

It would be interesting to learn more about the scanning.

I think the main factor regarding a consumer version will be price. Photocopiers were originally very expensive and not mass market products. Now, \$100 all-in-one printers can do it. As with photocopiers, there will be concerns about what can be made with them but, eventually, the concerns will be overcome by market pressure (if they become affordable).

**MARY BURTON, surgical nurse**

They use this technology for making prosthetic body parts; ears, skin, etc. It is an amazing thing. So far replication is done using plastics and is mostly in university settings because it's experimental. It's already a thriving industry. Dental uses are also on the way.



Printed jaw bone (left), and surgeons implant the jaw bone (above).

***BREAKING NEWS: After this article was written, on February 7, 2012, 3D printing was used for an operation that was the first of its kind. An 83-year-old woman in the Netherlands was fitted with a custom-made artificial jaw that was created by a 3D printer.***

The titanium implant, which weighs less than 4 ounces, was created by taking a CT scan of the woman's lower jaw and duplicating it with a 3D printer that lays down titanium powder instead of ink. The printer followed the pattern of the woman's jaw bone layer by layer, fusing the titanium powder in place with heat. In just a couple hours, the 3D replica was ready. (*Complete article and video is here: <http://abcn.ws/xoYh6Y> Pictures above are from the video .)*



Products, like the gears above, are printed all in one piece, in color, and with moving parts. Scene from the YouTube video of ZCorp's 3D facility where a wrench is scanned, and replicated by the printer. <http://bit.ly/zzB1xF>



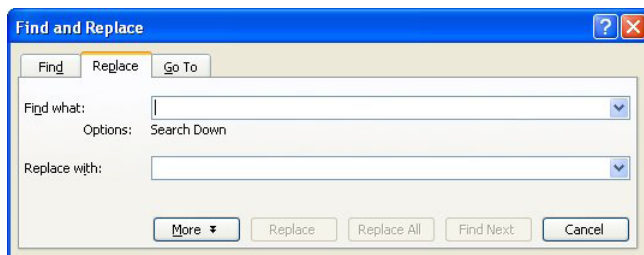
# WORD

## updating to smart quotes

Smart quotes are those fancy quotes that point different directions—you know, you see them all the time in typeset material. Word uses smart quotes automatically as one of the features in AutoFormat. However, you may be working with files created in a text editor, a different word processor, or a previous version of Word that did not use smart quotes. In these instances, you may think you are forced to change the quotes and apostrophes (since they are also “smart”) individually.

Not so! You can, if you desire, use the AutoFormat command; this will convert the quotes and apostrophes. However, this can mess up your other formatting. If you only want to affect the quotes and apostrophes, and nothing else, follow these general steps:

1. Make sure you have smart quotes turned on. (You do this on the AutoFormat tab of the Options dialog box or the AutoFormat tab of the AutoCorrect dialog box, depending on your version of Word.)
2. Press Ctrl+H or choose Replace from the Edit menu. Word displays the Replace tab of the Find and Replace dialog box.



The Replace tab of the Find and Replace dialog box

3. In the Find What box, enter a quote mark.
4. Click on the No Formatting button, if it is available. (If the No Formatting button is not visible, you may need to click on the More button to display it.)
5. In the Replace With box, enter another quote mark.
6. Again click on the No Formatting button, if it is available.
7. Click on Replace All.
8. Repeat steps 3 through 7, this time using an apostrophe instead of a quote mark.
9. Close the Replace dialog box when the replacements are finished.

It is just as easy to get rid of smart quotes—for instance, if you need to send a document to a colleague who doesn't have a smart quotes capability. In this instance you can get rid of smart quotes and apostrophes by following the same nine steps. The only difference is that in step 1 you need to make sure that smart quotes is turned off.

WordTips is your source for cost-effective Microsoft Word training. (Microsoft Word is the most popular word processing software in the world.) This tip applies to Microsoft Word versions: 97, 2000, 2002, 2003; [http://word.tips.net/T000963\\_Updating\\_to\\_Smart\\_Quotes.html](http://word.tips.net/T000963_Updating_to_Smart_Quotes.html). You can find a version of this tip for the ribbon interface of Word (Word 2007 and later) here: [http://wordribbon.tips.net/T009448\\_Updating\\_to\\_Smart\\_Quotes.html](http://wordribbon.tips.net/T009448_Updating_to_Smart_Quotes.html).

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# EXCEL

## displaying a hidden first column

Excel makes it easy to hide and unhide columns. What isn't so easy is displaying a hidden column if that column is the left-most column in the worksheet. For instance, if you hide column A, Excel will dutifully follow out your instructions. If you later want to unhide column A, the solution isn't so obvious.

**To unhide the left-most columns of a worksheet when they are hidden, follow these steps:**

1. Choose Go To from the Edit menu, or press F5. Excel displays the Go To dialog box.



2. In the Reference field at the bottom of the dialog box, enter A1.
3. Click on OK. Cell A1 is now selected, even though you cannot see it on the screen.
4. Choose Column from the Format menu, then choose Unhide.

Another way to display the first column is to click on the header for column B, and then drag the mouse

to the left. If you release the mouse button when the pointer is over the gray block that marks the intersection of the row and column headers (the blank gray block just above the row headers), then column B and everything to its left, including the hidden column A, are selected. You can then choose Column from the Format menu and then choose Unhide.

A third method is even niftier, provided you have a good eye and a steady mouse pointer. If you move your mouse pointer into the column header area, and then slowly move it to the left, you notice that it turns into a double-headed arrow with a blank spot in the middle as you position the pointer over the small area immediately to the left of the column B header. This double-headed arrow is a bit difficult to describe; it looks most closely like the double-headed arrow that appears when you position the pointer over the dividing line between column headers. It is different, however, because instead of a black line dividing the double arrows, there are two black lines with a gap between them.

When your mouse pointer changes to this special double-headed arrow, all you have to do is right-click and choose Unhide. Your previously missing column A magically reappears.

ExcelTips is your source for cost-effective Microsoft Excel training. This tip applies to Microsoft Excel versions: 97, 2000, 2002 and 2003 <http://bit.ly/xWJrhT>.

You can find a version of this tip for the ribbon interface of Excel (2007 and later) here: <http://bit.ly/ykX5IX>

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# ask the experts

compiled by Bob Goodman, Cajun Clickers

## how to get rid of ask

**William DePierri:** Ask has hijacked Firefox on Ellen's PC. She is running Windows XP, SP3 on her machine. I have tried to get rid of it, but have been unable to do so. I cannot find it in the program listing in the 'Add or Remove Programs' in the control panel.

I was able to get rid of the Ask Toolbar using the Add or Remove programs feature, but the Ask hijack lingers on. I did find some information about removal using Google, but the arrow that I was supposed to click on to begin the process was missing – I assume that Ask had overwritten it somehow.

If any of you know how to get rid of this monster, I would appreciate hearing from you.

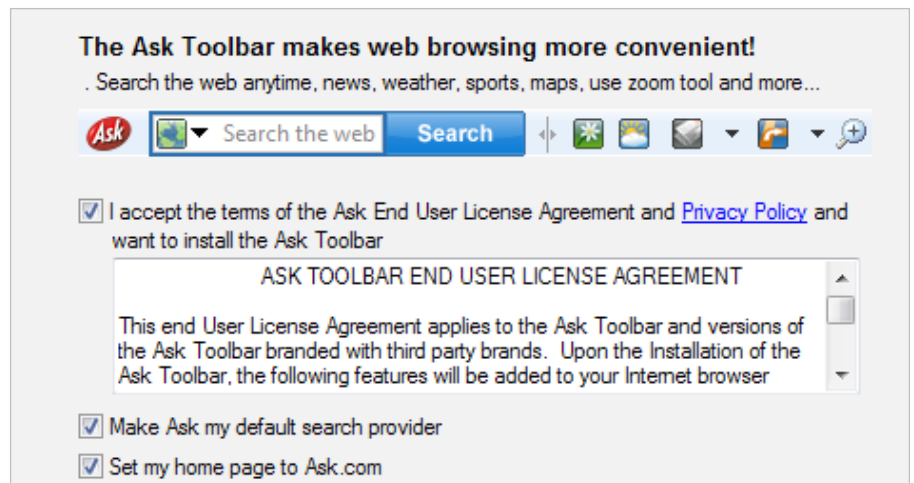
**Cornell Tramontana:** See if it's (also) an Add-On for Firefox. After

bringing up the Add-Ons (in the Tools menu), click on Extensions, then Remove for the Ask Tool Bar.

You might also need to change the default search engine in the Search Bar, if Ask has become the default search engine. Just to the right of the symbol for the search engine being used, is an arrow. Click on the arrow, and it will show the possibilities. Scroll down and click on the one you want.

You don't mention whether she intended for Ask to be installed. A lot of times when a program is installed or updated, it comes with bloatware. It helps to pay attention to every screen that comes up when installing/updating and to uncheck any additional software you don't want. If you uncheck this additional item, it will be installed.

**William DePierri:** Cornell, thank  
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you for your response to my query. My problem is not the Ask Tool Bar. I had the Ask Tool Bar, but was able to remove it using 'Add or Remove Programs'.

My problem is the fact that Ask.com has hijacked my browser Firefox. No matter what I have done to date, Firefox is reduced to a very small tab at the upper right side of the page. This tab is completely unresponsive. Ask fills the rest of the page, calling itself 'Ask.com. If you have any idea how I can get rid of this menace, I would appreciate hearing your suggestions.

**Ed Walker:** Bill, My guess is that whatever you installed to get the Ask toolbar has also set www.ask.com as your home page. You can change your home page under Firefox

"Tools", "Options", "General" tab.

**William DePierri:** Ed, thanks for your comment. However, even after I removed and reinstalled Firefox and set Firefox as the default browser in the setup step, I cannot access the Firefox screen to get to Tools, etc. I only get a full page ASK.Com screen with nothing to check to go to partial screen or close the screen.

Any more nifty ideas? I must admit, I have never encountered such a frustrating computer related situation in times past.

**Terry Stockdale,** www.TerrysComputerTips.com: Bill, sounds like the reinstall you did was not a clean reinstall of Firefox.

For a clean reinstall, uninstall, delete whatever is left in the Firefox program files folder and delete

the Firefox directory under the user's directory for that particular user. You'll lose all bookmarks, but hopefully you have them backed up (there's a backup function in Firefox under Bookmarks > Show All Bookmarks.

Then, reboot and install Firefox. You'll still be able to import bookmarks from other web browsers.

**William DePierri:** Terry; many thanks for your input. Worked like a champ. Not only did your comments relieve a lot of frustration on my part, but it possibly saved my happy

marriage. Ellen has not been amused about the situation the last three or four days that the Ask Search Engine has completely filled the screen on Ellen's PC .

All of this came about when I installed the Avery program for printing labels. I have used this program for many years without incident, but this time it came with a load of garbage in the form of the Ask Tool Bar and the Ask Search Engine. I plan to correspond with Avery about this breach of faith on their part.

## firefox

**David:** I have a computer that I can get on the internet with IE but not Firefox. I've uninstalled Firefox and deleted the Firefox folder and reinstalled; but have the same problem.

**Terry Stockdale,** www.TerrysComputerTips.com: Check your firewall software to make sure that Firefox is allowed to get to the Internet.

**David:** That worked, Terry. Thanks.

## toolbar

**John and Betty:** I started my computer this morning, and started IE. My toolbar—with Favorites—was gone. How do I get it back?

**Ed Walker:** Open IE then click on "View," "Toolbars" and click to check "Favorites Bar." I hope this gets what you want.

**John and Betty:** Ed, my Google page opens up and I do not see "View."

**Terry Stockdale,** www.TerrysComputerTips.com: John, Press

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I started IE and my toolbar—with Favorites—is gone. How do I get it back?



and release the Alt key to display the menu bar. Here's a related article: [www.terrystips.com/computers/displayinginternet-explorer-9-favorites/](http://www.terrystips.com/computers/displayinginternet-explorer-9-favorites/)

**John and Betty:** That did it, Terry; thanks.

## how to close a file or program?

**William DePierri:** I tried to update a Blu-Ray player program. It almost finished the update; then, an error message popped up that stated: "The following application(s) are using files that need to be updated by this setup. Close these applications and click Retry to continue. PowerDVD RC Service (Process ID: 9104)."

I did a Google search and found a comment to the effect that one could either run the Power DVD RC Service or shut it off – but no mention of HOW to shut it off. I also did a search for Process 9104 and for Power DVD RC Service on C: Drive on my PC. No luck for either search.

Does anyone have any idea about how to close this file or program? If you do, I would appreciate it if you would share the information. I am running Windows 7. The software in questions is Cyberlink Power DVD 9.5. When I tried to use the software, I received a message stating that I needed to update the software before it would play a blue-ray disc. Many thanks for the help!

**Russ Williams:** Bill, run MSCONFIG; Click START; Type MSCONFIG; then ENTER. When it opens click on the SERVICES tab; Find the PowerDVD service; and uncheck it; Click the APPLY Button; then REBOOT your computer.

**William DePierri:** Russ, thanks for the prompt response to my query. But, how does one bring up [Start] in Windows 7 - 64? When I click on the globe at the lower left, I get a box that says

[Start]. However, it quickly disappears when I try to put my mouse cursor on it and nothing good happens.

**Russ Williams:** Just left click on the Globe; that's The Start Button for 7.

**William DePierri:** Thanks, Russ. Got it!

## mp4 file reduction

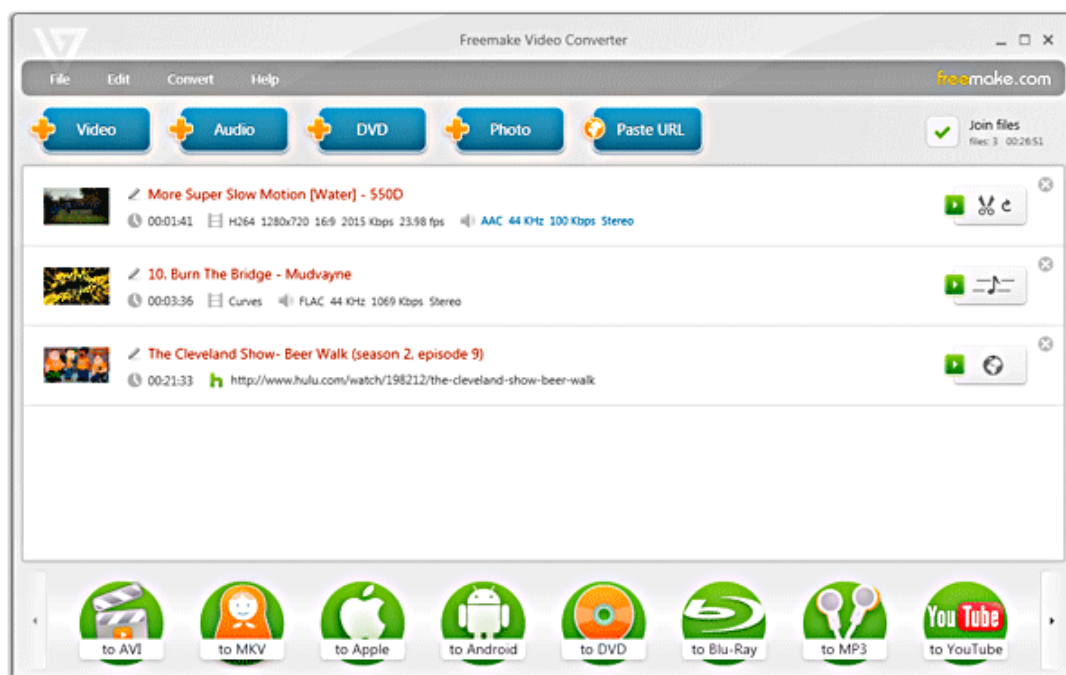
**Mark Firmin:** Greetings. I shot some video with my new smartphone and didn't realize that the resolution was set to 1920 x 1080. The resulting files are HUGE and I'm having difficulty sharing them.

Can any of you give me advice on the quickest, easiest, cheapest way to convert an MP4 video file to a smaller file? I realize that if I reduce the file size I will need to sacrifice some resolution. I've looked around the Internet and there's an overwhelming amount of information which gets complicated very quickly (bit rates, sample rates, frame rates, encoding, aspect ratios, format, etc., etc.). I'm hoping that one of you can guide me right to the crux of what I'm trying to accomplish.

**Russ Williams:** Mark, I use Freemake Video Converter. I will allow you to convert the file to different formats and also change the file size. Find it here: [http://www.freemake.com/free\\_video\\_converter/](http://www.freemake.com/free_video_converter/)

*Turn to next page*

Freemake Video Converter screenshot



## print screen

**Sprague Pugh:** I'm having a problem printing the screen showing on my monitor. Seems like in the past I could do it by pressing ctrl and print screen. The keys I have in upper right are printb screen (with SysRQ on the front, scrool lock and Pause.

**Ed Walker:** To print the screen image to a printer, do the print screen as you have in the past; open a graphics program or Word program and 'Paste' the image into it; then print from that program.

**Sprague Pugh:** Thanks, Ed.

## screenshot software

**Sprague Pugh:** Since I switched from Windows XP to Windows 7 my Screen shot software does not seem to work. I am trying to capture a screen and send it to my printer. Can someone step me through the screenshot software steps? Alternatively can some tell me how to capture a screen and get it to my printer? One screen I wish to capture is my desktop.

**Terry Stockdale,** [www.terrystips.com](http://www.terrystips.com): [www.terrystips.com/computers/screen-printing-from-your-computer-screen/](http://www.terrystips.com/computers/screen-printing-from-your-computer-screen/)

**Sprague Pugh:** Thanks; but I can't open the web site from your email. Tried single and double click on the address. Note at bottom of my screen shows "error on page."

**Terry Stockdale,** [www.terrystips.com](http://www.terrystips.com): Try copying the URL and pasting it into the address bar of your web browser.

**Sprague Pugh:** Thanks, Terry. That worked.

# tips from the internet

*Compiled by Ron Ingraham, Space Coast PC Users Group*

## the eternal bit

Isn't digital data supposed to last forever? Well, maybe, but digital media doesn't. Most common types of storage media deteriorate over time, such as CD-R and DVD±R discs with user-recordable dyes. Also, hard drives without ramps to offload their read/write heads may fail if left unused for too long a time because the heads may stick to the disks. Finally, data formats come and go, and the latest reader/player software may forgo support for formats that haven't been used in a decade or more. The upshot is that, even if you use media with a long archival life, you should still copy your important files onto fresh media from time to time, and convert them into supplemental (not replacement) file formats as new standards emerge.

## hard-to-read web pages

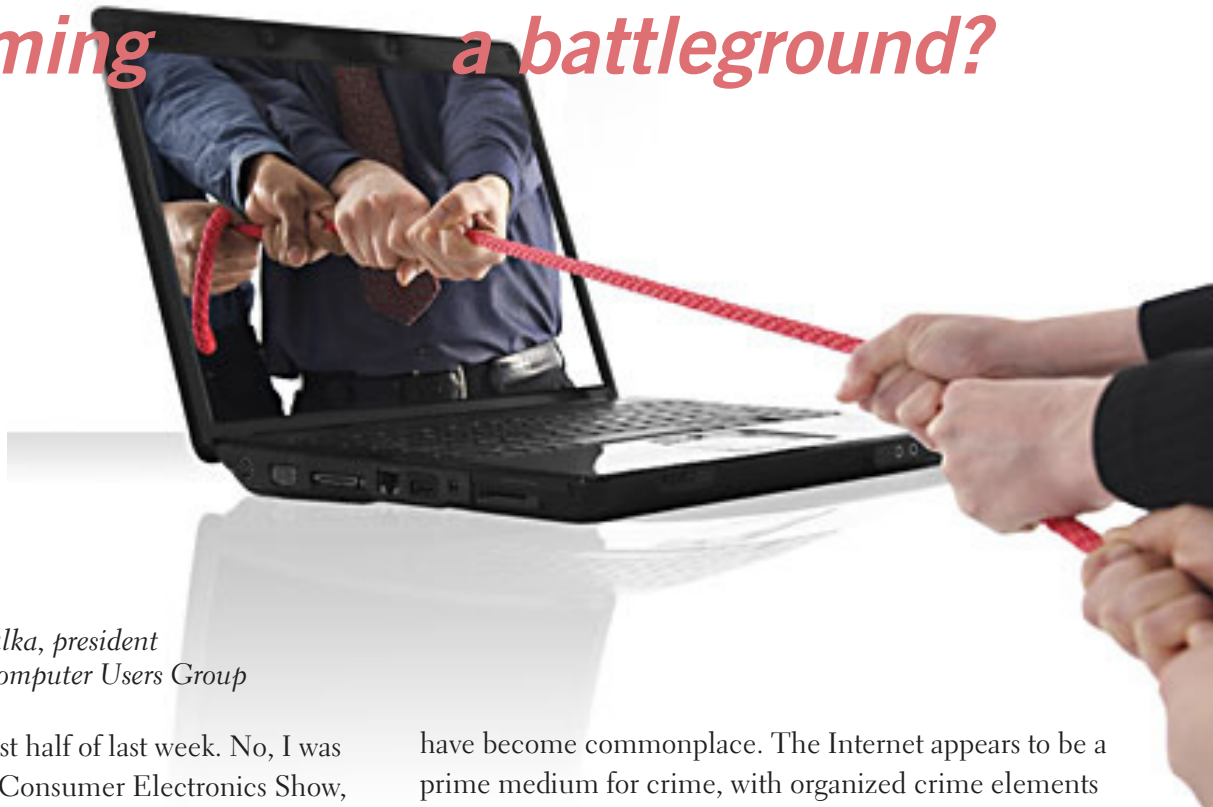
Some Web sites and email messages are really hard to read. Whoever designed them may not have realized that some users have a hard time reading dark text on colored backgrounds. Here's a trick that can help. Select the text with a click and drag of your mouse. This usually highlights it in white on a blue background. If the text is still hard to read this way, copy and paste it into Notepad or some other black-on-white text editor.

## step by step

When you're installing Windows on a clean hard drive or SSD, there's a certain order to follow. First, disconnect the PC's Internet connection and install the OS. Next, install the motherboard chipset's drivers to allow the basic hardware to work correctly and at a reasonable speed. Finally, install security software, set up the Internet connection, and go online to download Windows Updates. After that, you can install the latest graphics and other drivers, your applications, and your data.



# is the internet *becoming a battleground?*



*by Greg Skalka, president  
Under The Hood Computer Users Group*

I was in Las Vegas the first half of last week. No, I was not there for CES, the Consumer Electronics Show, as rooms were both unavailable and unaffordable during that show. I went the week after CES, when rooms were one-third the cost, and crowds were back to normal. We crossed the state line into Nevada around noon on Sunday, and witnessed the mass migration occurring on the southbound side of I-15 as everyone from the show left Las Vegas. I'm glad we were not in that traffic jam. My, wife, daughter and I were there to enjoy a few days off relaxing and celebrating my wife's birthday and my daughter's recent 21st birthday.

While we were there, another hacking incident hit the news. Zappos.com, an online shoe and clothing retailer, announced that they had been the victim of a cyber attack. Being based in nearby Henderson, the reports on this company that I was previously unaware of (you can imagine how much online shoe buying I do) dominated the Las Vegas local news. Customer address, phone and email information had been stolen, but fortunately credit card info and account passwords remained secure.

This was just one more incident in an increasing trend of crime and conflict conducted over the Internet. Reports of hacked computers and stolen commercial data

have become commonplace. The Internet appears to be a prime medium for crime, with organized crime elements taking advantage of the easy access and anonymity. I've so far avoided being part of one of these data thefts from a major company that I've entrusted with some of my personal information, but it is probably just a matter of time until I'm a victim too.

I'm also under siege on a smaller scale, receiving several scam emails every day. Most are such obvious scams that I almost have to laugh. Is the head of the FBI or Secretary of State Hillary Clinton really going to email me about claiming foreign funds I previously knew nothing about? I have seen some pretty realistic emails from banks (mostly ones I don't do business with, but a few that I do), advising me to click on a link to avoid a loss of account access. A little restraint and outside research show even the most polished of these to be fakes intended to trick you out of personal information or plant malware on your computer.

The worst of these online scams try to use your own friends and family to trick you into lowering your guard. I recently received an unsolicited email from my sister, which was also addressed to a number of other family

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## I'd hate to see the "Information Superhighway" that was supposed to be our free and open Internet turned into the electronic equivalent of the highways in "Mad Max," where danger lurks everywhere and lawlessness abounds.

members. It contained only a vague greeting and a link. I recognized it as a scam, but my wife did not. Fortunately, it appears the link only led to a Viagra-peddling website, as repeated cleanings of her computer turned up no malware. It appears that someone gained access to my sister's email account and used it to send this message to everyone in her email address book. After receiving this sham email herself at work, she changed her email account password and sent a warning out to all her contacts. That showed good web etiquette.

I receive similar emails periodically from a friend's account, but he never responds to my warnings about his email account being hijacked. If you lose control of an email account in this way, at least let the provider know so the account can be closed. If you simply abandon the compromised account, you'll likely leave a zombie account out there to continue pestering your friends.

In addition to the criminal element, the political conflicts of our world are starting to creep into the Internet. While electronic personal communications can play a positive role in exposing repression around the world, and can be a tool for change towards more open and free political systems, the access to information can also be a weapon.

Enemies of our country and way of life hack our government and commercial web sites to steal information and deny legitimate access. Our businesses and institutions may be under attack through the Internet by factions related to or agents of China, Russia or our middle-eastern adversaries.

Our own government has formed cyber warfare elements and acknowledges that future battles may include skirmishes in cyberspace. It is speculated that the Stuxnet worm, which appears to have targeted uranium processing facilities in Iran, may have been the product of U.S. or Israeli intelligence agencies. Palestinian hackers steal and release account information from banks and institutions in Israel, leading some in Israel to do the same with information on Palestinians.

Where will all this lead? I'd hate to see the "Information Superhighway" that was supposed to be our free and open Internet turned into the electronic equivalent of the highways in "Mad Max," where danger lurks everywhere and lawlessness abounds.

And speaking of laws on the Internet, we have recently witnessed online protests over U.S. Internet piracy legislation. A number of prominent web sites, including Google and Wikipedia, conducted partial shutdowns or redirections to protest pending legislation and solicit support from their users.

The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and Protect IP Act (PIPA) are bills under consideration by the U.S. Congress to protect intellectual property. Opponents claim the proposed legislation would harm free speech and reduce technical innovation on the web. I acknowledge online piracy is a problem, but also don't want a solution at the expense of an open Internet. Hopefully our own government won't soon be in the censoring business. We all have an interest in how this issue is resolved.

With all this conflict on and over the web, it makes me wonder if I'm taking all the reasonable measures I can to protect myself and my assets as I use the Internet. It is sometimes difficult to determine where "reasonable" fits in between "it won't happen to me" and a bunker mentality. As I've moved my finances and shopping online, I've realized I've become more dependent on the Internet.

By conducting all my banking activities, including bill payment and monitoring of accounts, on the web, I hope I've not made myself more vulnerable in the process. Am I safer not having bank statements mailed to me, or am I now more open to theft by hacking or scams? How would I access my money in a web-only bank account if the Internet should for some reason go down? It is great to be able to surf where I want, but does that surfing potentially expose me to malware that could capture my account

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information when I bank with the same computer? Is it paranoid to consider using a separate computer for banking and another for other web access?

It is exciting to think that the whole world can be accessed through that little RJ-45 Ethernet jack on your cable or DSL modem. It should also be sobering to consider that the whole world could be there in that connection.

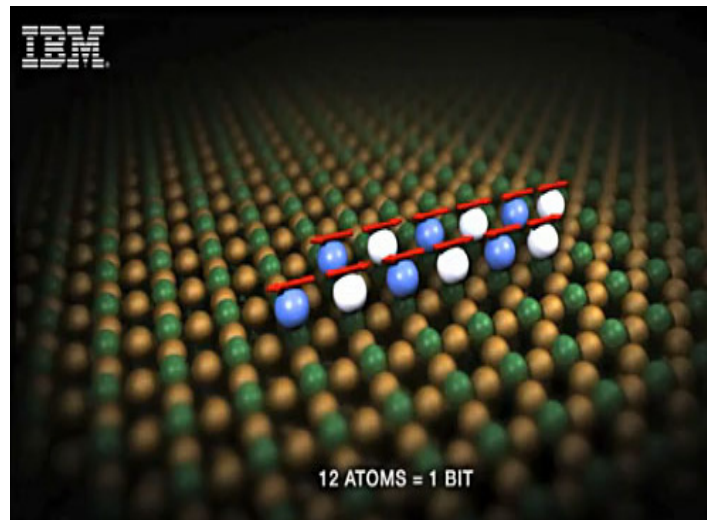
## tablets of clay

The crooks are not only after us on the Internet, but also in our electronics stores. Over this last Christmas, a number of iPad purchasers got the wrong kind of tablet. In Canada, a number of customers that purchased iPads at reputable stores like Best Buy and Walmart later found the box contained not a tablet PC but a slab of modeling clay. In perhaps more than a dozen reported cases, it appears crooks purchased iPads at these stores with cash, replaced the items in the box with the same weight in clay and expertly resealed the boxes. The boxes were returned to the stores for refunds, and since they appeared to be unopened, they were replaced on the shelves to be purchased by unsuspecting customers. The first customer discovering this switch was thought to be a scammer by the store, but after additional cases were discovered, he was reimbursed and given an iPad.

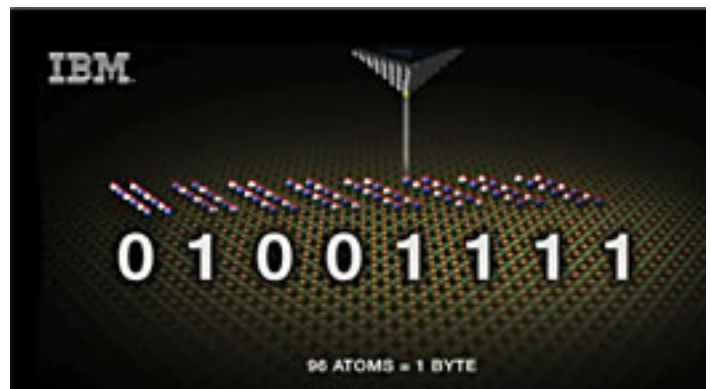
## just when you thought it couldn't get any smaller

Many of you are probably as dismayed as I am at the recent rise in the cost of hard drive storage. Since flooding last fall in parts of Asia disrupted the production of key parts and the global supply chain for computer storage, hard drive prices have greatly increased. After decades of steady decreases in the cost per unit of storage, these increases are hard to accept. I'll be resistant to buying any drives until the prices drop back down to their previous lows. Fortunately, I bought a few extra bare and external USB drives before the increase, so I can last a while. Usually I am slightly discouraged that I often don't get around to using a new drive until after its price has dropped from when I bought it. Now I feel better, knowing the drives I've yet to use have increased in value.

I sometimes wonder how much more storage can be



“Being able to increase the data density of devices means more storage in a smaller space: specifically, storage that is 100 times denser than today's hard disk drives, 150 times more dense than solid-state memory. An entire music and movie collection could fit on a charm-sized pendant around your neck.”



Scenes from [http://www.ibm.com/smarterplanet/us/en/smarter\\_computing/article/atomic\\_scale\\_memory.html](http://www.ibm.com/smarterplanet/us/en/smarter_computing/article/atomic_scale_memory.html)

crammed into a hard drive case or USB flash drive. Now IBM may have found the answer. In research to determine the atomic limits to magnetic memory, IBM has created the world's smallest magnetic memory bit, using only 12 atoms. This would make storage that is over 100 times more dense than current disk drives. This is from the same company that was able to spell out its initials in individual atoms (35 xenon atoms to spell out IBM) in 1989. Hopefully those 200 TB drives will be out soon!

Used with permission. Article appeared in February 2012 Drive Light newsletter for the Under The Hood Computer Users Group.

# google's announcement brings good/bad user reactions

**G**oogle announced Tuesday, January 24, that it will require all of its users to agree to a new privacy policy that will integrate user data across 60 Google products including Gmail, YouTube and search. The policy will also encompass information, including location data, collected on mobile devices.

**Users will not be allowed to opt-out.**

**In a company blog post, Google privacy director Alma Whitten said that “if you’re signed in, we may combine information you’ve provided from one service with information from other services. In short, we’ll treat you as a single user across all our products, which will mean a simpler, more intuitive Google experience.”**

**The new policy will take effect March 1.**



## Mike Lyons, ORCOPUG

Recently Google announced that it is changing its privacy policy in order to bring everything under one roof. Last week Google had 18 different main privacy policies (60 altogether) for its various products and services. Now it has one. This is a good thing and offers a much more robust and cleaner privacy policy than before.

Most importantly, they understand the value of privacy.

They have also reiterated its pledge to never sell your personal information, never share it externally and to continue to support the Data Liberation Front. Seems like a far cry from other social networks.

This whole thing is a money grab for all parties involved. Facebook has a siloed system with a lot of valuable information that companies pay a lot of money for. Facebook has made deals with Microsoft, but refuses to make a similar deal with Google. The same holds true for Twitter.

The game is to create an environment where users go and spend the whole day in that playpen. It's the same problem with politics today. Republicans only associate with Republicans and Democrats only talk to other Democrats. That's not good for the nation and it's not good for the internet.

Free and thoughtful exchange of ideas, in politics and on the internet, is what the nation and the internet was founded on. Now both are fighting to control minds and trying to drown out those they don't agree with.

As far as no opt out, all of them are doing basically the same thing. If you don't join Facebook or Twitter, you can't play. Google feels compelled to do the same thing. Facebook and Twitter don't make it as obvious that your information is being shared without your knowledge. Look how many times Facebook has changed their privacy policy. At one time, they claimed anything (photos, etc) you

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post on their site, they could use in any manner they saw fit without having to compensate you. Sure, they peeled it back, but then they try to slip the same thing in later (just like SOPA and PIPA). At least Google is saying up front, whatever Google services you are using, we will use this knowledge to learn more about you. Maybe it's to serve up more targeted ads on the screen. Maybe it's for not so nice reasons. Only time will tell.

Personally, I use many of the Google products, I use Twitter, and I have a Facebook account that I seldom use. That is also the order I trust these companies. Google seems to have strayed from their "Do no harm" mantra a bit, but their trust level is still way ahead of the others.

What I worry about Google is not so much the present leaders, but their future ones. I have no trust in Facebook. Apple recently created a new tool (iBook) to create content that follows their iStore standards. Under their terms, if you decide to sell your content, you can only sell through their iTunes setup. It seems to all come down to who has the most money does as they please.

### Jon Jones, NCMUG

Wow. This stings. Looks like the competing social site giants are drawing the line in the sand. Facebook, likewise posted a recent announcement that they were summarily forcing all users into the new timeline format that would lay out more of their stuff for view, and that they would not be able to opt out, though not being a FB user, I don't know the specifics of what will yet remain private.

Google has lot of leverage in this

case, because of their deep saturation throughout the entire industry. (Also why, though a Google+ and Youtube user, I've resisted a GoogleVoice number, and only use Android, Chrome and Gmail for work puposes, not personal.) To give a single third party entity so much control over all of our information just seems so Orwellian.

### Pim Borman, ret. SWIPCUG

It would be nice if you were able to see what information they have about you. If they don't have much more than you can find in the phonebook I won't worry about it. Amazon knows probably more about me from my purchasing history than Google from my email.

### Linda Gonse, ORCOPUG

I believe, as was also voiced recently by Tim Berners-Lee, that the Internet should not be hacked up into fiefdoms. It should be free and open to all. Fences around users should not exist. Third parties having control over a great deal of the personal data of individuals who use the services is a bad thing, for a couple of reasons, namely privacy and security.

The question of what kind of information is being held and what is going to be done with it, who has access to it and for how long, is also troubling.

In addition to that is the ultimatum Google issued that there is no opting out. This policy has a blanket effect on all users. Even if you just subscribe to one of the services under the brand's control, you are automatically included with the masses regardless of the number of services used. It's like not being a little pregnant. You are or you aren't.

At the very least, I wonder how will this effect all Google users if one of its websites is hacked?

### FEDERAL COMPUTER WEEK

(1/25/2012) Google's new policies are raising questions in the blogosphere about how Google will use the tracking information it collects on individuals, whether it would assemble detailed dossiers on individuals, how long it would be stored, who might have access to it, and whether it would ever be disclosed publicly or to third parties

...Reaction to the policy changes on the Web was leaning negative. Although a few bloggers and observers were mildly supportive, many others questioned Google's motives and foresaw the possibility of broad profiling and significant privacy risks.

... "This is an entirely new level of sharing. And given all of the negative feedback that it had with Google+ privacy issues, it's especially troubling that it would take actions that further erode users' privacy," Gizmodo said.

...Google's privacy changes are coming at a time when competition appears to be intensifying for social media advertising dollars. Google also announced recently it was adding social results to its search engine, which also was greeted with mixed reactions.

Read the entire article here:  
<http://bit.ly/yQefA7>



by Keith Nallawalla

**M**alware and hacked sites are more common than you might think. According to Matt Cutts' recent video even people like Donald Trump and Al Gore have had their websites hacked.

What is malware? The term “Malware” can be any kind of malicious code that is designed to cause problems for a computer or network. Examples of this include spyware, Trojans, viruses and worms. It could also include a hacker making changes to the site adding extra pages designed to phish customers. This means tricking them into giving out personal or credit card information. Malware may change/steal your passwords, access your credit card details or other personal information, hijack or lock you out of your computer and much more.

## malware audit

### checking for malware

Register your site in Google's Webmaster Tools ([google.com/webmasters](http://google.com/webmasters)) to prove that you control a particular site by loading a special html file onto it, which will then signal to Google that you control that page. Once you have an account set up you can click the diagnostics tab on the left and click on Malware. If your site is clean it will simply say “Google has not detected any malware on this site.”

If your site does have malware then you should quarantine the site by taking it down immediately and contact your web host. If they are aware of it already, say, it has attacked other sites they are hosting they may already be attempting to fix the problem.

You should also change the passwords of everything, this includes the FTP access, admin accounts, CMS



accounts, users. Also double-check what users exist — perhaps the hackers created some new accounts.

### prevention

Some steps to prevent malware infection:

1. Within Webmaster Tools, go to Search Queries and look at what see what some of the search queries Google can find on your site, if anything unexpected like “Viagra” or “diet pills” or other typical spammy topics are appearing (and you know you have no posts about those topics) then you might have an infection.
2. Make sure your websites emails are forwarded to an email address you check regularly in case Google notices the malware and tries to notify you. They will

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also notify you on the Webmaster Tools home page.

3. Be careful of third party content on your site such as any widgets or ad networks. Ad networks can sometimes be dodgy and have malicious scripts in them. Most are fine though.

4. Make sure any computers you use to access your site are safe, with the latest antivirus programs installed and up to date to prevent any viruses, trojans, etc. from affecting your site.

5. Keep your CMS, e.g. WordPress and plug-ins, up-to-date.

6. When making new passwords make sure they are very hard to guess, using different capitalisation, symbols, numbers etc. Don't use common passwords like abc123, love, god, letmein, etc.

*Used with permission: Source: <http://bit.ly/xNP3Ow>*

Keith Nallawalla is Social Media Manager at TrainSEM. As Ash



Nallawalla's son, he grew up with computers and typifies the social networking generation. As an active social media

community manager and event promoter, Keith understands how young people use social networks and how they can be kept safe online.

## has your *website been hacked?* google can help!

The latest threat of hacking websites may indicate that 1-2% of all websites are hacked, according to Google's Matt Cutts. Hackers, responding to the security improvements in personal computer software, have begun to target internet servers. And this trend will most likely grow.

"A really scary trend is happening," says Cutts. He goes on to explain that as personal computer software, such as Windows Vista and Windows 7 are getting better about protecting your computer, hackers will instead begin to target your web server. "I've seen Donald Trump's site hacked, I've seen Al Gore's site hacked. All sorts of stuff. And they get sneakier and sneakier" said Cutts in video from the Google I/O 2010 conference on YouTube, which can also be seen on [mattcutts.com/blog](http://mattcutts.com/blog) or <http://www.mattcutts.com/blog/seo-site-review-session-from-google-io-2010/>.

Your website may be hacked and you don't even know it! You can literally find this out within minutes of registering with Google Webmaster Tools, and you can also find out if any of the links on your site are broken, if the Google crawler has located any other problems on your site. Please see the link below to register your site with Google Webmaster today. Google Webmaster tools : <http://www.google.com/webmasters/>

Read the entire article here: <http://bit.ly/yI0qcS>

## january keyword explained

### *Participation*

*by Mike Lyons, ORCOPUG president*

A traditional New Year's activity is to make resolutions every year — you know, lose weight, go to the gym three times a week, etc. Most of them never make it to the end of the month.

This year try something different. Instead of making promises that you'll never keep, by the end of February decide to create one presentation for your fellow members. It doesn't have to be long (unless you want to), maybe as short as 15-20 minutes on sum aspect of how you do something with computers, a software program that you use every day and can't live without, etc.

The computer is an amazing device. It's the first product that wasn't designed to a specific task. A toaster toasts, an iron irons, a car gets you from point A to point B. A computer does anything man can think of and code to accomplish.

Who would have thought that a bunch of 1s and 0s could create a picture better than film camera, or let us see into the human body and diagnose injuries and diseases we can't see. Allow us to create amazing music or create unbelievable maps and navigation devices.

Everyone of you uses this technology every day in very different ways. Share your experiences and maybe you just might open up a new path for one of our members.

# prepare and file your federal income taxes for free

by Ira Wilsker

It is that time of year again. We are in the process of receiving W-2 forms, 1099's of various types, and other documents that we will need in order to prepare our income taxes.

While many people still use the paper-pencil-calculator method of completing the mandated Federal tax forms, there are a variety of free online and downloadable tax software packages that are available, as well as several popular commercially available income tax packages, with TurboTax and H&R Block at Home (formerly known as TaxCut) being the top selling commercial packages. For those who prefer to have others prepare their taxes, CPA firms and store front tax services are readily available.

As it has done in the past, the IRS has compiled a list of 16 approved online tax preparation services on its FreeFile website ([apps.irs.gov/app/freeFile](https://apps.irs.gov/app/freeFile)) that will for free, prepare and e-file Federal income taxes for eligible individuals. While the eligibility standards

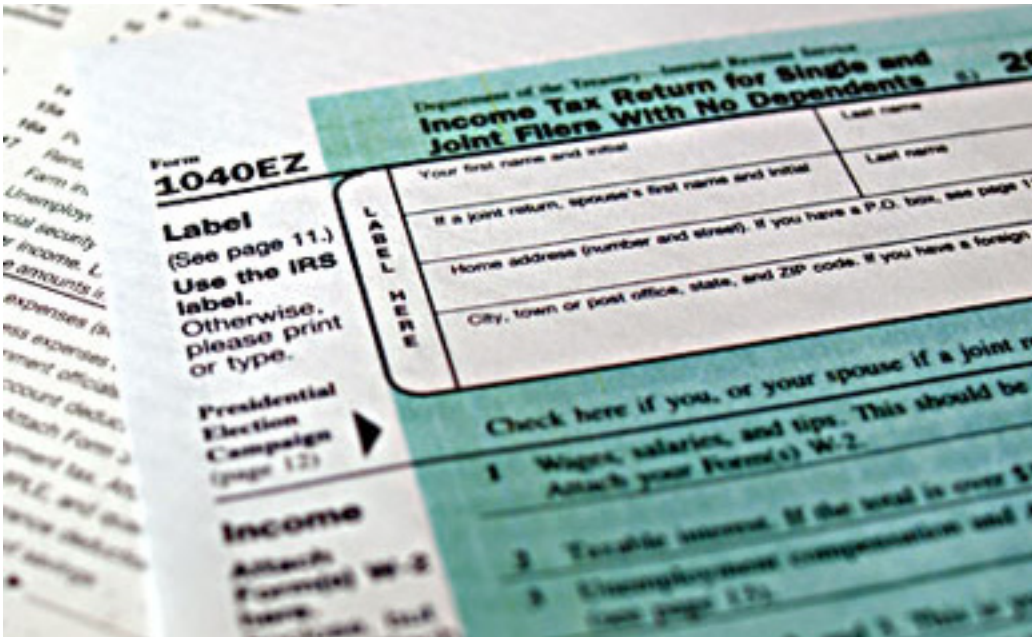


16 approved online tax preparation services are listed on FreeFile website.

for each of the IRS listed free services varies, the IRS still claims that about 70% of all individuals are eligible for the free filing services.

What is new is that the IRS (through a third party, [www.freefile-fillableforms.com](http://www.freefile-fillableforms.com)) has now made electronic versions of many of its forms available which can be completed by anyone for free, and e-filed without using one of the other free online services or other commercial tax preparation products. These free fillable forms can be filled out on the computer or printed and filled in by hand, and then e-filed. Unlike the online and commercial tax software that computes the users' taxes, the free fillable forms are just interactive

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blank forms, and do not carry out any calculations or give any advice.

Something else that is available this year is an independent third-party rating of the free tax services by Gizmo’s TechSupportAlert.com.

The Gizmo community based service has tested and rated all of the free tax services listed on the IRS FreeFile website, and has posted its reviews, ratings, and recommendations ([www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-income-tax-filing-software.htm](http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-income-tax-filing-software.htm)).

While the IRS FreeFile list has 16 services listed, the Gizmo ratings can

only recommend eight of those listed.

In addition to the eight free online services recommended by Gizmo, there is also one top-rated “10 Star” stand-alone tax program that can be downloaded and run on the user’s computer.

This downloadable free program is TaxACT Free Edition, and has earned “Gizmo’s Freeware award as the best product in its class!” ([www.taxact.com/s\\_taxact/free\\_taxact.asp](http://www.taxact.com/s_taxact/free_taxact.asp)). Available for Windows computers only, this free program is limited to a single tax return, but can process almost all Federal forms and schedules.

College students may find TaxACT Free Edition helpful as it also includes a “College Student Financial aid worksheet”.

Gizmo’s community of reviewers, in its ratings and evaluations, has recommended the following free online tax preparation services in this order based on their overall score: TaxACT Free Edition Online (rated a “10”), was also listed as “Gizmo’s Freeware award as the best product in its class!”; H&R Block’s Free File (9 star rating), which also offers free state filing for residents of AL, AR,

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FreeFile shows an overview of steps to take for filing taxes electronically.

The screenshot shows the IRS Free File website interface. At the top, there is the IRS logo and a search bar. Below the search bar are navigation tabs for various user groups: Individuals, Businesses, Charities & Non-Profits, Government Entities, Tax Professionals, Retirement Plans Community, and Tax Exempt Bond Community. The main heading is "Free File: Do Your Federal Taxes for Free". On the left, there are sections for "e-file Topics" and "IRS Resources". The central content area features a "freefile" logo with the tagline "IT'S FAST. IT'S SAFE. IT'S FREE." and a video player showing a three-step process. To the right of the video, there is text stating "EVERYONE is Eligible to Free File!" and a "freefile QuickLinks" section with buttons for "Pick a Free File company", "Use Free File Fillable Forms", and "Get more info...". Below the video and text, there are three numbered steps: 1. Get Ready, 2. Choose a Free File Option, and 3. e-file Your Return for Free!

**1. Get Ready**

- **Gather your tax information.** You need a copy of last year’s tax return and your W-2s, 1099s, etc.
- **Determine your AGI.** Check your last year’s tax return for a quick estimate of your adjusted gross income (AGI). Did you know that approximately 70% of all taxpayers have an AGI of \$57,000 or less?
- **Review the Free File FAQs.** Read the [Free File FAQs](#) and [Free File Fillable Forms FAQs](#) for more information about the program.

**2. Choose a Free File Option**

- **Use Free File Tax Software.** This program is available if your AGI is \$57,000 or less:
  - [Get help finding a Free File company](#) that’s right for you; or
  - [Browse the list of Free File companies](#) to choose your own.
- OR--
- **Use Free File Fillable Forms.** Everyone is eligible to use [Free File Fillable Forms](#), which are online versions of our paper forms designed for people comfortable preparing their own tax returns. This option does not offer state tax returns and performs only basic calculations.

**3. e-file Your Return for Free!**

- **e-file with Free File.** Transmit your return electronically by using secure IRS e-file.
- **Use direct deposit.** Get your tax refund quickly and safely, and you can [track your tax refund status](#) within 72 hours after you e-file.
- **Pay electronically.** Find out more about available [electronic payment options](#).

GA, IN, MI, MN, MO, NY, NC, OK, OR, SC, VA; TaxHawk (8 star rating); FreeTaxUSA IRS Free File Edition (8 stars); FileYourTaxes.com (7 stars); Jackson Hewitt Online (6 stars); TaxSlayer (6 stars); and TurboTax Freedom Edition (6 stars).

The Gizmo community also reviewed the IRS' new "IRS Free File Fillable Forms", but only gave it a rating of 5 stars (below Gizmo's minimum recommended rating of 6 stars).

While these free fillable forms are available to everyone, without limitations, Gizmo states that these, "... online versions of paper forms [are] designed for people comfortable preparing their own tax returns. No interview process. No help screens. Many values must be transferred manually from the Schedules to other places in the return. Many calculations must be done manually, ... Federal only, no state returns."

While the IRS claims that 70% of taxpayers can use the free online tax services for preparing and e-filing their taxes, eligibility for each of the 16 listed services varies. Generally, users of these free online services must have an adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$57,000 or less (the \$57,000 AGI is the upper limit for the IRS approved FreeFile services), with some services having even lower eligibility requirements.

The TurboTax Freedom Edition is one example, offering its free service to anyone with an adjusted gross income of \$31,000 or less, unless active duty military, then the \$57,000 or less eligibility kicks in. Anyone eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit can also use the TurboTax Freedom Edition. Several of the services have



Free fillable forms can be filled out on the computer.

eligibility restrictions based on the states of residence, and are either available only to residents of certain specified states, or are available to the residents of any states except those explicitly listed.

For example, there are several of the free filing services listed by the IRS that are available to residents of most states, but not Texas (and others). Those services as listed by the IRS that are explicitly not available to Texas residents are Online-TaxPros.com, Free1040TaxReturn, Tax Simple, 1040NOW.NET, and ezTaxReturn.com.

The other 11 free services listed by the IRS allow eligible Texas residents to use their services. Some of the services are for the residents of all states, while a few are only for residents of a small number of states; obviously this

can be a strong influence on which service to select based on the state of residency.

Some of the free services are only available for tax payers of certain age ranges (with some exceptions); TaxSlayer is for people age 25 or younger (with some exceptions), while FreeTaxUSA IRS Free File Edition is only available to people between the ages of 23 and 64. 1040NOW.NET is for age 72 or younger, while Free Tax-ACT is for those between 19 and 55.

Details and eligibility requirements for each of the IRS approved FreeFile providers is available on the IRS website at apps.irs.gov/app/freeFile, and should be reviewed before selecting a free online tax preparation service.

Since the eight Gizmo top-rated

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free online tax preparation services, and the free downloadable software from TaxAct, all use an interview method to collect relevant tax information, make all necessary calculations, and check for errors before e-filing, those would be the ones that I would recommend to eligible taxpayers with an adjusted gross income of less than \$57,000.

Since 70% of taxpayers can use these free online services to prepare and e-file their federal income taxes, eligible taxpayers can save a lot of time and money by utilizing these services.



*Ira Wilsker is an Associate Professor of Management Development at Lamar Institute of Technology in Beaumont, Texas; a Deputy Sheriff in Jefferson County, Texas; APCUG contributor and former APCUG Advisor and Board Director; and columnist for The Examiner newspaper in Beaumont.*

*For 16 years, he's hosted "My Computer Show" a call-in tech support show on KLVI radio, 560AM, 4-5 p.m. Pacific time, Mondays. The show streams live over the net at KLVI.com and on the free iHeartRadio app. His call-in number is 800-330-5584.*

## what the heck are hiberfil and pagefile?

by Linda Gonse

One day while purging unnecessary and unused files on my Windows XP computer, I spotted two massive files on the C:\ drive that perplexed me. One was hiberfil.sys at nearly 3.5 gigabytes! And, the other was pagefile.sys at 2 gigabytes!

I did not delete them right then and there. First, I checked them out on Google. As it turns out, both of the system files serve a purpose.

**Hiberfil.sys** is a file the system creates when the computer goes into hibernation mode. Windows uses the file when it is turned back on. If you don't need hibernation mode and want to delete the file you need to turn the hibernation option off before Windows will allow you to delete the file.

The file size depends largely on the size of active RAM in the computer as the contents of the file are basically a RAM image. That explains why the file was so large. My computer has 4G of RAM — although it only recognizes 3.25 gigabytes.

I couldn't see a need to have hibernate enabled on my computer so I disabled it by unchecking the Enable Hibernation box in Power Options in the Control Panel. (The procedure for turning hibernation off is significantly different between Windows XP and Vista.)

The next time I rebooted, though, my UPS scolded me for not having hibernation enabled. The UPS unit used that as storage space in case the power goes out and battery power has to kick in.

I was careful to research pagefile.sys before taking any kind of action that might compromise it.

Good thing, too. **Pagefile.sys** is the virtual memory file Windows uses. Typically, when installed, Windows sets the size of the file at around 1-1/2 times the physical memory size. However, the size may vary depending on the amount of free disk space when the file is created and other factors. The default size generally works fine but it can be changed. Windows uses this file for its normal operation, but if you really need the space you can delete it after turning the virtual memory option off. Just be aware that this can cause extreme instability in Windows — even causing it to stop working. Yikes!

Back in the old 3.11 Windows days, a file like this was called a swap file. Windows used the hard disk space even then to simulate extra memory. A swap file helped when printing large documents, among other uses.

Not surprisingly, experts advise leaving pagefile.sys alone and to look elsewhere for files to delete!



by Wil Wakely, SCG  
Seniors Computer Group

This article might be a bit “techy” for some of us, but it is important to know a bit about what goes on inside of our computer so when something bad happens, we have a clue as to what might be wrong, and we can save time and money by not having to hire a high-priced technician to fix a simple problem.

First, let’s review the hardware. The power supply converts the house electricity, 110 Volts AC (alternating current), to the appropriate lower DC (direct current) voltages that the rest of the computer requires. It contains a fan to keep it cool, which is about the only noise you should hear. There is one large printed circuit board inside called the “motherboard,” because it contains connections, or “slots,” where other smaller

“daughter boards” can be installed that do specialized functions. The motherboard is essentially the “head” of the computer and contains the major memory and connections for all of the other components. It has connectors for the keyboard, mouse, hard drives, modem, video, sound, fan and USB devices. It also contains the CPU, Central Processing Unit, a large computer chip which is the genius that runs everything. The latest versions of the CPU can do over three billion calculations per second, so it is really loafing most of the time. It is truly multi-tasking which means that it can do a variety of things at the same time.

So here’s what happens when you first turn on your computer and it “boots”. Booting comes from “bootstrapping,” or lifting oneself by the bootstraps. The computer needs to know some rudimentary facts about itself before it can come fully alive. This information is retained in a computer chip on the motherboard called a ROM (Read-only Memory), which permanently retains certain information without requiring any power. There is a small disk-type battery on the motherboard which allows this ROM to be read.

This battery also keeps the clock running while the computer is off, so if the clock time begins acting strangely, the battery may need to be replaced; however, it is usually good for years. This ROM contains the BIOS (by-ose) which stands for Basic Input Output System, and instructs the

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## computer basics you should know



Booting your  
computer comes from  
“bootstrapping,” or  
lifting oneself by the  
bootstraps.

computer where to find more information in order to fully start up. A process called POST (Power On Self Test) runs to test the memory and make sure the rest of the computer is healthy. It gives a series of Beep Codes to indicate the state of health. One beep means everything is okay. A Google search of Beep Codes will tell you what's wrong if you get weird beeps while Booting. If you press the Del(ete) key immediately after pressing the start switch, a screen will show the BIOS settings, which can be modified if necessary. Be careful!

Hard drives are so important to the computer that it helps to understand how they work:

Think of them like the old jukeboxes — lots of LP records that each can be played with a moveable tone arm. The hard drive has hard metal platters, unlike old floppy disks which were flexible. They contain tiny magnetic spots which, depending upon how they are magnetized, indicate a one or a zero, which is the binary

language the computer understands. A moveable “head,” like the tone arm, “reads” the magnetic state of the spots, called magnetic domains, and “writes” to change the magnetic polarity. Rather than a spiral track like an LP, the hard drive has ever larger concentric circles called cylinder tracks. The platter is also divided up into sectors like pieces of a pie. So to find a file, the head moves to a specific cylinder track and sector and reads the data that is there. A large table of contents called a Partition Table contains the track/sector location of all the files.

Obviously, if this table becomes corrupted, the files cannot be located. Fortunately, a backup copy is automatically retained. However, if the hard drive dies, this backup copy is useless. (Backup! Backup! Backup elsewhere!)

While booting, the hard drive is recognized and a small area at the front of it is defined as the MBR, Master Boot Record. This contains

enough information about the hard drive to locate the OS (Operating System) like Windows and load it.

The OS has its own subconscious memory called the Registry which contains a wealth of information about the computer and files. This now loads and can take quite a while if it is large. If this Registry file or the MBR gets corrupted, it is a major problem.

Fortunately, backup copies are automatically maintained. (Backup! Backup! Backup!)

Now we are almost home free. The next thing that happens is to load the StartUp files. These are programs that start automatically when you turn on your computer. If there are a lot of these it can drastically slow down the boot time. You can see and change these Startups by typing “run msconfig” and clicking on the StartUp tab. Check or uncheck the programs you desire. Keep these to a minimum for faster booting.

At this point Windows should be running and you are a happy camper to have full control. As you can see, lots of things happen before you are allowed at the controls, and all it takes is a minor glitch in any of these booting processes for your computer to fail to boot. It's amazing that it works at all!

Frequent backups of your hard drives are the solution to major computer headaches. It is not a case of ‘if’ your computer crashes, it is ‘when.’

A hard drive (right) can be likened to the old jukebox (left) which had an array of records and moveable tone arm. Hard drives have several platters and read and write heads.



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# time for renewal?

(3 mos. expired)

NOV. 1 Bill McGraw

(2 mo. expired)

DEC. 1 Carl Westberg

JAN. 1 Joe Gionet

LeRoy Kaump

FEB. 1 Mike Lyons,

Charlie Moore

MAR. 1 Frank Bollinger

Kevin Joe

APR. 1 Lothar Loehr

David Musser

MAY 1 Lloyd Boutwell

*submitted by Charlie Moore*

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# january raffle winners

<b>MGI Photosuite III</b>	<b>Value \$89</b>
Carl Westberg	Winner
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Lloyd Boutwell	Winner
<b>Sunbelt Vipre AV</b>	<b>Value \$39</b>
Dave Musser	Winner
<b>Microapp Fish</b>	
<b>Screensaver</b>	<b>Value \$19</b>
Lothar Loehr	Winner
<b>MS Virtualization w/Hyper-V</b>	<b>Value \$50</b>
Sid Liptz	Winner
<b>Mixcraft</b>	<b>Value \$29</b>
Larry Klees	Winner
<b>SmithMicro Aquazone</b>	<b>Value \$29</b>
Frank Bollinger	Winner
<b>Sunbelt Vipre AV</b>	<b>Value \$39</b>
Mike Lyons	Winner
<b>Mixcraft</b>	<b>Value \$29</b>
Charlie Moore	Winner

*submitted by Charlie Moore*

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Areas of Interest/Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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*Meetings are the second Tuesday of every month. See [www.orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.org) for more information.*

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Tim O'Reilly, President  
O'Reilly Media

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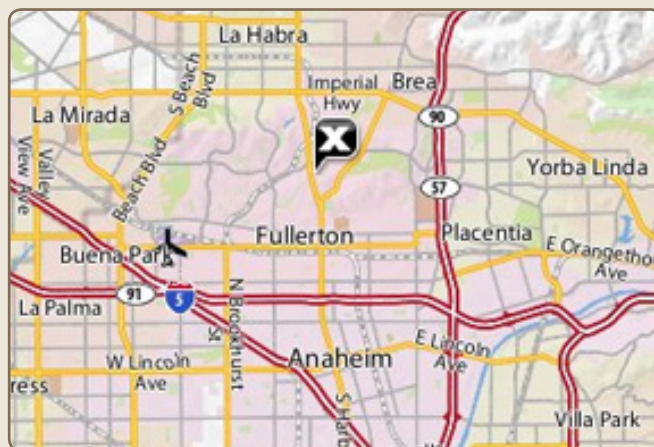


## where are the meetings, when are they held?

*next meeting: Tuesday, March 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!



Go to [www.orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.org) for the Yahoo! location map