



SCUG REPORT

Sarnia Computer User's Group

Award Winning Magazine & Website

www.scug.ca



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Inside This Issue

Club Information	2
Secretary's Notes	3
Compuprize Winners	4
Shareware Report	4
SIG Reports	5
Finacial Report.....	6
TID BITS	7
Ira Wilsker - Resolutions.....	8
Everyone is a Publisher.....	9
Selling on Ebay.....	10
SCUG Book Review.....	11
Does Microsoft Listen?.....	12
SCUG Book Review.....	15
Google's Gmail.....	15
Review Market Research.....	16
APCUG News.....	18
SCUG ADS and Pricing.....	19
Information on ALL Meetings..	20

SCUG EVENTS

Digital SIG

Next Meeting on June 1st.



Windows SIG

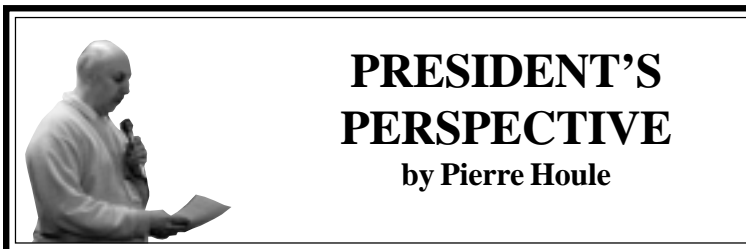
Next Meeting
June 16th.



General Meeting

Next Meeting on June 29th.

Sean Hanlon, informs SCUG that HP will be bringing a colour lazer printer, colour photo printer and discussing the attributes of these. As well, HP has a special door-prize, but what it is we cannot say...we are all sworn to secrecy. You will have to come to find out...also bring along your gadget and printer questions and anyother inventions that HP produce. You will find this meeting VERY informative.



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Pierre Houle

Editor's Note: *Please give some consideration to becoming a SCUG Volunteer. You need very little knowledge, because we have the experts standing by, more than will to assist you in any position. We need new blood, people are worn out and the time has come to take SCUG further into the future.*

Tonight is your chance to make a difference. Tonight nominations open for the SCUG executive elections. If you know someone in the club who can contribute, please nominate him/her for a position. Some people just need a nudge. If you are approached, consider it your big chance to guide SCUG to greater things! You will know the satisfaction received from being a contributing member.

With your help, we will have a successful election at the June meeting, and the SCUG will continue to be a source of information, inspiration and friendship to its members.

A word of warning! DO NOT venture on-line without your computer being protected! I recently built a computer, and installed Windows XP. Before installing updates, patches, and virus scanners, I went on-line to download the latest versions of Zonealarm, Spybot, and Ad-Aware. I have done this many times before without problems, but this time I was surprised to find the computer was infested within ten minutes! The hard drive had so many viruses and spyware that it could no longer function. After much aggravation, the hard drive had to be reformatted. Fortunately, all I lost was an hour or so of my time, and no information. I know of at least two other individuals who somehow left their computers vulnerable, and paid dearly with year's worth of lost information.

Make sure your computer has an up to date virus scanner, spyware removal program and firewall program (or, better yet, a router or both) before going on-line. Practice safe computing by keeping Windows up to date with the latest security patches. Scan your computer regularly, including e-mail. Never open an attachment. Never accept downloads from web pages. Become informed about threats and how to protect yourself. The Internet is a great resource. Practice safe computing so you can enjoy its benefits.

**Sarnia Computer Users' Group Est. 1982
2004 - 2005 Club Officers**

President	Pierre Houle	president@scug.ca
Vice President	Iain Smy	vicepresident@scug.ca
Treasurer	Dorothy Alexander	treasurer@scug.ca
Recording Secretary	Tom Deeprose	secretary@scug.ca
Membership Secretary	Val Conway	membership@scug.ca
Shareware Librarian	Dan Bilger	library@scug.ca
Editor - SCUG Report	Greg West	editor@scug.ca
Public Relations	Norm Lamoureux	pr@scug.ca
Program Coordinator	Bill Colotelo	coordinator@scug.ca

VISIT SCUG ONLINE: www.scug.ca

(SIG) Special Interest Group Leaders

Digital Photography	- Fred Abma	- digitalsig@scug.ca
Windows Group	- Pierre Houle	- windows@scug.ca

If you want SCUG to form a **new** Special Interest Group, please email president@scug.ca with your idea!



Greg West - Editor

Editor's Korner

Send Letters to: editor@scug.ca

We Are Not Geeks!

Help us spread the SCUG word. Over the past few weeks, Iain (SCUG's Webmaster) and I were out on the town, no, we were not frequenting the local bars or strip clubs; we were actually attempting to get the SCUG message out there



Vic Sterry
Proofreader

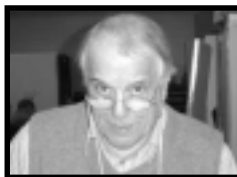
by visiting with local editors and coffee shop owners, as well Iain spoke with a few Internet servers about some new ideas we are working on for the club. In our travels we foundt that in far too many cases many people in Sarnia think of our club as a bunch of computer geeks who are untouchables, or rather too far advanced for the beginning or average computer user. This is wrong and we need to get the message out that we are here for all types of computer users...not only just Windows users but Mac users as well, including beginner, average, and advanced levels.. So, spread the word, tell someone this month about your club, and ask them to come out to the next meeting. Word of mouth is the best advertising and helps our club grow.

To help us rid ourselves of this concept of being some unique and sometimes intimidating club, Iain is using the front page of our website to get this message out. In part Iain points out:

Welcome to SCUG - Sarnia Computer Users' Group

Do you use a computer? Do you need help? Do you need a friend? Even if you are an experienced computer user, the Sarnia Computer Users' Group welcomes you! We aren't ALL nerds, we're folks just like you who feel the need to master these beasts and not let them intimidate US!

So, please spread the word, tell a co-worker, a friend, a neighbour about SCUG. **Email us: [editor@scug](mailto:editor@scug.ca)**



Your Secretary's Notes

by Tom Deeprose
secretary@scug.ca

SCUG Executive Meeting May 2nd, 2005
at St. James' Church,
140 Lansdowne Rd. North.

1. Secretary's Input- Approval of the April 4th /05 Minutes. -Item 12 should read that a Thumb Drive for the presenter's use was to be considered, and not purchased as written. Apart from this correction, accepted as written.

2. Membership Report. Val's statistics showed that as of today, Membership stood at 93 (plus 45 Associates) with no new members or associates. It includes 5 member and 2 associate renewals and 2 members and 1 associate lapsed. Meeting attendance was 57 for Iain's Web Presentation, a goodly turnout. We will stay with 100 for the Newsletter.

3. Vice President's Input: Iain reported that no one has yet come forward as a firm candidate for any of the open Executive posts although there have been a couple of people showing interest. The Volunteer's Register is working better for the SIG meetings than the General Meetings.

4. Treasurer's Report - Dorothy. The financial statement was accepted as written. The unusually large capital expenditure was fully discussed and approved. See Item 12, New Business, for details. A minor confusion with paper quality, affecting the total cost of printing the Newsletter, has been resolved.

5. Software Library Report - Dan At the April meeting: 42 CD's were given out and 42 returned. No CD sales. The Freeware/Shareware of the Month is still under consideration

6. Meeting Program. The feedback from Iain's presentation on Website Basics was very well received and clarified many members' ideas on this subject. Future Meetings: May- Erik Burggraaf with his Market Research Program used in setting up a new business. Pierre will discuss Eric's set up requirements for his presentation. June- Hewlett Packard are on line for a presentation on some of their latest technology. Next season's list possibles include Ebtech, Scott Elliott, counterfeiting from the OPP, and a suggestion from Bruce Ritchie for a presentation on cleaning up viruses and the best way to protect browsers from picking up viruses from

websites.

7. Newsletter. Greg is not entirely satisfied with the quality, finding it adequate but not up to the standard of his home printed version. - A computer column by Greg and Iain is in the formative stages with "Business Trends" and maybe even "Sarnia This Week" at a later date. Stayed tuned!

8. Webmaster's Input. Iain reported that visits to the SCUG Website are averaging 89/day and are truly international.

9. Program Co-ordinator & Accommodations. Bill reported no change in the latter. Reviews initiated totaled 22 for this season, believed to be a record. A new Review Committee has been formed with the following members: Pierre Houle, Paul Witheridge, Val Conway, Bill Colotelo, Jim La Pointe and Greg West (books only)

10. Promotions - Norm Chesley Colwell won the 50/50 draw at the April Meeting Future Prizes will be- For May, a CD case, Adobe Acrobat 6, InkSaver and paper. For June, a DVD burner, DVD blanks & case

11. SIG news and ideas: - Digital - Fred is doing fine: May's subject; Photo tips - Windows - going well: May subject TBA.

12. New Business - The decision to buy the new projector at approximately \$1000 was an Exec. decision, fully discussed by e-mail in the interim from the last Exec. Meeting. It was decided to hang on to the old one until we are fully at ease with the new one. Its final disposal will be decided later.

- The Website support Hard Drive and case were purchased (at about \$140) and put in the Webmasters care.

-A proposal to relocate the Newsletter Desk to the far side of the meeting room to decrease congestion at the entrance approved as an experiment.

-A need has arisen to discuss the handling of lapsed memberships of those taking extended winter breaks and who cannot be contacted. To date, this has been a discretionary decision by Val but a procedure should be formulated. It was decided that an announcement at the October & November Meetings would be used to publicly air this subject and get some feed back.

13. Old Business - APCUG -news and discounts. No recent input.

Next Executive Meeting, May 30th @ St. James'.

Welcome New Members:

Ray Macklin, Wilfrid Coulter, Lynn Pugsley, Dave Tully, and Elly Henne

We had 3 new members (Lynn Pugsley, Dave Tully, and Elly Henne) join at the last Digital Meeting of whom we graciously welcome to SCUG.

Welcome back

Paul & Jean Hicks, John & Ann VandenHoven, Dick Carpani, Mike Lyon,



Dan Bilger

**SHAREWARE
CD
SCUG Librarian
library@scug.ca**

Welcome to SCUG. We have finished the first year of the Shareware CD. I heard one constructive criticism to add a text file to let you know what was on the CD. I will be implementing that this year. If there are other ideas that I have not thought of please let me know along with favourite programs that you think others in the club might enjoy or find useful.

This Month: May: HandySnap 0.2b for Win9x/ME/Win2k/XP (1661 kb)

Author: WisePixel Multimedia

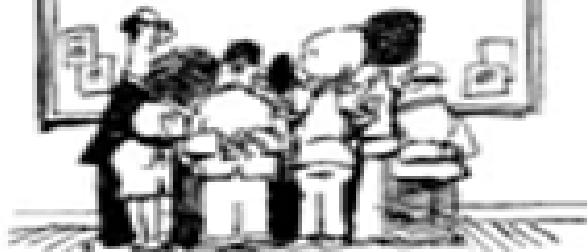
Description: HandySnap is a compact and elegant screen capture utility with several very useful tools. You get exactly what you need - a tool for screen capture and for doing annotations on your screenshots. It's fast, easy and effective.

Compuprize Winner

Chesley Colwell
won the 50/50 draw



**Don't forget your
compuprize tickets tonight!**



In addition to the standard set of tools like window capture, area capture and entire screen capture there are 2 simple but irreplaceable tools: "sprite" and "text label". The first one allows you to insert a sprite into the captured image (sprite is one of the predefined PNG images located in a special folder. You can use any of the several predefined sprites or add your own ones to the library). The second tool will let you to insert a custom text. Together these tools let you annotate your screenshot in the way you wish.

April: Award-winning registry cleaner to fix Windows errors and optimize software performance.

Registry Mechanic is an advanced registry cleaner for Windows that can safely clean and repair problems with your registry in a few simple mouse clicks! Easily fix problems with the Windows registry that are a common cause of crashes and error messages.

March: Guard Bar-Spyware-Adware Blocker 1.0 for Win9x/NT4/ME/Win2k/XP

The program blocks spyware and adware from infecting your PC, and eliminates pop-up ads. It can clean cookies, temporary Internet files, and recent and history files. You can get your local weather information on the toolbar and search the Internet from any Web page. You can search Google, Yahoo, MSN, AOL, and Lycos, with a click of the mouse directly from the toolbar.

Jetico Personal Firewall 1.0.1.47 for Win9x/NT4/ME/Win2k/XP

Jetico Personal Firewall protects your computer from unwanted hacker's attacks from outside as well as from malicious programs "living" secretly in

Continued on page 10

Special Interest Groups

SIG REPORTS



Windows SIG Computer Meeting

Pierre Houle
windows@scug.ca

Windows SIG Synopsis for May 2005

Twenty-eight members attended the May Windows SIG.

Pierre led the session with a talk on customizing the Windows Desktop. Topics included: customizing the desktop with custom wallpaper and screen savers; customizing the task bar, including location, toolbars, size and function; customizing the Start Menu, including number of entries, and adding fly-out menus. Pierre then asked those present to share their customizing techniques. Several people described their settings, which proved to be quite informative.

The second half of the meeting was a question and answer session. There were many questions and informative comments and answers. Thanks to everyone for participating. Those present, and those on the permanent notes list will receive notes on the meeting, including questions asked and answers given. Also, the notes will be posted on the SCUG website under Windows Notes.

The next Windows SIG meeting will be Thursday, June 16th, 7:00 P.M., at Grace United Church, room 10. The topic will be RSS Feeds by Iain Smy. RSS Feeds are newsgathering services that display news headlines for quick scanning. Also, as usual, we will have a Q and A session.

Also, as this is the last meeting of this SIG for the season, we will be discussing the SIG leadership for next year. Come out and give your opinion.

Editor's Note: *SCUG is growing in membership each month...these guy must be doing something right...way to go SIG Leaders!!!*



Digital SIG Photography

Fred Abma
digitalsig@scug.ca



Members listen intently as Fred answers questions.



Meeting Report of the Digital Camera Group.

Thirty-one people attended the May meeting of the Digital Photography Group at St. James Anglican Church, 140 Lansdowne Sarnia. Since I was in charge of the program there is not a lot to report. I showed a large 16 X 20 photograph produced from a 3.2 megapixel camera and then I talked about how to take better pictures. I showed about ninety photos demonstrating various ways of taking and showing better photographs. Many people take pictures but it takes planning and seeing the picture in order to produce better pictures. The new Digital Projector did justice to my pictures. Fred Abma, Leader of the Digital Photography Group.



There is nothing like Fred's photography "tips and tricks to generate enthusiasm at the Digital SIG.

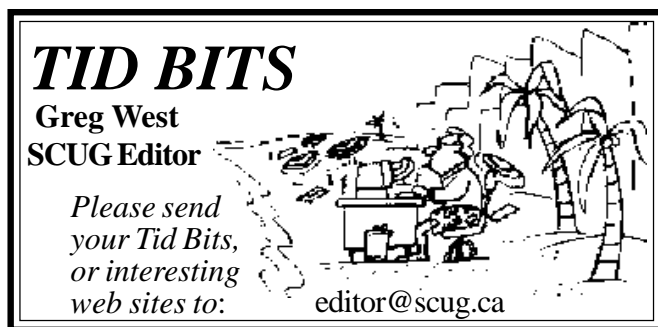


Fred listens to a member's photo question.

Next Digital Photography meeting: June 1st.

SORRY

This page is for members only.



Email Saves - text & attachments...

In the process of making this newsletter I receive much information via email, text, pictures, PDFs and many other types of files. To make my life easier I save these emails into a specific folder and that folder is saved in the Start (bottom right corner of your screen) until the newsletter is complete. So how do you save these emails and their contents to a folder? One way is while in the email program you can open up the specific email you want to save and then click on File/Save As, then save it as whatever format you need. Text only will only save the text and omit the attachments. There is a much easier way to do this. Simply open up the email program, left click on the said email, then drag and drop it into the folder (or desktop) you want to work on it. This way the entire email travels to the folder, including all files and attachments. The nice thing about this is that the email goes to the folder you drag it to; as well it also remains in your email program - 2 copies saved in one easy step.

* * *

Airline Seat Pitch and Laptops

I know, what the heck is a seat pitch and what does it have to do with laptops? Well, anyone who has ever flown in a crowded airplane and wanted to work on their laptop knows that the first thing you realize is a spot to put your coffee, and with a laptop open on the small foldout table there isn't enough room. As well, with the two people on either side of you, well your elbow room is limited and the situation is become quickly complicated. Now for the grand finally, the guy in the seat in front of you reclines his back rest almost into your lap spilling your coffee and you laptop automatically closes.

At first, you think that your laptop screen is crushed and to your amazement (or luck) it is not. You now put your gun away, but reluctantly. However, so much for working on your laptop for the next several hours while bozo, in the seat directly in front of you, snores quite comfortably.

But wait, there is help. Yes, it is in the form of "seat pitch". Seat pitch is the distance from one point on a

seat to the equivalent point on the seat in front. According to James Martin, "U.S. airline's domestic flight coach seats range in seat pitch from approximately 30 to 36 inches, with many at 31 inches. The larger the seat pitch, the more distance you'll have from the seat in front of you."

For those of you who are going to fly somewhere this summer you might want to check out one of the best sites for airline seat arrangements and guidelines..and remember to book your seat early ahead of bozo!
 Seat Guru - <http://www.seatguru.com>

* * *

WIFI Locator (Wireless Internet Spots)

<http://www.jiwire.com>

With this site you simply enter an address or City or Postal Code, and you can check out the places you intend to travel to this summer for a wireless connection. You have the choice of being selective by choosing: Cafes, Hotels, Airports, Truck Stops, and/or "All Location Types". You can even just check for the FREE WIFI spots within your destination. Oh yes, don't forget to pack along your laptop LOL.

* * *

Ok, there is a new kid on the block this week and he is bent on protecting our emails from SPAM in the MailApp of your choice...oh yes it is another one of those amazing Freewares, and it is free. As most will contest not every email program the comes built into your mail program. Some simply do not do the proper job. According to PCWorld some email spam protections are virtually useless, giving one a false sense of security. They are claiming that "though Microsoft has added features to both its e-mail programs for improved protection from spam, Outlook is the only one of the two that has a junk mail filter; it works by moving suspected spam to a junk folder based on the sender's address and a static (and inaccessible) list of spammish words." They go on to say that the new outlook 2003's filter misses too many at the low selection, whereas at the high level it won't allow many legit emails.

Spam Bayes is the new kid and it seems this program is worth a try. You can download it from:
 (simply type this into your URL box):
find.pcworld.com/47130

If you do try tis out let me know how it works. unfortunately I won't be able to do this for a while as I am being held up in Sarnia General with a severe case of pneumonia and will incapacitated for some time yet. My was horrified when aske her to bring me my laptop...but the show must go on.



Current Hoaxes and Urban Legends

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.snopes.com>

<http://urbanlegends.about.com>

Some of us find them cute, entertaining, exciting, and fun, while others of us find them embarrassing, irritating, and a waste of time. Many forward them believing that they are doing good, or warning of harm, or forward



them because they came from an allegedly reliable source. A few are so convinced of their truth that I am explicitly requested to put them in this column, or announce them on my radio and TV show. What I am referring to are the hoaxes and urban legends currently circulating on the internet that many of us seem to love to forward to everyone in our email address books. Many of

these hoaxes and urban legends have a grain of truth or logic in them, while many others are totally lacking any basis in fact, yet many of us still enjoy forwarding them without a second thought.

In order to avoid embarrassment I strongly recommend that everyone tempted to forward such emails should check out their validity prior to another mass send to all we know. There are several excellent websites that compile information on these emails, and a quick check can save us from the embarrassment of sending out a hoax, and preserve our personal credibility. If we find that the interesting email is indeed true, we should still consider not forwarding them to everyone, as many of our intended recipients may not find our interests to their likings, and may even be offended that we consumed their valuable bandwidth and time. Typically, when I receive one of these from an acquaintance, if I am not already familiar with it, I check it out; if it is true

“...there is an email circulating with a virus that can not be detected by contemporary antivirus software and that if you open the email, your computer will be effectively destroyed...”

(a minority of the time), I may choose to selectively forward it only to those that I think may be interested in the topic, but I never send it to everyone in my address book. If it is false, I usually reply back to the sender that it is indeed false, and include a link documenting the falsehood. Some emailers are so humiliated that I caught them in an inaccuracy that they reply in anger back to me, despite the incontrovertible fact that it was they who had sent the bogus email.

To verify the authenticity or falsehoods of these oft forwarded emails, I use two primary, and several secondary resources. Primarily I use the excellent and comprehensive urban legends resource of Snopes, at www.snopes.com. Well organized in an easy to navigate menu format, along with a competent search engine makes Snopes an excellent choice to check out the validity of questionable emails.

My other primary resource for checking the legitimacy of potential hoax emails is urbanlegends.about.com. This site is frequently updated with the latest hoaxes in circulation, and can reliably document their validity.

A common topic of these questionable emails is virus warnings. For this reason, most of the major antivirus software publishers also compile lists of hoaxes, mostly virus related, on their websites. I utilize these sites as secondary resources. It is also notable that old hoaxes and virus warnings never seem to die out, and periodically reappear. One that has been documented to be in circulation for over six years, but is again currently making the rounds in mass emailings is the "It takes guts to say Jesus" virus hoax.

This email, in several iterations, warns that according to CNN, AOL, McAfee, and other reputable resources, that there is an email circulating with a virus that can not be detected by contemporary antivirus software and that if you open the email, your computer will be effectively destroyed. Every one of the hoax and antivirus websites list this as a hoax, yet countless copies are being forwarded by well intentioned people trying to warn their acquaintances. Some of the variations even go on to state that while it may be false, it is so important that it is being forwarded anyway. Another similar email warning that does have some validity is the one that says "I've Got Your E-mail on My Account".

It goes on to warn that someone is using "your" email account to spread a virus, and I have received 10 copies. Continued on page 9.

Continued from page 8 - Hoaxes
ies of it, all with your email address and ISP in the header. The email then says, "I have copied all the mail text in the windows text-editor for you & zipped then. Make sure, that this mails (sic) don't come in my mail-box again." Attached to this dire warning is a file, commonly named "your_text.zip". If opened, the file will infest your computer with the Sober.N worm. If it infects your computer, Sober.N will terminate the antivirus and firewall software on your computer, rendering it vulnerable to further attack, and then forwarding itself to everyone in your address book! This Sober.N warning is the exception to the rule that most warnings of this type are bogus.

Another dire warning, which I am receiving multiple copies of, is the warning that a directory of cell phone numbers is being compiled to enable telemarketers to call us on our cell phones, consuming our valuable supply of limited minutes. This hoax, which is now circulating for the second time, is listed by several sites as one of the top hoaxes in circulation. The grain of truth in this is that most cell phone carriers are instituting a "411" directory service of cell phone numbers, this list will emphatically not be for sale to telemarketers.

To see the latest hoaxes in circulation, as well as the ones in widest distribution, check out the hoax and urban legend websites, or the website of your favorite antivirus software. You may find some of the hoaxes actually quite entertaining, and wonder how intelligent people could fall for such silly emails.

* * *

Everyone's a Publisher, and Blogs are Our Printing Presses

By Gabe Goldberg
APCUG Advisor
Columnist, AARP Computers
and Technology Website

Just when we think we understand technology and its buzzwords, it all changes. E-mail, chat rooms, Web boards, instant messaging, and cell phone cameras -- haven't they been around forever? But one of this year's hot words is still a bit mysterious: blog. It's neither the villain in a Star Wars movie nor a weather phenomenon: it's simply an abbreviation for "Web log". A blog is an online diary or journal, usually casual and open for all to read.

Blog topics vary as widely as the people who create them. They can be personal how-was-my-day recordkeeping; focus on topics such as politics, tech-

nology, religion, etc.; and include pointers to other online resources -- such as other blogs!

To be interesting and effective, blogs need constant care and feeding. Blogs attract visitors, links, and buzz by being timely, so people are unlikely to visit blogs that don't frequently show new and interesting content.

But before you learn to read blogs -- and it's often as simple as visiting Web sites! -- you'll need a reason to do so. Searching Google for "blog" and "senior citizen" yields almost 30,000 hits. That's too many to explore but shows that blogging offers something for all ages. So I'll explore a few interesting blogs, then describe ways to explore the "blogosphere" (the world-wide and ever-growing collection of blogs).

Hosted on a colleague's Web site, Dr. John Huth's blog [jimbuie.blogs.com/john_huth/] highlights his personal crusade to reduce senior citizens' isolation through computers. Recent posts include "Video-Conferencing: the Killer Application to Reduce Isolation and Depression Among the Elderly" and "Bedside Computers in Hospitals".

TravelPod [www.travelpod.com/], an elaborate and polished Web site, describes itself as the Web's "original travel blog". The assortment of travel journals, travelogues, travelers, and destinations inspires me to hit the road! You can browse highlighted stories or search on interests. For example, having enjoyed a trip to Denmark about 15 years ago, I found dozens of bloggers discussing the country.

Web site Moreover collects news and information from thousands of editorial sites and more than a million blogs. Its "Consumer: Senior News" page [p.moreover.com/cgi-local/page?index_seniors] includes varied material such as travel, insurance, retirement, and crime.

John Woolington hosts a simple but deep technology blog well worth visiting [maturetechnology.blogspot.com/]. Titled "Technology Is Not The Simple Life", it includes observations and opinions about coping with change.

For anything-goes fun, visit Wil Mosher's blog [dailysnooze.blogspot.com/]. He's a curmudgeon and proud of it, noting that he "hides in his hole by day, emerging at night to frolic and fornicate in the moonlight... When he gets off the couch!"

Ken's Weblog [kengory.blogspot.com/] proudly shows a fellow's family, friends, politics, humor, and favorite Web links. It's clear that having a blog is like having your personal TV station or magazine!

Gossip Cooler [www.seniorcitizens.com/weblog/gossipcooler.html] is a daily blog about growing older. The site it's on has useful info and links interleaved with many advertisements; since there's no hint who writes or runs the site, be careful.

A woman artist/activist/writer's blog [windchimewalker.blogspot.com/] offers her responses to world events, disability, and life. Describing herself as a "raging granny", she leaves no doubt where she stands on issues. Blogs like this show the Internet's power to share ideas and create communities by allowing readers to comment on what Patricia says.

A simple blog [www.lazydazers.com] lets you read about and see pictures of a couple's RV travels and adventures.

Finally, the Ageless Project [jenett.org/ageless/] is a fascinating compilation of Web sites (not all are blogs) illustrating that "the personal, creative side of the web is diverse and ageless".

Blogs and RSS are becoming increasingly popular and are getting good press coverage [techweb.com/article/showArticle.jhtml?articleId=57700173].

You can visit the blogs I've referenced as simple Web pages with normal hyperlinks. Many blogs are also readable via RSS (Rich Site Summary), an Internet technology which can bring material from multiple publishers/blogs to you as it's published, without your having to visit multiple Web sites. I read RSS "feeds" via my email software, Mozilla Thunderbird, and through a Web site which collects RSS feeds [www.bloglines.com/myblogs].

This article appeared originally on AARP's Computers and Technology Web site, <www.aarp.org/computers>. (c) AARP 2005. Permission is granted for reprinting and distribution by non-profit organizations with text reproduced unchanged and this paragraph included.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

Shareware Continued from page 4
side your computer's memory and hard drive. Three levels of protection are included: low-level network packets filtering, application-level network events filtering and filtering of user-level process activity.

Jetico Personal Firewall checks every packet that comes in or out of your computer. Using configuration sets for Security Policy you define how your computer is connected to the local network and the whole Internet. Your computer may be completely hidden from any unfriendly attempts to access your hard drive while you are able to access any web sites you want and you decide on which applications are allowed to access Internet and which are not.

With Jetico Personal Firewall you feel secure, safe and protected while enjoying all Internet activities.

February: PC Security Test 2005 3.3 for Win9x/ME/Win2k/XP is a free program for Windows that checks computer security against viruses, spyware and hackers.

January: Backup4all 1.3.0 (last freeware version) OS: Win95/98/Me/NT/XP/2000. Backup4all is a powerful backup utility..

November: Some Christmas fun including a Christmas Screen saver and a couple of games DUOTris: Truly original and hugely addictive arcade puzzle action. and Hex: Hex is a Tetris game based on hexagonal cells, thus making the game more addictive and a bit more difficult.

October: Starter 5.6.1.38 Highly configurable and easy to use utility for managing your windows startup. One can choose which programs are allowed to run when Windows is starting up. Disable an annoying application in one click of mouse! Terminate an unwanted or hanging process, even a Windows service. Freeware among a lot of analogues.

September: on the CD, you will find: Mozilla: (formerly Netscape navigator) Deepnet Explorer: the first web browser to offer fully integrated P2P file sharing capabilities and a built-in RSS/ATOM news reader.

.Next month bring the CD back with you and exchange it for another CD with a new program loaded on it.

Repeat this procedure each month. If you forget to bring your CD back next month, you can wait until the following month or you can get another CD for the nominal price of \$1.00 .

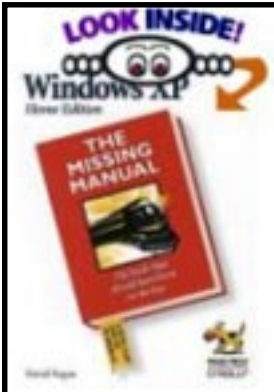
Please Note: Ta-Da, at the June meeting. This CD will contain the entire

year of the SCUG SHAREWARE LIBRARY programs and it is yours to keep

Non-members can purchase a CD for only \$2.00, however

when you do become a SCUG member you will then receive the full CD included with the price of your membership. Utility Disks - \$1.00 each diskette
Spotlight on Shareware

There is a link on SCUG's www.scug.ca where you can download any of the programs that were listed in the Spotlight on Shareware in past issues of this Newsletter.



SCUG Book Review
WINDOWS XP
HOME EDITION
THE MISSING
MANUAL
 by **Dorothy Alexander**
 Sarnia Computer User's Group
www.scug.ca

Size: 612 pages paper back edition

Cost: \$36.95 Cdn.

Author: David Pogue

Published by: Pogue Press/O'Reilly

See: www.missingmanuals.com

This book, **WINDOWS XP HOME EDITION, THE MISSING MANUAL**, Second Edition, is one of a series of "The Missing Manual" books which should have been included when you purchased the software. Author is David Pogue, a New York Times technology columnist, who also wrote "WINDOWS XP, PRO".

I volunteered to do the review on this book in anticipation of upgrading from Windows 98SE in the near future. After listening to discussions of the advantages of XP I thought I would use an open mind and come to my own conclusions on the disadvantages/disadvantages of Windows XP, Home Edition. Most programs today come with "Help" menu on your screen rather than providing you with an actual manual to peruse. This often makes it necessary to go on line to actually find out what you need to know. This book attempts to fill this void and in my opinion does it very successfully. Now that Microsoft has provided Service Pack 2 for XP some of the problems that existed at the start have been eliminated. It now provides the user with better protection against viruses, worms and malicious hackers as well as a Windows Firewall, Pop-up Blocker for Internet Explorer, and a new Windows Security Center. This book goes into detail on these subjects as well as many other features.

The preliminary chapter deals with comparisons, myths and new features in an overall manner. There are numerous tips included along the way. For instance XP comes with System Restore. If you installed a program that was not working as it should you could simply "roll back" your computer to its earlier, condition rather than having to go back step by step. Thus I would assume that you would not have a need for "Total Uninstall" which is an independent software program that would do this for you with previous Windows versions. I find that the entire book assumes that you have no prior knowledge of XP (which in my case was very

true) and goes into graphic details as well as explanations. However advanced users will get a wealth of knowledge from the numerous "tips" throughout the entire book.

Windows XP offers dozens of important new features, which are discussed and illustrated throughout the book. The different aspects of XP are discussed from a tour of the Desktop, to the new two-column start menu, and instructions for customizing the Taskbar and toolbars. Instructions for organizing files and folders to maximize efficiency for both the desktop computer as well as your laptop. Troubleshooting, installation/uninstalling and upgrading are all covered step-by-step in this book. An entire chapter covers, pictures, sound and movies. I currently download my digital camera via a cable hook up to the computer. I understand with XP it will automatically open the camera and the scan wizard will walk me through the process of selecting the photos that I want, eliminating the second step entirely.

The book, in Chapter 13 covers in detail how to plug in your printer and scanner as well as telling you about printer tricks, troubleshooting, faxing, Networking is covered in another chapter for those who have more than one computer in their system. Yet another chapter tells you how to install XP and all the requirements and discusses which route to take: upgrade or clean install.

I have two pre-2000 programs that I use frequently, e.g. Print Artist and Master Cook. This is one of the things that made me hesitant to install XP on my system. Both are not recognized by XP, but if I "run this program in compatibility mode for" and choose the name of the Windows version I had on the computer, from the dropdown list, I can trick the programs to comply according to one of the tips mentioned on page 116. Although I must admit I have yet to try this since I am on vacation as I read this manual and I have neither a computer with me nor do I have XP in order to try it!

The book discusses how Microsoft can remotely access your computer to analyze a problem you are having. Fortunately, if you do not care to have this occur, you can disable it and allow XP to run like other Windows systems operated. In this day and age I personally think I would be reluctant to have someone access my computer remotely.

I found the book very informative and am sure I will get more out of the book once I install XP on my computer and can physically try out the various tips suggested in the book. Overall I would rate this book as excellent and a 'must have' in your computer library. In my opinion this book will become a very valuable tool to keep on hand when I install Windows XP Home Edition on my computer.

Does Microsoft Listen?

By Bud Bondietti

Editor, PC Post
Modesto PC Users Group, CA

After a long frustrating ride with my desktop computer and its numerous error problems, the day came when I knew the only thing to do was to do a factory reinstall. I lived with the errors and frustration for a long time, since I knew I didn't have all of my data backed up although I did keep up with all the updates and precautions one normally takes when dealing with the "Internet World." On making a backup, my start off point would be to backup all the data that I wanted to hang onto, including my vast music collection and tidbits of information that I have picked up over the years. One of the wonderful points of owning a computer today is that the cost and feasibility of backing up your data is so much easier than 10 years ago. Back then, one had to utilize recording media (floppies, tape and such) that couldn't always be depended upon to keep the data safe. In addition, you had to allot a large block of time for completing the backup. Today, with the availability of large capacity DVD disks or external hard drives, backing up is easier and faster. Case in point, I backed up my 250 gigabyte hard drive in a little over an hour to my external 300 gigabyte hard drive, while tidying up my computer area. So on with the story.

After performing everything I could think of to prepare for the big event, I got out my restore CDs and settled in for the battle. After putting CD number one in the drive, I received a message that the reinstall could not be performed from the desktop and that I needed to shut the computer down and reboot from the CD-Rom drive. So I exit windows and reboot with the CD in the CD-Rom drive, and the program starts to do its thing. I'm thinking I could be done with this by mid-afternoon and then things start going wrong. An error message stating that the hard drive partition is not big enough to handle the operating system is found so that process will be halted. Well, so much for a simple chore.

I try once more with the same results and then realize that I'm going to have to find a solution to the problem so I take the restore CD out of the drive then boot up the computer and head to the Sony website to see if they have an answer to my problem. After searching the online database for over an hour with no results, I realize I'm going to have to pay for human tech support,

so the next chore is to find a phone number that I can call for tech support. After a little searching, I finally locate the number and get ready for another wait to talk to someone who can help me out. After a short period of time (15 minutes or so) and a credit card charge of \$19.95 (my computer is out of warranty), I finally get to talk to Todd. I explain the problem to Todd and he says the first thing we need to do is to get to the bios menu, so we go into reboot mode and before the screen changes I start tapping the F2 key and the system goes to the bios menu. Todd then instructs me to go to the exit section and arrow down to the "restore system defaults" line and select that. I do so and then "save changes and exit." The system boots up and Windows starts its usual routine. Todd then says to put my system restore CD back in the drive and reboot. While following Todd's able instructions, I watch as the factory restore program starts up and allows me to complete my original objective. Thanks Todd, \$20 well spent. So, with the system restored, I head on to reinstalling all of the programs that I need to do the things I like to do.

After getting the factory restore project completed, I next wanted to upgrade to Windows XP professional as I need the extra power that program gives with networking. This part went very smoothly and now it was time to start reinstalling all of the additional programs that I use on a daily basis. My first step was to re-install Microsoft Office 2003 and it actually went smoother this time than the first time I installed it. After installation, I always make it a habit to reboot the computer even if the system doesn't ask me to. After the reboot, I started checking out the Office applications, and to my satisfaction everything worked smashingly. Once again, I rebooted and, to my dismay, I got a closing error message that I was all too familiar with from my previous installation. Starting to get that sinking feeling, I rebooted again and again to see if the error was a fluke or what. To my disappointment, it wasn't a fluke and so I was faced with trying to fix the problem. After a moment or two's thought, I realized that the problem occurred after installing Office 2003 so I set off to the Microsoft website to see if anyone else may have had the same problem and to see how they fixed it. Just my luck, no one else in the world had the problem so I began thinking about contacting tech support and paying them to help me solve the problem. After a long drawn out search, I finally found the number for tech support and, of course, all of the times were busy; the wait time was over an hour and they suggested that I try emailing my problem to tech support. I thought that this last suggestion was probably the least expensive and prepared in my mind what I needed to say.

After sending my email to tech support, I prepared for
Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12 - Does MS Listen?
 a long weekend wait to hear back from Microsoft. The next morning, Saturday, I received a phone call from Microsoft, not an unusual occurrence since I became a Microsoft Partner but I was surprised when the gentlemen on the other end started asking me questions concerning the error message I had questioned. After I described the error message in a little more detail, the gentlemen asked if I was going to be home in an hour. I said I was and he assured me that a real live tech support person would call back and try to help me solve the error. I was shocked that someone would take that much interest in my problem, and warily waited for the phone to ring. Within 45 minutes the phone rang and a gentlemen named Amit Singh helped me walk my way through the problem. It turned out to be a conflict between a Sony Viao program and Microsoft. After about two hours of trial and error, my computer was back to being the error-free system that I enjoyed using. My conclusion is that the big guys do listen – you just have to learn where to yell.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

Protecting Your Internet Passwords

by Gene Barlow

User Group Relations Copyrighted April 2005

The internet plays an important role in our lives today. Almost everything we do has an internet possibility to it. We can access our bank accounts over the internet. We can pay our bills and loans using the internet. Every business that we have an account with lets us access our account and update our records over the internet. We can purchase airline tickets, reserve hotels, and rent cars over the internet. Each of these offers us personalized accounts to make these tasks easier to do. We can even buy groceries, tickets for movies, and order our prescriptions over the internet. How much easier it is today to do all of these things with our internet access. Of course, having access to these internet accounts requires that we set up a private ID and password for each of them. A typical user may have 20 or 30 of these account IDs and passwords to keep track of. So, while the internet has made our life easier in many ways, keeping track of these security codes has gotten harder to do.

Some users will try to bypass these methods set up to protect their privacy and personal information. To avoid keeping track of many codes, some individuals will use the same ID and password on all of their accounts. This is certainly not very secure. Once these common codes are discovered, they open up the hacker to all of your personal accounts. Others will write their codes down on yellow sticky notes and paste them to their computer display. This is also not very secure. Anyone that walks by your computer will see these codes and be able to get into your private accounts without any problem. The real solution is to set up difficult and different passwords for each of your accounts and keep these in a very secure place. That is exactly what WhiteCanyon's MyPasswordVault helps you do.

MyPasswordVault is a database program that stores its information on your computer in an encrypted format so that nobody can find this file and see all of your codes. You still need to remember a password to gain access to MyPasswordVault, but all of the rest of your codes are guarded safely inside the vault. So, when you need to access an account on the internet, you simply open up MyPasswordVault, find the ID and Password for that account, and copy and paste it into your account access fields. You will be able to safely and quickly access the many accounts that you have set up on the internet. This is a great software utility that will let you safely and quickly enjoy all of the advantage of using the internet for your financial transactions.

MyPasswordVault is offered by WhiteCanyon software at the list price of \$25. You can purchase this valuable product at the user group discount price of just \$17. Look for it in our User Group Store at www.usergroupstore.com and click on any of the yellow "Buy Now" buttons to get to our secure web order form. Complete the form including the special user group code of UGNL0405 and submit it. You may share this discount offer with your immediate family and close friends. These prices are not available to others not involved with a user group.

I hope this month's newsletter has made you aware of an exciting new software offering from User Group Relations to make your computer usage more productive. Let me know if you have questions about anything in this newsletter by sending me a note to gene@ugr.com. Thank you for your attention.

Gene Barlow is the president of User Group Relations, a consulting firm specializing in promoting computer products to the user group community. He has over 40 years of experience with computer systems. He worked

Continued on page 15



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Stats as of April 30, 2005

93 Members + 45 Associates
 = 138 Total Membership
 New Members..... 0 Members + 0 Associates
 Renewals..... 5 Members + 2 Associates
 Lapsed Memberships..... 2 Members
 + 1 Associates Guests..... 0 Guests
 Total Meeting Attendance..... 57
 Newsletter remaining after meeting: 4

SCUG MEETING

St. Bartholomew's Church
 718 Cathcart Blvd.
 Sarnia, Ont.

WHEN?

Last Wednesday Each Month
 7:00 p.m. social time
 7:30 p.m. call to order

Next Meeting
March 30, 2005

FOR SALE

2 meg. Concord Digital Camera
 Lexmark 1100 Color Inkjet Printer
 Lexmark Z32 Color Inkjet Printer

Norm 542-5757

Sarnia Computer Users' Group

718 Cathcart Blvd.
 Sarnia, Ontario
 N7V 2N5

Email: info@scug.ca
Internet Site: www.scug.ca

Please submit articles for the January
 SCUG Newsletter before the 16th. to:
editor@scug.ca.

**Member of the Association of
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 (APCUG)**
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I agree that everyone should be given a ticket at the door, if that is the wish of Staples and HP. We should have someone either in the lobby, or with Tom as he gives out the newsletters. We need to ensure everyone gets one and only one ticket each.

Pierre

ATTENTION ALL SCUG MEMBERS

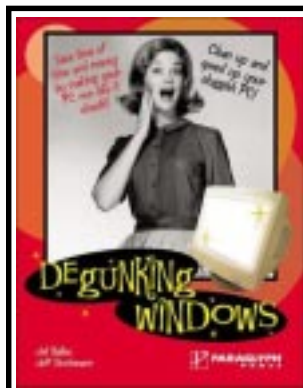
As a SCUG member you can advertise for free in this paper. Simply send your ad to editor@scug.ca

Editor's Note: I regret that there may be some omissions within this newsletter, but I certainly hope not. I have been hospitalized since the first of the week, but had the newsletter half done. My wife brought me my laptop to the hospital where I had some files saved on CDs and my daughter burned my emails to disc. I trust that nobody tried to email in this period as it seems I have everything. Sorry if I don't. Also ignore the typos as the drugs in here are great haha.

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SCUG Book Review Degunking Windows

By Gregory West
Editor, SCUG Report
Sarnia Computer User's
Group - www.scug.ca

By Joli Ballew and Jeff Duntemann.
Published by Paraglyph Press.
Category: Operating Systems / Windows.
ISBN: 1-932111-84-0
Format: Paperback, 310pp
U.S. \$24.99 / CAN. \$37.99

Some people claim it a rule of nature that we humans are naturally lazy when it comes to cleaning, organizing, and simply putting things away where they belong. Well, I for one choose to think I am too busy for all of the above, especially when it comes to my computer. The only time we give our computers a concern is when they become sluggish and crash. Many of us tend to hoard all the junk we think we cannot do without taking up valuable space on the hard drive. After a while we face the decision of either calling the computer tech for a in-home-expensive service call, head out and buy that costly new machine, or we reformat and pray that we have all the original discs and that we save all important files properly.

Wait, it really is not all that drastic. There is help and it is contained between the covers of this new computer-self-help book with a basic 12-step process that shows you how to completely cleanup your computer's hard drive and making it run like a new machine. Although the authors "highly recommend that you complete all of the main Degunking tasks in the order they are presented" you do not have to tackle them all at once.

In fact, if you are short on time you can do this process in small amounts. The first thing I did after reading this book is to reorganize all my files into a more manageable system. Instead of completing the 12 steps at one sitting the book offers Ten-Minute, Thirty-Minute, One-Hour, Three-Hour, to a Half-Day Degunking sessions that help you clean up your computer at a pace that suits your lifestyle. Whichever timeframe you choose you will most certainly see the progress immediately as your computer becomes organized and more manageable. Thus, it will run faster and problem free. In just a few hours you will speed up your computer, secure it from

"dangerous hackers", and have it run as a well organized machine, functioning like a new computer, only it will be a more effective and secure system.

This book is very easy to use, written in a language that everyone will follow along easily, but its expert assistance will easily guide you through the technical processes of fine-tuning your computer. With extensive sidebar help and tons of amazing screen shots you can see how easy this process really is once you begin. This book not only shows you the how to fix problems, but it easily explains why the problems got there in the first place, thus helping you become aware for the next time. There is also a troubleshooting section guiding you through the common problems; you will see just how easy it is to correct them. This book is a must have for all home computer users.

Editor's Note: This review appears in Amazon.com

Learn to be a Writer

The most feared human activity is public speaking and next in line is writing. At SCUG you have a great opportunity to learn just about any computer-related subject there is, current and up-to-date books. All you have to do is contact Bill Colotelo, SCUG's Program Coordinator to get a list of hundreds of great books to review, of which you keep the books.. coordinator@scug.ca



Remember, during the entire process you will be helped with each step by our in-house experts, and after a few reviews you will be asking for more and more...it is actually a fun learning process, and it is FREE..

Protecting Your Passwords continued from page 14

for IBM for 34 years in various technical and marketing positions. He managed IBM's user group support organization when IBM introduced the IBM PC till he retired 14 years later. In this role, he helped hundreds of user groups get started and is sometimes called the Father of User Groups for his involvement. He was the first sponsor of the Association of PC User Groups and was a guiding influence on this organization for many years and funded many special projects for them. When he left IBM, he set up his own consulting firm and has represented many software clients to the user group community the past 9 years. He currently represents Optimal Access, Acronis, WhiteCanyon, and Spearit software companies and their exciting products. He is an outstanding speaker, writer, and helper of end users and loves working with user groups. He may be contacted at gene@ugr.com.

Market Research Wizard by Erik Burggraaf A SCUG Member

Introduction

For most of us, eBay is a fun way to buy almost anything. We all enjoy browsing the categories and imagining that laptop on our desk or that appliance in our kitchen. Selling on eBay is a neat hobby that brings in a little extra cash. For a few, it's a full time job, marketing, selling, and shipping product.

If you want your own home-based eBay business, your best product sources are dropshippers and light wholesalers. Light wholesalers are companies that will move product in small quantities that smaller business owners without vast amounts of storage space or start-up capital can handle. Drop shippers are light wholesalers who will ship product one at a time direct to your customer, as if it comes from you. These options allow entrepreneurs to choose products, and focus on marketing them, without concerns about large storage, high start-up costs, employees and wages.

Market research wizard by Worldwide Brands is a tool that helps you decide what products to sell online. It uses data gathered from eBay, yahoo, Google, and other sources to provide a breakdown of costs, demand, supply and competition, then calculates your chances of success. It can be used to determine where to sell, and how to market your products. WWB also publishes directories of drop ship and light wholesale suppliers, and provides reliable and thoughtful information and analysis.

I decided to do a case study of this powerful program, but first, I needed a product. I bought the drop ship directory, and spent a few hours browsing. Naturally, the first thing I looked for was the electronics thinking... computer club. Anyway, it didn't take me long to see some drawbacks. One of the wwbn newsletters voiced exactly what I was thinking, and clinched it for me. The demand for electronics is stable, but the market is saturated. Everyone has to undercut everybody else to get the sale, and so if you do sell, the profit margin is generally low. Then I hit on something totally unexpected... Cake. That's right, Gourmet frozen cheesecake. I'd buy it if I had the money, You bet your life. Plus, I cheated and studied the bottom line for a couple of days, and MRW reported excellent chances of success.

Cheesecake

Our supplier is Sussie's Of Mississauga. They make cookies, cake, and barbeque sauces, among other things. When you open the market research wizard, you are at the welcome screen, which introduces the program. To

move between the functions of the program, click the tabs at the bottom of the screen, or click view, and choose the appropriate window from there. The keyword fields, sorting buttons, and tree view showing your searches, remain the same in all windows, so you can change keywords or view results for a particular component from anywhere.

Sussie's Cheesecakes weigh 18 OZ. and they retail for \$40 US. This includes free next day shipping to the US and Canada. There are four flavours to choose from. Visit their website at <http://www.sussies.com>.

Demand

Demand checks popular search engines and finds out what people are searching for. As I write this, no one is searching for cheese cake. Last week, some 250 people actually were searching on chese cake. For the search I'm currently working with, I changed my category to food. That netted me results I have no use for, for example, deer food. Using cake as my category last week netted me much more likely possibilities, such as wedding cake and cake recipes. Beside each search is the number of searches on those keywords within 15 to 30 days. The main point of interest in this page is the variations on your keywords. An ideal situation is to have a high number of searches along with a low number of variations, because this means that more people are likely to want the product, and be able to find you. Cheesecake has a consistently low number of variations, but it also has comparatively few searches. One search on Cheesecake turned up 652 searches with 7 variations, while a similar search using a different category in the keywords turned up 0 searches and 0 variations. This is probably because the second category keyword I used was more general than the first, and thus had a negative effect on my search results.

Demand

This is a simple page that scans some popular websites such as yahoo and eBay and tries to assess the level of competition already in the market. The numbers in this window should be low in conjunction with high numbers in the demand page, meaning that the demand for your product isn't being met properly. Although it states that all three keywords yield the best results, Sussie's is rather an ambiguous brand name, and cake and cheesecake are quite similar. Therefore, this is a case where splitting up the keywords shows a more accurate picture of what's actually going on. For example, Here are results using all three keywords:

102058 yahoo stores, 23803 eBay stores, 42391 eBay

products, and 23800704 Google pages. By comparison, here are results for Cheesecake alone: 0 yahoo stores, 0 eBay stores, 1 eBay listings, 704 Google pages. A glance at the category keyword "cake" shows just what you would expect. The more general keyword holds far and away the bulk of the overall totals. If we made cheesecake our category and started using the four flavours we have access to as product keywords, that surely would yield interesting results on other pages, but not here where competition for Cheesecake is so slim.

Advertising

This page shows where and how many ads there are for your product on the net. The interesting feature of this page is a list of people who are actively advertising your keywords. Double clicking each one opens the homepage of the website advertising your product. Naturally, some of the entries say things like "Cheesecakes: compare Prices" <http://www.bizrate.com>, or "Low prices on cheesecakes" <http://www.nextag.com>. I think results like those are pretty useless myself. You would still have to waid through headers and popups and banner ads, and if you did find what you were looking for, either the product would be inferior, or the low price would never materialize. Those places rely heavily on glitz and hype to draw people in. Besides, I wouldn't shop there myself, especially for something as specific as cheesecake.

You also get excellent results, such as "Cakes at delightful deliveries" <http://www.delightfuldeliveries.com> This is a specialty shop that sells cakes, cookies, guift baskets and more. Browsing a site like this gives you a real sense of what the competition is actually doing. How much are people charging? How much selection are they offering? What extra services are they offering? Free shipping ETC.

Resources

Often I find myself thinking, "Wouldn't it be great if they added this feature?", only to discover that they already have. The resources page is just such a case in point. Market research wizard comes with two companion products: The Drop ship Source Directory, and The Light Wholesale directory. For our case study, we began knowing what product we wanted, and where to get it, but we didn't have to do it this way. We could have started with a brand name Maxtor, a product 200 gb hard drive, and a category computers for example. Then, we would have learned some nifty things about selling Maxtor hard drives, but if we wanted to buy in, where would we start?

If you've purchased the drop ship or light wholesale directories, You can add them to the resources tab, and search them via the market research wizard. The only slight drawback is that they haven't made the search results clickable yet, so you still have to log into the directory via the web to see the contact information for each supplier.

There are two other clickable tabs in this window. The supply methods tab details drop shipping and light wholesaling and how they work. You need this information if you want to be successful selling on eBay or through your own online storefront.

The business resources tab links to WWB's business centre. No one should be without this information, but the interface of the resources tab is not the nicest way in the world to get it. You would be better off spending some time on the actual worldwide brands website in their resource center, and especially, subscribing to their news letter and listening to the radio cybercast.

Auction pricing

This is a tool much like the competition listing, but whereas the competition page leans more toward people who want their own online storefront, the Action Pricing page is better suited to people who want to sell through eBay. It simply shows current auctions that matched your key terms and the value of each auction.

Auction pricing can be difficult. Lower prices attract more bidders, but an auction that gets undersold loses money. You can always over charge for shipping, but no one likes to feel they've been had after the sale. If you check here, and find things are being undersold, you may want to consider moving your product to an online store, or, making some careful decisions about the format, pricing and advertising of your auctions.

I'd also like to see the ability to click and be taken directly to auctions of interest implemented here.

One thing I found was that I didn't get very accurate results on a product like cheesecake. I got cake pans, recipe books, candles, blank cd's cake boxed, and an Aerosmith live album on cassette from 1979.

Summary

This is easily the niftiest page on the wizard. It will display all of the searches in your database, along with all of their statistics. You can click the column headers to sort by a given statistic. This makes it ridiculously easy

to study online trends, compare demand vs. variation, and discover which keywords yield the best chances of success.

Don't forget, you can also export all your data to a CSV file, and import it into excel or equivalent spreadsheet program. From there, you can generate nifty pie charts and graphs for addition to your business and marketing plans.

Analysis

Finally... The bottom line. How well is cheese cake going to do in the online market? Between 50 and 83% in four searches over 4 weeks. My category keywords need a lot of work. The only one that went anywhere was one search where I used cheesecake as a category, then flavour keywords such as chocolate and blueberry.

Results like these are very motivating and confidence building. Results for my search on Maxtor hard drives were a great relief, as in, "boy, I'm glad I didn't find that out the hard way."

Of course, a basic understanding of business sales and marketing is an asset with this tool. If you don't have great business sense, there are masses of wonderful material available on the WWB site.

What's not to like? I find the interface very cluttered and keyboard unfriendly. Make sure you install it on a stable computer, as it's not very portable at all. I would rather have a proper .chm help system, but the documentation itself was excellent. So, the only real problems I ran into were of a design nature. The capabilities of mrw are everything WWB promises and more.

The market research wizard costs \$97 US. Its companion directories cost \$69.95 each, or you can buy them in a package along with a \$25 e-book for \$197. This sounds like a lot of outlay, until you start pricing storefronts, warehousing, employee wages and benefits, taxes, and all the wonderful business of setting up your own store front. Make no mistake, these products will not make you a millionaire over night, think for you or teach you problem-solving, or win you friends and influence. They will provide the information you need to be successful if you invest the time, money, and practicality to pull it all together.

* * *

NEWS @ APCUG



Here's a discount offer from a vendor that is new to user groups LapWorks <http://www.laptopdesk.net>

They are offering 20% off to APCUG user group members – the coupon code is APCUG20%OFF and is good through June 18, 2005. The discount is also applicable to their bundled products.

See the below comment from Patricia Hill, Computer Booters in Phoenix, Arizona regarding the laptop feet.

Laptop Desk 2.0 at \$29.95 each <http://www.laptopdesk.net/laptopdesk2f.php>

Laptop Desk UltraLite at \$29.95 each <http://www.laptopdesk.net/laptopdesk-ultralitef.php>

Laptop Legs / Mac Feet at \$24.95 each <http://www.laptopdesk.net/access-legsf.php>

4 Port Hub at \$19.95 each <http://www.laptopdesk.net/access-usbhubf.php>

Keyboard lights at \$19.95 each <http://www.laptopdesk.net/access-usblightf.php>

Optical Mini Mouse at \$24.95 each <http://www.laptopdesk.net/access-mousef.php>

MouzPad at \$9.95 each <http://www.laptopdesk.net/access-mousepadf.php>

You can check out the virtual laptop desk link to see how your laptop will fit on the laptop desk. They will also provide review product – don't forget to complete the review within 90 days and send them a copy of the newsletter. Photos are available in the press kit section / product photos.

If you have a new computer have you noticed what's missing? Laptop legs! Yep, the manufacturers have eliminated those little legs that lift up the back of your computer to cool it and make your typing more ergonomically correct. Laptop Legs from Lapworks fills the bill. They are two-level, peel and stick legs made just for your laptop. Easy to apply -- it'll take you longer to read the instructions than to put them on. Patricia Hill, Computer Booters, Phoenix AZ

Happy computing,
Judy Taylour, Chair - APCUG Member Services

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 7:30 p.m. call to order

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Additional Disks	\$1.00	\$2.00

NOTE: Some of these programs are Shareware which must be registered and paid for if you like them and decide to keep them on your machine. This is your responsibility!

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Full Page	1x - \$30.00	3x - \$25.00	6x+ - \$20.00
Half Page	1x - \$20.00	3x - \$15.00	6x+ - \$10.00
Business card	\$10.00 per year		

*One year = 9 issues, September to June
 Full and half page rates are per insertion*

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2004 - 2005
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Simply come to a meeting and receive a Guest Pass which entitles you to sample our various meetings over a 3 month period. If you find the group is helpful we hope you will join. An annual family membership in S.C.U.G. is \$35. This includes entrance to all meetings, a free shareware program each month, and a copy of the monthly SCUG Report - Here is the meeting schedule:

<u>Executive</u>	<u>Digital Photo</u>	<u>Windows - PC</u>	<u>General Meetin</u>
30-May	1-Jun	16-Jun	29-Jun

- * **Exec and Digital** - at St James Church-140 Lansdowne North
- * **Windows - PC** - at Grace United Church, 990 Cathcart
- * **General Meetings** - at St. Bartholomews Church, 718 Cathcart

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- | | |
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| * Members Only Web Pages | * Special E-Mails |

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