

NATGUG News April May 2003

Editorial

Yet another Natgug week-end has passed, We must have more to attend if the meetings are to continue, I can't get a hotel to take a booking with so few attending, another point of view is that if people don't attend it must be that meetings are no-longer wanted by them, either way if we don't get more to attend I will not be arranging any more meetings.

After all that negative comment I have to say that this meeting was great fun and a good venue very much enjoyed by everyone who attended, it was nice to see Leo Knaggs and his wife, I can't remember the last time Leo had attended a meeting.

The Hotel was very good but unfortunately we will not have another meeting there, I feel I have been let down by people not attending and the hotel were expecting more than ten to attend and up to sixteen bedrooms filled, we failed to do this and will not be welcomed back to this venue again. There were a few other problems, the cost of the week-end would have been £205.00 and we would have to vacate the systems room before lunch, all totally unacceptable to us, this change was mainly due to the lack of support for this meeting.

The next meeting will be back at our old venue of the Villiers Inn Wroughton and will be on the 24th 25th & 26th October 2003, the cost will be £180.00 for the whole weekend, Please support this one or we may lose this venue. I would like you all to let me know when you have booked in at the Villiers (e-mail CLCars@bun.com or drop me a note in the post rather than ringing me) I will need to know who has booked in so I can remind those who normally attend if they haven't booked. Your help with this will be much appreciated.

At our next meeting I have been asked to give a talk on video editing, I have been slowly putting this together and should have something to interest those of you who want to edit their video and put on to CD DVD disk or tape.

Woody's Windows Watch

by Thornton Jacobs - NWA-PCUG

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Some of you may already subscribe to this ezine. It is published periodically in Australia by a fellow whose first name is Woody and whose last name I cannot remember. It is primarily concerned with Microsoft Windows and is free. I have been receiving it for a couple of years and have found it to be very informative. It has reviews and tips on using Windows and also publicises problems that have been found and reports on progress that Microsoft has made in fixing them. There is a sister publication called "Woody's Office Watch" that covers Microsoft Office. In addition there is a new ezine that covers Microsoft XP.

The current issue of Window's Watch has an article on the problems one person faced when upgrading to Windows XP. Also, among others, is an article on a security flaw in Internet Explorer that can expose your cookies to a web site or e-mail and allow them to be manipulated.

To subscribe you can send an e-mail to www@woodyswatch.com or go to their web site at <http://mcc.com.au> and click on the Woody's Window Watch link, or <http://mcc.com.au/www/> will take you directly.

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Reviewing Software

by Herb Goldstein - SPCUG

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Internet Explorer 5.01 Service Pack 2 was released last month. It provides the latest updates and security fixes to Internet Explorer technology. Internet Explorer 5.01 SP2 can be installed as an upgrade to existing versions of Internet Explorer, or on computers with no previous Internet Explorer installation. Total download size for a typical installation is approximately 17 megabytes (MB). However, because set up downloads only those files that are necessary for your computer, this size may vary between 6 and 17 MB. You can get it by going to <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/download/ie501sp2.htm>

Whistler now Windows XP.

It's official. Microsoft will name the next releases of its Office and Windows software (formerly known as Office 10 and Whistler, respectively) "Office XP" and "Windows XP". The XP stands for eXPerienced. According to Bill Gates, "These breakthrough versions of Windows and Office will give people the most powerful end-to-end computing experiences ever available. The coming generation of Windows XP and Office XP will let customers communicate and collaborate more effectively, be more creative and productive, and have more fun with technology." Gates also mentioned an evolution from applications to eXperiences starting with Office XP and Windows XP.

Windows XP is due to ship toward the end of 2001, while Office XP is expected around May. We will be providing more info in coming months.

A Glimpse at Luna

Windows XP will sport a new user interface, called Luna. According to Microsoft, Luna brings "a fresh, clean look" to the Windows desktop. It also includes a "skinning" system, where you can choose your own look and feel for Windows; and in the Home Edition, Fast User Switching for people who share a single PC. The new UI removes clutter by placing all desktop icons except the Recycle Bin in a reorganised Start menu. Windows XP will also include a new taskbar system, where open items are grouped together by likeness. Another new feature checks for dead shortcuts and icons and prompts you to delete them. For a glimpse at some of these features, go to: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/guide/newlook.asp>

XP's Protection Scheme

It looks like the new Windows XP and Microsoft Office XP are coming with a copy protection scheme that may raise your hackles. If all goes as indicated, you will be able to install these products on only ONE PC, and only ONE TIME! To add insult to injury, you will then be required to register the product to receive a product key, without which the software will have a very limited number of use sessions. The final details will be forthcoming, but it looks like Microsoft is going to throw you a big-time curve in order to put an end to software piracy. What these stringent limitations will mean will vary with the user, but they certainly appear to be universally onerous and not much to anyone's liking. We can only guess at how computer users are going to accept this or not. I will withhold further comment until I see the final offerings.

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Office XP Gets its Own Corporate Preview Program

According to Valerie Ryan of topica.com, Microsoft recently announced a corporate preview release of Office XP. Formerly Office 10, Office XP is Microsoft's next-generation desktop application suite and has an expected final release date of May this year. For \$19.95, including shipping and handling, you can obtain a copy of the release, which includes Word 2002, Outlook 2002, Excel 2002, PowerPoint 2002, Access 2002, FrontPage 2002, and "various multilanguage packs". To order, go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/en/technologies/resource.asp>. And just by the way, the release is only good until August 31, 2001.

Beware the Latest Spyware

Any time you go on-line you run the risk of accumulating spyware completely unbeknown to you. These small hidden spy files can linger indefinitely on your hard drive and give someone complete entree to what's on your computer, where you go on-line, and what you do. Outrageous!! Fight back! Stop what you are doing and go to www.lavasoft.de and download the free AD-AWARE 4.5. Install and use it to find and destroy any of these hidden demons. Now I know I have told you about all this before, but let me relate my own experience. I installed Version 3 of this software some time ago and have been using it without realising that it has been upgraded to detect much more with the latest version. Smug and complacent, I never checked for an upgrade until recently. I installed version 4.5 and indeed found 9 spy files and 2 comet cursors residing on my drive that the earlier version missed. Go and download the free and fabulous AD-AWARE 4.5 right now and give your hard drive a scan with it. You may be very grateful you did!

An added plus.... If you want to support these good people to the tune of only 12 bucks, you can download a pay version (AD-Aware Plus) which consists of the same Version 4.5, but contains the added "AD-Watch" that stands guard to automatically detect and eliminate any spyware as you pick them up. They also give you automatic notification of news and upgrades. It's all available at the same Web site, www.lavasoft.de

PC-Cillin; My Not-so-secret Love Affair

There are a lot of programs I enjoy. Then again, there are some with which I am truly in love, and none more so than PC-Cillin. That everyone needs an antivirus program on their computer today is a well-recognised given. Surf the Web or open an e-mail message today and you run the risk of infecting your computer with a nasty bug that will destroy everything on your hard drive. I guard against these intrusions with the best of antivirus software, PC-Cillin. New viruses come out on a daily basis. An antivirus program is only as good as your most recent update. PC-Cillin updates me automatically at least two or more times a week without my even asking. What's more, as changes and updates take place in the program, they are transmitted to me just as automatically as my virus pattern updates. You need this superb program. Get it today at www.antivirus.com. This dynamite program deserves a prominent place on your computer!

Great Registry Editor!

Also from Lavasoft comes a superb registry editor called REGHANCE. It is a shareware product that any of you who do occasional registry editing will thoroughly enjoy. It's very fast, easy to manipulate, and will find your references and permit you to edit them in a flash. Download a copy at <http://www.lavasoft.de/aaw/index.html> and try it out today. You will be delighted with this great utility from the makers of AD-

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AWARE. Keep an eye on these innovative people and their excellent software!

Changing file associations can be a gross nuisance. You have certain types of files set to open with your favourite application, then you go ahead and install new software that rudely and with neither your desire nor permission changes your associations to open with IT. Not too much you can do about it other than to re-associate your files as you prefer. Here's how: In Windows Explorer, go to View, Folder Options, File Types. A quicker way is to hold down the Shift key while right-clicking on a document, and you are given an option called Open With. Select this and then choose the program you want to open this particular kind of file with in the future. Check the box that says Always Use This Program To Open This Type Of File before clicking OK, and the file association will change to your choice.

Printing a list of files within a folder is easy if you use a freeware application called FolderPrint that you can get at <http://www.homestead.com/algof/files/FolderPrint332.zip>. This excellent tip was provided by computer guru and professional, SPCUG's own Marshall DuBois. Thanks, Marshall!

Unhappy with Windows ME ?

In any case, if you're using ME either by choice or because it came with a new PC -- and if you're not fully satisfied with it -- please click on over to <http://www.winmag.com/windows/features/murunbetter/02.htm> and check out the tips waiting for you there. Some of the recommendations are not for novices, so handle with care!

New Battery Power

According to Cnet news sources, Toshiba recently unveiled Advanced Lithium Batteries (ALB), which will allow electronics manufacturers to create small devices with the staying power of larger ones. Similar to lithium-polymer batteries, which are made of a gel, ALB technology derives its power from a polymerlike liquid. Both can be molded to about 1 millimeter, compared with standard lithium-ion batteries that are about 5 millimeters thick. What makes ALB superior to the others is that its slim figure packs the energy punch of its larger counterpart. ALB costs about 20 percent more than lithium-ion batteries but slightly less than lithium-polymer ones. Applications include devices varying from cell phones, to PDAs, to laptop computers, and should aid in the further miniaturisation of all of them.

Windows ME and DSL

Be aware that there is no uniform compatibility between DSL service and Windows ME. Check with your intended ISP before you switch, and see if the right drivers are available.

At a meeting with Bill Gates, insider professionals were recently treated to a synopsis of the salient features of the upcoming Windows XP. According to Gates, here's what you can expect:

1. Much greater reliability, in the order of an improved Windows 2000.
2. A newer, friendlier user experience that will surpass that of the Macintosh.
3. Speed. It will be considerably faster than anything we have to-date.
4. Dramatic improvement of Windows Media Player.

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5. Network connectivity to your machine. Tech support will now be able to access, operate, and connect to your machine to solve problems directly rather than just giving you advice.
6. Makes more difficult tasks easier, like working with graphics, video and music files.
7. Sharing a computer among two or more users will get easier, yet more sophisticated.
8. Two versions will be available -- one for home users and one for business users.
9. There will be very close connectivity between Windows XP and Office XP.
10. Look for a fall release with pricing similar to previous operating system releases.

What Bill Gates didn't tell them about is the new copy protection scheme coming with XP that allows installation only one time and on only one computer. This may be Microsoft's answer to software piracy, but sticking with Windows 98 may be users answer to this onerous, unpopular and undesirable feature.

Hardware Nuts Need Love Too

If you want to keep up on the latest developments in hardware, there are a few particularly good sites you will want to visit: tomshardware.com, pcguide.com, ars-technica.com, madonion.com, and storagereview.com

Looking for Product Reviews ?

Currently, the best sites can be found at consumerreview.com and epinions.com For pricing and availability, try pricescan.com, pricewatch.com, dealttime.com, mysimon.com, shopper.com, and buy.com. Happy hunting! Additional good sources for reviews are zdnet.com and cnet.com

Fix Internet Explorer 5.5 Problems

IE 5.5 comes with a new repair tool. To get to it, launch Add/Remove Programs from your Control Panel. Click Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 in the window of the Install/Uninstall tab, and then click Add/Remove. Select the "Repair the current installation of Internet Explorer" radio button. Click OK.

Spoil Junior's Fun!

To control who sees what on your Web browser, go to Tools/Internet Options and open the Content tab. Click Enable under Content Advisor. You'll be prompted to create a supervisor password and define sensitivity settings for potentially offensive content types.

Maximise your screen view in Internet Explorer by pressing the F11 key. It's a toggle, so hit it again to return to the default view.

Get Rid of Your Cache Files Automatically

One of your browser's greatest nuisances is the huge volume of temporary files it gathers as you use the Internet. There are various ways of emptying these files regularly which we have told you about numerous times in the past. Internet Explorer 5.5 has a much better idea. Go to Tools-Internet Options and click on the Advanced tab. One of your check-box choices will be Empty Temporary Internet Files Folder when browser is closed. Check it, and your garbage strewn Internet cache will be cleaned automatically when you exit Internet Explorer. I have found that most inexperienced users don't even know the trash is there and their hard drive is filled with many megabytes of Internet cache files they neither want nor need.

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Here's an easy way not to accumulate it in the first place. Alternatively, for a one-shot cleanup of your temporary Internet files and your recycle bin at the same time, you should periodically run Disk Cleanup. You'll find this utility on the Start Menu submenu: Start Programs Accessories System Tools.

Defrag You Must!

As often as we've said it, it's apparent that many of you still have not gotten the vital message. Defragging is an absolute must to keep your computer running efficiently. As you use your hard drive, files become fragmented and little pieces of them scatter hither and yon. Heavy use calls for daily defragging. If not, do it at least weekly. In Win98 you'll find the Disk Defragmenter by going to Start Programs Accessories System tools. (The program file is DEFRAG.EXE and it's found in the \Windows folder. Create a shortcut to it on your desktop by using the right-click "send to" command) Defrag performs three tasks to enhance performance: It places the pieces of all your files into fast-loading contiguous areas of your hard disk, moves your most frequently used files to the front of the disk where they'll load fastest, and groups your applications' separate pieces into the most efficient load order. Defrag often. Your computer will love you.

Boost Your RAM

To give a virtual boost to your computer's memory, right-click My Computer and choose Properties Performance File System. There you'll find that the Typical role is usually "Desktop Computer". If your PC has more than 32MB of RAM it will operate slightly faster if you select "Network Server", even if it isn't really a server. (The Network Server setting uses a little more RAM for various disk buffers and caches to speed disk operations.)

Reinstalling Windows

If you've screwed things up badly, reinstalling Windows may be your best way out. It will replace any missing or corrupted essential files, but will retain the data files that you have created. Remember to not have any programs running in memory when you reinstall, especially antivirus software. Be sure to visit the Windows update site afterward (it's on your start button menu) and reinstall your tweaks and service packs.

Are You Choking Your RAM ?

Your computer may be running like a turtle with a hernia because of all the junk you have running in memory at startup that you may not be aware of, but evident by the army of icons you have sitting in your system tray. Often, when you install some software or hardware, it acts like it is the only thing that belongs on your computer and inserts itself in startup memory. To control what you want sitting there, Click the Start button and select Run, now type MSCONFIG and hit enter. Up comes a really nifty (yes, I said nifty) dialogue box. At the top, select the Startup tab and you can now check the programs you want to start. The caveat is that you know what it is you are de-selecting. If you have any doubt, ask a more experienced user, or track the item down in Windows Explorer before you de-select it. Intermediate and certainly advanced users should have little trouble figuring out what each item represents.

Are Your Drivers Current ?

Drivers are small software applications that you install with your printer, scanner, and all other hardware peripherals attached to your computer. They are updated from time to time by the manufacturer of the hardware item. You can check for the latest drivers at the manufacturer's Web site, or you can go to drivershq.com to check out all your drivers.

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Different Time Format ?

You can change your time format at any time by going to Start, Settings, Control Panel and double-clicking the Regional Settings icon. Click the Time tab, and then select a Time Style from the drop-down menu.

Restoring a WIN98 Registry Save

Ethan Welkes, noted winmag.com author, reminds us that every time you start your Win98 PC, the Registry Checker automatically creates a backup of the Registry. It stores the five most recent backup copies in the \Windows\Sysbckup folder. They are stored as RB001.CAB, RB002.CAB, and so on. If you want to manually back up the Registry before installing software that may effect the registry, you should run the System Info utility (Start Programs Accessories System Tools), then go to the Tools menu and select Registry Checker. After a quick scan, Registry Checker will offer to make a backup. Click Yes to make it overwrite the oldest backup file with an updated one.

To restore a Registry backup, boot your computer to a C: prompt and run ScanReg. Follow the instructions to view your backed-up Registry files and restore the most recent one. For a plethora of good Windows and computer advice, visit winmag.com regularly. You'll get yourself an interesting education!

DSL Fees Going Higher ?

Industry watchers predict that DSL fees, which in our opinion are already too high, will be going higher. Not a happy prospect for broadband enthusiasts.

1400 Gigabytes ?

A new CD-R is under development (along with a drive to play it) that will hold an unbelievable 1.4 Terabytes. When it hits the streets it will be the mother of all backup devices or whatever else you might want to do with a storage device of super-monstrous size. Just think of it -- one CD that will hold more data than 20 of today's largest size hard drives. I can't wait! For more info, go to <http://www.c-3d.net/>

High Speed Internet Access is available today in several different formats. For a complete rundown, go to <http://www.browsebest.com/>

R.I.P. Pentium 3

This year will mark the demise of the Pentium 3 which will give way to the Pentium 4 as a desktop system processor. It's a pity since in many ways the Pentium 3 is a much better processor than the Pentium 4. So much for the price of progress!

Speed Things Up!

The first thing that comes to the mind of most people seeking to make their computer run faster is a faster processor. That's only part of the story, and not necessarily the most important. Usually more important is the speed of the hard drive. If you are shopping, you need to focus on a 7200 RPM drive. It runs appreciably faster than a 5400 RPM. You may, in fact, have an older drive even slower than that. Hard drives of huge size are available today at a fraction of their cost not too long ago. If you are running more than one hard drive, remember to put your swap file on the fastest drive. Windows uses your swap file frequently, so it belongs there.

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To Recover Some Disk Space

When you install Internet Explorer 5 over Win9x, you'll find a new folder called Windows Update Setup Files in your root directory. This folder is filled with setup files that take up between 10MB and 20MB of space on your hard disk. It's a good idea to save them for a while after installing IE5 to make sure it's running properly. That way, you won't have to download the app again if you run into trouble and want to reinstall. After using IE5 for a while without encountering any problems, you can delete these files to regain the disk space.

Performance Test provides a battery of tests that rate your PC's 2D graphics, 3D graphics, memory, disk, and other systems. You'll also be able to compare your results against other PCs, so you know how your system stacks up. (Shareware/Win95-98-NT) Click for more.

Snoop Inside Your PC

If you are nosy about what's under the hood, here are 3 great little utilities that you will find among scores of others at one of the best shareware download sites in existence, <http://www.zdnet.com/downloads/>

1. DR Hardware 2000 gives you a comprehensive report on your system's hardware -- you'll get detailed system information on everything about your sound board, BIOS, CMOS, memory, adapters, drives -- pretty much the whole nine yards. You get to see the results in attractive 3D charts.

2. Winbench is a techie's delight. It's a subsystem-level benchmark that measures the performance of a PC's graphics, disk, processor, and video subsystems.

3. Performance Test provides a battery of tests that rate your PC's 2D graphics, 3D graphics, memory, disk, and other systems. You'll also be able to compare your results against other PCs, so you know how your system stacks up.

Need Buying Advice ?

Before you buy any computer products, get the expert information you need. Shop smart and SAVE from computershopper.com's How-To-Buy Guides. Find out how much you should expect to pay, which features to look for and which ones you can live without. You can get it all at <http://cgi.zdnet.com/slink?83549:683154>

Grossfader's Wisenspouten

Prominent among the many things true in this life are:

- + If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.
- + A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.
- + Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.
- + For every action, there is an equal and opposite criticism.
- + He who hesitates is probably right.
- + Never do card tricks for the group you play poker with.
- + Success always occurs in private, and failure in full view.
- + The colder the X-ray table, the more of your body is required on it.
- + The hardness of the butter is proportional to the softness of the bread. -- The severity of the itch is proportional to the reach. --

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Don't sweat petty things ... or pet sweaty things.

+ Hell hath no fury like the lawyer of a woman scorned.

+ Bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of checks.

Sony, the consumer electronics giant, recently unveiled Double Density CD-R and CD-RW drives and discs. Dubbed DD-R and DD-RW, the discs can hold 1.3GB of data, or about 300 songs. That is twice the capacity of CD-R and CD-RW discs, which hold 650MB. The technology doubles the capacity of the discs by essentially shrinking the space between the tracks on the media. The drives will be available in retail stores by the beginning of April and will cost \$249. DD-R discs will cost \$1.99 each, and DD-RW discs will cost \$2.99. Sony's new products are an attempt to provide a middle solution between CD-RWs and their giant cousin, DVD-rewritable discs, which offer 4.7GB of capacity. The DD-R/DD-RW drive will be able to read and write CD-R and CD-RW discs. But existing CD and CD-RW drives won't be able to play DD-R and DD-RW discs. The Sony Double Density ATAPI CRS200E-A1 is an internal drive with a maximum write speed for DD-R and CD-R of 12x, a maximum write speed of DD-RW and CD-RW of 8x, and a maximum play speed for CDs of 32x.

Software Review: FrontPage 2000

by Diane K. Jensen - SPCUG

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Microsoft FrontPage 2000 is a wonderful program that lets you build Websites without programming. In other words, you don't have to know HTML, and you can build a Website in quite literally a matter of minutes depending on the complexity of the Website. Right now, Microsoft FrontPage may be the most popular of the "WYSIWYG" or "page layout style" Web editors. Particularly those of you that are heavy MS users (Word, Excel, etc.), you will find this program a very natural tool to use.

Surprisingly, considering all the features that this program has, it requires very little of your computer. You need: a PC with Pentium 75MHz or higher processor; MS Windows 95 or later; 16MB of RAM for Windows 95 or 98, or 32MB for Windows NT; 86 to 152MB on your hard disk where the operating system is installed, depending on installation of MS IE 5.01 and which features you opt to install; a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM drive; a VGA monitor; and a mouse.

There are so many easy-to-use features in this program that I would be hard pressed to describe them all in this review. I'm having trouble deciding which feature is my favourite. It could be the way it automatically makes thumbnails for you; it could be the way it very easily creates a navigation bar for you, it could be the numerous "themes" that you can customise in an almost unlimited number of ways, etc. It also easily creates presentation effects for text and objects in a matter of seconds. And, being a WordPerfect user, I love the "Reveal Tags" feature that lets you easily look for potential code errors.

The program comes with an instruction book that has a pretty good tutorial. It was very easy for me to follow because I have been doing Website construction for a couple of years now with PageMill. However, I could see where someone who has absolutely no experience

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at all with building Websites or pages could have a little bit of difficulty understanding all the levels of the tutorial. The manual does have a very good and quite lengthy glossary in the back which would be very helpful to those who don't understand all the terms that relate to Websites and Website design and construction. Therefore, I do think a beginner who is really willing to dig into this book and program could easily figure things out.

There are some glitches in the tutorial, however. Some of the instructions either don't work or are insufficiently complete to finish the task. I think it would be helpful to buy another book to help you understand how to use this program fully. That is often the case with most far-reaching software. Both Microsoft Press and Barnes and Noble would be good places to find what appeals to you. I encountered another problem, not necessarily a fault of Microsoft, when I went to publish my sample Website to the Internet. For some reason it wouldn't work at all, even though I have my own Website with plenty of space to add the sample. I discovered that the problem was that my Website hosting company does not support FrontPage "extensions". Without going into a lot of unnecessary detail, just ask your Web hosting company if they do support FrontPage extensions. If they do, you'll be fine. If they don't, find another Website hosting company (that's what I'll be doing). Also, you may run into problems modifying pages previously constructed with PageMill or similar software. What I have since discovered is that FrontPage does change the coding when you import a page from another Web development program. Use FrontPage only to build new Websites.

But, the advantages to this program far outweigh any disadvantages, in my opinion. FrontPage 2000 gives users pretty much everything they need to create exactly the site they want. If they start from scratch, they can use Dynamic HTML to animate, use Cascading Style Sheets to wrap or layer

text and images, and get just the colours they want with enhanced colour tools.

Site management is pretty easy. FrontPage automatically fixes hyperlinks when files are renamed or moved, and 13 management reports can summarise the status of a site at a glance. Users can quickly author in HTML view by using buttons and menu items.

I really like the way FrontPage can manipulate and manage your pictures without having to go back to your image editing program. You can easily do various things like rotate pictures, adjust the contrast and/or brightness, crop, add text, and more. Not to mention make your thumbnails for you with one click!

For those who need to make Websites for other countries, FrontPage is also available in 15 languages. And if you do own other Microsoft Office products, the spelling checker coordinates between all the Office applications, which is a nice feature.

The program contains about 60 basic themes that most professional Website designers would laugh at, but they are very easily customised so that they don't look like everyone else's Website. They also make it very easy to create a professional looking Website in a very short period of time by adding all the bells, buttons, and whistles that would take hours to add by hand with just HTML coding.

FrontPage also contains "templates" which will easily let you create a Table of Contents, a Frequently Asked Questions page, a Guest Book, a Search Page, and more. Another great feature is the forms that FrontPage can automatically generate for you. You can use these forms to do such things as: request names, addresses, phone numbers, email address; collect feedback about your site; or just request any kind of information in general.

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There are Websites that have more information about FrontPage 2000 and they are: <http://www.microsoft.com/FrontPage/>, and <http://www.microsoftFrontPage.com/bulletin/>. The place to sign up for a FrontPage 2000 newsletter is: <http://register.microsoft.com/regsys/custom/newslettersdk/officeneews.asp> (Note: I did sign up for this newsletter a couple of weeks ago and have yet to receive one, so I don't know if there really is such a thing). This program normally retails for \$149.00. However, I found it at www.buysoft.com for \$114.95.

Software Review:

Adobe Acrobat 5.0

by Gary Schweinshaupt - SPCUG
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Adobe Acrobat PDF files are now the standard for sharing documents throughout the world, like their logo says, "Adobe everywhere you look!" Adobe has implemented even more tools for sharing, collaborating, securing and formatting documents, making the program almost a necessity for Internet transactions and certain cross-platform situations, including e-book publishing and even Palm OS, and greater accessibility for disabled people. Adobe PDF is a universal file format that preserves all of the fonts, formatting, colors and graphics of any source document, regardless of the application and platform used to create it. Adobe PDF files are compact and can be shared, viewed, navigated and printed exactly as intended by anyone with free Acrobat Reader software.

More than 200 million copies of the free Acrobat Reader have been distributed worldwide. You can convert any document to Adobe PDF using Adobe Acrobat 5.0 software.

Updating from Acrobat 4.0 to 5.0 was uneventful, and it now takes up just short of 80MB of hard disk space (20MB more than version 4.0). It automatically uninstalled 4.0. This new version promises to double the functionality; I'm truly amazed at the new features. If you want to know some of the basic features, please go back to the Acrobat 4.0 review I did in June 1999 <http://www.spcug.org/reviews/9906_04.htm>. Acrobat also places its sister program, Distiller, onto your system. Running inconspicuously in the background, Distiller creates a PDF file from almost any document. Similarly, Acrobat places icons and a pull-down menu in MS Office to enable PDF creation and with version 5.0, makes round-trip routing of content between PDF and RTF files even easier. Acrobat now installs an entire menu into Word and Excel (97 and 2000 versions), making it possible to reconfigure 5.0 on the fly. I think the integration now with other applications is even more seamless and transparent to the user. If the Acrobat and Distiller icons are not available right on your program's menu, you can access the Distiller output as a selection in your printer output.

This newest version of Acrobat continues to further emphasise Web tools and workgroup collaboration. Acrobat has also been optimised for network implementation. Network administrators can now setup Acrobat over a network and customise the Acrobat installer to assign and limit features appropriately for different users.

Now users can work smarter as a team, using Acrobat to streamline document review cycles.

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Reviewers can add comments such as electronic sticky notes, text highlights, and more to PDF files from right within your Web browser. This makes it easy to get comments from multiple reviewers, and they can add to it simultaneously in an on-line Adobe PDF file (this requires a WebDAV, ODBC/ SQL, or standard network setup).

A new feature that really got my attention was the ability to quickly develop new documents from an Adobe PDF file. Simply save the PDF file to the Rich Text Format (RTF - or any one of five other output formats, so that you can repurpose text in a new document. You could extract text from a PDF file before, but it was a tedious manual process. The results seem to vary depending upon the structure of the PDF format, in a few tests the text and tables remained editable, but lost some of its formatting. When generating RTF files, Acrobat did not preserve embedded images or multiple-column layouts. And a big hurray for the ability to export just the images from a PDF file to JPEG, EPS, PS or TIFF images, this was not available in previous versions. Acrobat provides controls over compression levels and resolution for the images that it generates. You can also edit images in a PDF file directly in Adobe Illustrator 9.0 or Adobe Photoshop 6.0. Once the images have been edited, they automatically return to the Acrobat file, this is really a great advancement! You can even convert a PDF file (text and all) into a picture. Acrobat can also pull double duty as an image viewer, thanks to its ability to open a wide range of graphics formats directly -- including BMP, GIF, JPEG, HTML, PNG, and TIFF.

Form development has also made a giant leap. The ability to create interactive forms that look like their paper versions is even more pronounced, and now you can link the forms to a Web server, so that users can fill them in and digitally sign them from within their Web browser. To do this in the previous version was most difficult.

Acrobat 5.0 forms are also powered by JavaScript, so developers proficient with custom coding can make PDF forms more functional on the Web. All of this gives PDF forms the potential to act as a front end for e-commerce systems and back end databases. They include a 90-day trial edition of Cardiff's Liquid Forms, which provides for easy drag-and-drop creation of PDF forms (as yet, I haven't been able to try this out).

Adobe 5.0 now includes features designed to make Acrobat easier to use for people with visual disabilities, including the option of viewing PDF documents in high-contrast mode. Other enhancements include tighter Web integration, support for industry standard protocols like Open DataBase Connectivity (ODBC) that connect PDF forms with back-end databases, and easier data exchange in Adobe PDF files through support for the eXtensible Markup Language (XML). Forms submitted in the Web-standard XML (Extensible Markup Language) are easier to integrate with back-end systems. This means that people can fill out PDF forms on Websites and return them digitally.

Viewing a PDF file within a Web browser is nothing new, now however, all of the annotation and markup tools are also available in the browser window.

Acrobat 5.0 has also beefed up its security to help you protect your PDF files and content from unauthorised use. PKI certificates and 128-bit encryption are fully supported (the 4.0 version had 40-bit encryption). Acrobat's digital signatures can use two different systems: Acrobat Self-Sign Security and third-party certification authorities, such as Entrust and VeriSign. PDF files can now be set to key-based and/or biometric security (including scanned-in handwritten signatures) to ensure that they are read or edited only by authorised individuals.

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Adobe PDF is also the emerging workflow standard in the publishing industry.

All of you should upgrade to take advantage of the new features. Any company that regularly sends a variety of documents to different recipients should give it a try.

Windows system requirements for Acrobat 5.0 are: Pentium processor, Windows 95 OSR 2.0, 98, Me, NT 4.0 or Windows 2000; 32MB of RAM (64MB recommended); 115MB of available hard-disk space and a CD-ROM drive. Full product retail price is \$249, upgrades are \$99. Acrobat Business Tools registered owners can now step up to the full version of Adobe Acrobat and save \$100 off the regular price. For previous versions of Acrobat or alternate languages and operating systems go to:
<<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/alternate.html>>

From Adobe Systems Incorporated,
<<http://www.adobe.com/store/products/acrobat.html>>.

Software Review:

CameoCast

by J. Chandler Campbell - SPCUG

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CameoCast is a free application that claims to play high quality videos. On their Website, their demo looked great.

According to CameoCast, once their free software has been downloaded and installed, one can watch movie trailers, take an interactive quiz or play a game. Once CameoCast is installed, one never has to do anything else. Content is gradually downloaded to your PC each time you are on-line. These behind-the-scenes downloads to a hard drive are gradual while one is on-line and are claimed to not impact negatively one's overall system performance. Such behind-the-scenes downloading ala CameoCast avoids the wait time associated with streaming audio and video, waiting until the buffer is filled before the start button can be clicked.

Go to <http://www.Cameo.com/CameoCast/> to view the demo of this new program. Wander around this site to gain an understanding of CameoCast and what it does, and this will answer most questions.

This reviewer wants to express one cautionary note, viz., this software is still in Beta testing. As some of you know, Beta is Latin for "still doesn't work" (just kidding), but care should be exercised in considering to use a Beta version of anything. Our Grosenfader wisenspouted this previously, so take heed.

Whenever the CameoCast software becomes bulletproof, this should introduce the ability to watch all kinds of videos, including movies, via your computer. Unknown at this time is the kind of programming which CameoCast will be providing. Movies ? Music videos ? Such programming could have a great deal of appeal. At this early stage of the game, our suggestion is to access this website and check out CameoCast, but consider carefully before downloading this Beta program.

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I Thought You'd Never Ask

My MultiBoot Arrangement

by Bill Shook - NWA-PCUG

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I've had the same arrangement since 1998 and used to be prepared to talk on it and brought it up at meetings occasionally when it seemed appropriate, but something else always took precedence and I never did get into it. Now, over the years with no involvement with the subject -- it just keeps running and running ... -- some of you may know what happens to memory retention. That's why when I received a question on it at last meeting, from Ed Maxey, I had trouble recalling the details. I can now and here it is. Thanks for waiting.

It's an 8 bit interface card that fits into an ISA slot with the name of ATA PRO FLASH Enhanced Drive Support Card from Micro Firmware, Inc. It cost \$39.95 then and is the same now. Features include:

1. MultiBooting -- You can boot from any available drive in the system.
2. Large Hard Drive Support -- Overcomes system BIOS limitations with higher-capacity drives. It can handle drives up to 127 gigs.
3. Supports the LS-120 SuperDisk and Iomega Zip drives, making them both bootable. Speaking of backup (we were, weren't we ?), this is why I bought it -- to boot from my LS-120 SuperDisk as the A: drive, as backup to the 1.44 floppy.
4. Does not use an IRQ.

5. Reprogrammable Flash ROM which makes for easy firmware revisions and updates -- all downloadable and free to customers.

6. Support for up to 8 IDE devices (on 4 or more interfaces) vs 4 devices on 2 interfaces normally handled by a system.

Here's how it works:

1. When the system is turned on, the sign-on screen will appear and if nothing is pressed within 4 seconds, it will boot up to the default drive.
2. If the letter S is pressed during the 4 seconds, it will enter Configuration mode; if B is pressed, it will allow selection of a bootable drive other than the default.

Note that the default drive is always the default until a new default is programmed in Configuration. Selecting a particular bootable drive with the B, as indicated above, results in booting to that drive only during that session.

Smooth! Doesn't give any trouble (that's why I forget it's there). I like it.

Micro Firmware, Inc
<http://www.firmware.com>
support@firmware.com
405-321-8333

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