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Editorial

Just a few words re our next meeting, you may well know I have negotiated with the new hotel owner good prices for members staying for the week-end, the important bit is that if we get good numbers attending then the cost for all will be reduced, so its up to **YOU** encourage all the members you know and any new members of friends to come along and stay and you will save your costs and help every one else to save money. I feel that I have done as much as I am able if we don't get the numbers attending I will have to think about ending our long running successful meetings, **THIS COULD BE OUR LAST MEETING IF YOU DON'T BOTHER TO COME OR YOU FAIL TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO COME, THE FUTURE IS DOWN TO YOU!!!**

I have recently been working on using some old stepper motors rescued from TRS-80 Disk Drives, Its quite easy once you have worked out that they want power sent down a set sequence of wires, its best to think of the motor as a fixed magnet with Electro magnets surrounding it, the motors have powerful torque so are quite useful.

I found a very useful reasonably priced gadget at Maplins, a USB IDE Adapter, it states USB2 but I have used it on USB 1 without any problems, it will allow you to connect a hard drive or CD/DVD drive via the USB port any hard drive can be connected without even rebooting I have not tried yet but I assume if you get two or more you can connect any number of drives to your computer for just £29.99 each, the adapter comes with a power

supply AC input 100-240 v ac 50-60Hz so will work on Plane or Ship power and can be used on any machine with a USB port.

I do look forward to seeing you all at our next meeting.

Bob Sparling.

Q&A -- C.C. Delan

by C.C. Delan

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****Q: #1** really find your column useful. Thank you. I do have two questions:

Just accomplished a good install of NT4 (took a long time to figure it out). Found emergency disks not much help. Would the XCOPY command copy everything to another hard drive to store and restore from, if something goes wrong ?

I am trying to make some sort of dictionary to help with the terms in VB Studio. Do you know of a program or help type DB that I could use ? I have some friends who are college students and would like to see if they could use it.#

A:** Of course you find my column useful. Even I am occasionally amazed at the brilliance of my mind and the exquisite subtlety of my

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writing. But modesty prevents me from saying more.

You're right, I've never found the NT emergency disks particularly useful either.

I trust that your installed version of NT includes the various service packs. If not, I suggest that you download them from MS.

For those who have forgotten their DOS commands (or never knew them), XCOPY is a more powerful version of the COPY command. It can move files, directories, subdirectories and even whole drives from one destination to another. It can be useful especially for backing up.

(An enhanced XCOPY utility, called XXCOPY, is available free at www.xxcopy.com. I haven't tried it, but it looks worth investigating.)

If you are talking about data, yes, the XCOPY command works wonders. If you are talking about duplicating the operating system, I wouldn't go that route. I would install NT again, separately, on a separate partition. On bootup you could choose which version to load.

Once a second copy of NT is installed (on a separate partition) you could use XCOPY to copy the data from one partition to the other.

It's quite a while since I've used NT, but as I recall you can manage the partitions from NT's Disk Administrator.

Re VB Studio, unless the terms you're talking about are very exotic indeed, you're probably reinventing the wheel. Most computer terms are

already defined in various places on the Web. One example is www.whatis.com. I'm not sure that site has exactly what you're looking for, but it's an example of what I mean.

Microsoft's Knowledge Base is also good for such things. An easy front end for KB is www.freeanswers.com.

****Q: #My curiosity was piqued by a question raised in last month's #Hard-Copy# ...: Who invented the laser printer? What is the true story? What does C.C. say?#**

A: C.C. says that you should keep in mind Oscar Wilde's line: "The truth is rarely pure and never simple."**

Gary Starkweather invented the first laser printer in 1971 at that fount of innovation, Xerox PARC (Paulo Alto Research Center), the same place where Bob Metcalfe invented Ethernet and the source of many tools we take for granted today. In 1977-78 Xerox introduced the first commercially available laser printer, the 9700. It was very fast (120 pages per minute) and very expensive (about \$350,000). It was left to Cannon to develop the desktop version, the LBP-10/LBP-CX in 1982. Cannon offered it to Xerox, but Xerox declined, apparently because Xerox believed it had a better one. It didn't. Cannon partnered with H-P and the rest, as the saying goes, is history. By 1985 H-P dominated the laser printer market.

Had Xerox followed up on even half of its research, it could have been the dominant player in the computer biz. The folks at Xerox PARC were

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the source of windows, icons and mice. The creators of Ethernet, PostScript and MS Word all came from Xerox.

For the whole amazing story of Xerox PARC, see Michael A. Hiltzik's book #Dealers of Lightning: Xerox PARC and the dawn of the computer age# (ISBN0887309895). You can buy a used copy for as little as \$2.50 (as of this writing, in mid-October) plus shipping from www.half.com, or \$2.69 from www.amazon.com.

Starkweather, at last report, was working for Microsoft.

**Q: #Hope you can help. I have Windows 98 Second Edition on a Dell Dimension XTS T600 with lots of RAM and disk space. Starting about two weeks ago, when starting up I got one of those "The program has performed an illegal operation. If the problem persists, contact the program vendor" messages. The program referred to is ExShell.exe. I've been closing the message, finish loading Windows, and as yet have not experienced any difficulties. What is ExShell.exe ? It is located at C:\Program Files\Platform. Can I delete the program ? If not, how can I fix it ?#

A:** C.C. can and will break you out of your ExShell and ... that's no yolk.

The problem is unrelated to disk space or RAM. ExShell is left over from your Excite@Home cable ISP service (now out of business, so you may be using AT&T cable or something else). The purpose of Exshell was to put the ExcitePlatform icon in the tray (next to the clock). To get rid of it:

Click Start, Run, enter "msconfig" in the box (without quotes). Select the Startup tab and uncheck EXCITE PLATFORM (or some words to that effect). Restart your PC.

Poof! You're no longer booting on ExShells. Your ExShell is all shelled out. Your Shell is Ex'd. It is now an ex-ExShell.

Now, is that an ExShellent answer, or what ?

**Q: #Sometimes I try to uninstall a program via its own installer and it either doesn't work at all, or it leaves pieces of itself scattered around the registry. Or I try the Add/Remove Programs Applet in Control Panel and the program isn't even listed, or it's listed but doesn't uninstall completely. There must be a better way, mustn't there.#

A:** There are lots of commercial and shareware uninstallers that claim to do the trick. You can find most of them with the search term UNINSTALLER at www.tucows.com.

But here at the deLan Labs we are the ultimate cheapskates. Our motto is "Never walk where you can ride. And never pay to ride when you can ride for free."

A Romanian outfit recently launched a freeware app called UninstallAbility that runs in all versions of Windows from 98 to XP. Here's what they say about it:

"Windows keeps information about the programs that can be uninstalled from your computer in an uninstall list in the registry. As any program or anybody with a registry editor has

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access to this uninstall list, the list may become corrupted or even destroyed. In this case you may no longer be able to uninstall programs from your computer! UninstallAbility maintains backup copies of this list and of all uninstall information and allows you to restore it easily if necessary. UninstallAbility can also help you when a program you want to uninstall has disappeared from the uninstall list, but not from your computer.

"UninstallAbility can restore it from a backup copy so that you can remove it from your computer."

I haven't tried it, so can't specifically recommend it, but it looks like it's worth a shot. The price is certainly right:
www.aurelitec.com/software/uability/download.htm.

****Q:** #I have received several spam e-mails touting software that claims to be able to make CDs from DVDs, or transfer VHS tapes to DVD or CD. I would like to be able to do this, but I am leery of anything that comes in spam messages. Is there a legitimate source for such tools, or at least reliable information on the subject ?#

A:** Damn the spam, full speed ahead to www.vedhelp.com. Here's how they describe themselves

This site will help you to make your own VideoCDs, SVCDs, or DVDs that can be played on your stand alone DVD player from video sources like DVD, Video, TV, Cam, or download movie clips like DivX, MOV, RM, WMV and ASF. We also have an extensive list of stand alone DVD players with compatibility

information such as CD-R(W), DVD-R(W), VCD, SVCD, MP3 and more."

SVCD stands for "Super VideoCD", the details of which are explained at the site.

****Q:** #I've been using Windows ME for several months and am confused about the System Restore function that is supposed to be there. First, where exactly is it, what does it do, and how do I use it ? Do I really need it ?#

A:** Go back with me to the dim, dark past of the last century. Or at least to 1999 April 24, which is the day a column by my colleague, Jerry Maizell, was published in the (late) Near North News, "#GoBack# to the future: time travel software". Here's what Jerry had to say:

"#GoBack#, by WildFile software of Plymouth, MN, is an innovative, first-of-its-kind program that allows you to view your hard drive as it was at any previous time as far back as a week ago. #GoBack#'s menu offers three simple functions: create a #GoBack# drive showing another drive as it was in the past; recover an old version of a file that was deleted or changed; or revert an entire hard drive to the way it was in the past.

"Typically using about 10 pct. of your drive, #GoBack# works in the background to create a twin drive, a sort of parallel universe in another dimension. I did not notice any degradation of system performance while #GoBack# made and stored its copies, though disk- or CPU-intensive activities, such as multimedia applications may be affected."

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Since then, #GoBack# was sold to Roxio (www.Roxio.com). Microsoft's System Restore is a similar, less full-featured, utility that is included in WinME and XP.

To use it, click Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Restore. Select "Restore My computer to an earlier time", then select the checkpoint you created. Your computer will then return itself to the state it was in at that time.

System Restore is very useful if you have an emergency. It is not, however, something to be used casually. It is always best to use the least drastic methods to restore data (or restore the registry) before using System Restore. But when nothing else works it can be a lifesaver.

You might want to consider buying #GoBack# itself, as it offers more flexibility than MS's SR. At the moment it's going for \$29-95 after \$20 mail-in rebate.

Keep in mind that SR (or #GoBack#) takes up a huge amount of space and CPU power to maintain itself. If your system is short on space or power you may want to consider disabling it. To disable System Restore: Control Panel, System, Performance tab, File System. Click the Troubleshooting tab and check Disable System Restore.

Did Microsoft send it?

by Siles Bazerman

siles.bazerman@gte.net
APCUG Representative
Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, CA
orcopug.org

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Return-Path:

<1.spar.metzger@wanadoo.fr>Received: from mel-rto6.wanadoo.fr ([193.25.19.25]) by orval.sprint.ca (InterMail vM.5.01.02.00 201-253-122-103-101-20001108) with ESMTPid <200300225200401.DVU126901.orval.sprint.ca@mel-rto6.wanadoo.fr>for<xxxxxxxxxxx@sprint.ca>; Tue, 25 Feb 2003 15:04:01 -0500Received: from mel-rta10.wanadoo.fr (193.252.19.193) bymel-rto6.wanadoo.fr(6.7.015)id 3E0C343F02651838; Tue, 25 Feb 2003 20:59:47 +0100Received: from JJE1GO (81.50.38.12) by mel-rta10.wanadoo.fr (6.7.015)id 3E26DAA6016CCA66; Tue, 25 Feb 2003 20:59:46 +0100Date: Tue, 25 Feb 2003 20:59:46 +0100 (added by postmaster@wanadoo.fr) Message-ID: <3E26DAA6016CAA66@mel-rta10.wanadoo.fr> (Added by postmaster@wanadoo.fr) FROM: "Microsoft Corporation Internet Security Division" <zgyegdwd201593@AvVyZc.com> TO: "MS Customer <SUBJECT: Newest Internet Security Update> Mime-Version: 1.0 Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="cGwarduOGAAVvQYBK"

From: Microsoft Corporation Internet Security Division
To: MS Customer
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2003 2:59 PM

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Subject: Newest Internet Security Update

MS Customer this is the latest version of security update, the "February 2003 Cumulative Patch" update which eliminates all known security vulnerability affecting Internet Explorer, Outlook and Outlook Express as well as five newly discovered vulnerabilities. Install now to protect your computer from these vulnerabilities, the most serious of which could allow an attacker to run executable on your system. This update includes the functionality of all previously released patches. System requirements Win 9x/Me/2000/NT/XP. This update applies to Microsoft Internet Explorer, version 4.01 and later.

Recommendation: Customers should install the patch at the earliest opportunity. How to install Run attached file. Click Yes on displayed dialog box.

How to use: You don't need to do anything after installing this item. Microsoft Product Support Services and Knowledge Base articles can be found on the Microsoft Technical Support web site. For security-related information about Microsoft products, please visit the Microsoft Security Advisor web site, or Contact us. Please do not reply to this message. It was sent from an unmonitored email address and we are unable to respond to any replies. Thank you for using Microsoft products. Best wishes from Microsoft Corporation Internet Security Division

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mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

NOTE: the attachment was deleted.

Is this a legitimate message or a hoax or worse? I am sure some of you have received the above message and attached file. It has been circulating the internet for over a month.

The message is a hoax, and the attachment is a worm/virus that is particularly virulent. It not only replicates itself but starts deleting files on your hard drive.

Let us look at the message and see how we can tell it is a hoax.

1. Microsoft NEVER-NEVER-NEVER sends out messages with patches or attachments, especially unsolicited ones. At the most, Microsoft will refer you to a secure site where the patch can be downloaded. (Did I say NEVER?)

2. This is a rather good copy of the format used by Microsoft, but look at the first line. There is no capital letter to start the sentence. Also there are a number of grammatical errors as well as format errors.

3. The message is not sent through a Microsoft site, but from a melrto6.wanadoo.fr (a french site with no Microsoft connection).

4. Microsoft does not have the named division, although it does have units that deal with security, internet or otherwise.

If you receive this or any other similar message, do not immediately install or run the executable file. Check it out. There are numerous sites devoted to security as well as many usenet groups which report on these matters. Your first line of

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defense is to contact your User Group officers and ask them. They will know or will have access to resources to verify or debunk the claims.

Remember to practice "Safe Hex."

KVM Switches

by Lenny Bloom - FCUG

[Reprinted from the 2003 July issue of "SYDTRUG News", newsletter of SYDTRUG Inc., PO Box 75, PANANIA NSW 2213, AUSTRALIA, where it was reprinted from the 2003 April issue of "The Voice of FCUG", newsletter of the Fairfield County Computer Users Group Inc., 280 Main Street, Westport CT 06880-2408, U S of A]

KVM stands for Keyboard, Video and Mouse switch. These switches are designed to let you run multiple computers using one monitor, keyboard and mouse. Say, in your house, you have limited desk space, but want to view both your old computer and your new CPU. You cable in a KVM and you can switch between computers. No software is required. With higher versions of KVMs you can attach 4, 8, 16 or up to as many as 512 computers, to show on one screen. This can save enormously on the cost of equipment and space.

Since this is not networking or data sharing, you cannot spread a virus from one computer on the switch to another. One FCUGer has hooked up his old CPU and a new machine. He downloads from the Internet to the old machine and tests anything questionable there, before taking a floppy and moving the program over to his business computer.

Shown at the FCUG meeting were three versions of KVMs: a Belkin four-CPU switch, a clone six-CPU

switch, and an EDI MAX four-CPU switch.

The price depends on the number of computer connections, the brand and the cabling. Be careful to check that cables are included in your price, or that might be an additional purchase. On some models there are audio switches that transfer speaker and microphone connections. Another price-raising feature is an "on-screen" display. A KVM cable switch can have a fifteen-foot cable, but you can buy extender cables that will carry your signal to up to 2000 feet. This and Daisy-Chain connections are how Internet providers bank up to more than 500 CPU servers in a room with one monitor.

Before you go out to buy, check what connections you have on your computer: USB, PS/2 or AT. Your keyboard should have the same connection or an adapter cable.

You can pick up KVM switches at office stores such as CompUSA or Staples. A Belkin KVM 4-CPU switch with Audio costs \$160 at Staples. A two-port with audio is \$130. These Belkins have five year warranties. Prices for KVMs range from \$60 for a 2-CPU KVM to \$500 for a 16-CPU KVM with "on screen" display.

You can buy KVMs over the Internet at www.tigerdirect.com or www.computergate.com. A fifteen foot, tri-headed, KVM cable with PS/2 connectors at both ends is \$9-99 and shipping from Computergate. By studying product descriptions on the Internet sites noted, you can learn more about the switches. You can also pick up KVMs at the local computer fairs; in this area look at

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www.coganfairs.com or
www.marketpro.com to check their
schedules.

Software Review:

DCE AutoEnhance

by Larry Anders -- Tampa PC Users Group Inc.

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Many of us by now have bitten the bullet and purchased a digital camera. With the prices ranging from \$79 to well over \$1000, there is a price range for almost everyone. I know because I am on my second one and considering a third.

Although the photographs from digital cameras have gotten much better since my first Sony Mavica of five years ago, they are still not perfect. They all seem to need a little something, whether it be brightening, sharpening or something to make it perfect. Now, I am not saying that the photos I take with a regular film camera are all perfect, but in some sense there's not much I can do about them once the picture is developed and printed, unless I want to scan them in one at a time and "fix" them. At least the digital photos are somewhat ready to be "fixed", or probably better put, adjusted to your liking.

Almost any graphics program today will import the image produced by your camera and let you make the adjustments you deem necessary. I

have reviewed a few of those programs in this newsletter in the past, such as JASC Paint Shop Pro, Adobe Photoshop Elements, and my favourite, because it is free, Digital Camera Enhancer from MediaChance. The one problem I have with all the above software is that only one photo at a time can be processed. Most of the time that is okay, but recently I published a large amount of pictures to my website and it took a couple of hours to prepare the photos. By preparing I also mean resizing for optimal loading on a PC that doesn't have a broadband Internet connection. Two hours to process these photos was totally unacceptable, so I went looking.

NOTE: William LaMartin, newsletter Editor and Webmaster for the Tampa PC User Group, tells me that Adobe Photoshop can batch process graphic images. But at over \$600 for the latest version 7, and a learning curve that will take me into the next millennium, I decided to look elsewhere. (PhotoShop is no doubt the best program on the market for professionals, which I am not.)

I searched the Internet and found a few programs and almost wrote an article on EyeBatch Image Processor, until I visited MediaChance's website, <http://www.mediachance.com>, again and found my favourite program has been upgraded to a commercial batch processing program called DCE AutoEnhance (DCE). The free version is still available under the camera tools section. There is a fully functional evaluation version of DCE available for the download. The only restriction on the evaluation version is that you can

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only batch process five photos at one time, and the evaluation period is only good for 30 days. That is more than enough to put DCE through its paces. It only took me five minutes to know that this program belonged in my arsenal of tools. Enough for this story

****On with the review****

DCE has all the tools of its free sibling but it also goes quite a bit further when adjusting and enhancing batches of photos. I know what you're thinking; "How can you adjust all photos the same if each one was taken at different times under different conditions?". Well, MediaChance uses something called Exif Metadata that your camera stores with the images, and processes the data accordingly, (I didn't know my camera stored anything other than the image.). So DCE knows whether the shot was taken with or without flash, in the night or day, etc., and adjusts itself accordingly. Some of the features shown and talked about at <http://www.mediachance.com/dce/features.html> are:

- + Automatic Balance (Most digital photos are a little dark. This will balance out the light and contrast.)
- + Remove Blue cast (Removing the extra blueness brings the sharp colour back.)
- + Adjust Mid-tones
- + Enhance Colours (With this you can give a boost to the colours - without over-processing them.)
- + Enhance Details
- + Remove Hot Pixels (This removes the "dust" or white dots from photos that have a longer exposure time - like evening shots without a flash.)
- + De-noise the image (The new mega-pixel cameras might add more

detail than we really need. This filter smooths out the roughness while leaving the needed detail in.)

+ Portrait De-Focus Filter (This was included especially to smooth out skin tones.)

+ Resize the image (This is the real timesaver for me. I feel I get a better photo by taking higher resolution snapshots and then reducing the size before uploading to the web. This may or may not be true; but it makes me feel better.)

+ Finds the JPG quality for each image according to your needs

+ Add text or Exif data such as date of shot taken, shutter speed, ISO etc. into the image with great control about colours and parameters (You have full control over the size, font, colour, background colour and transparency and position. I haven't seen this ability in other digital processing software up to this point.)

Don't forget, most of the above mentioned features are all automatic, but if you get that one photo that you think needs a little more tweaking, there are manual adjustments on just about all of the features. Because of the time it had taken me in the past to prepare my photographs for the web, I had actually all but stopped, or rather slowed down considerably, taking pictures to post on the Internet. This past Christmas I took a great deal of pictures that never made it to my website. They will now, a few months late, but what's wrong with Christmas in July. I just got a Christmas present in April when I found DC AutoEnhance, and you can too. Just go to:

<http://www.mediachance.com/dce/index.html>, download the evaluation version and you can see what I'm talking about. You'll be surprised to

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find out your digital photos aren't really as good as you thought they were, but they can be - I guarantee it!

If you decide that DCE does the job for you, send MediaChance the \$35 registration fee so they'll keep on making good software. And while you're at their website, look around. There's a lot of other good stuff to try out.

[Larry Anders is the Librarian of the Tampa PC User Group, Inc. You can contact him at Larry@AndersNet.com]

The Truth About Mail-in Rebates

by Roger A. Poverny - TUGNET

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Mail-in rebates are a bonanza for retail computer stores: They can advertise a very low sales price (or even a free price, after mail-in rebates), and then charge buyers of these so-called bargains a higher-than-normal sales price. It brings in the customers who are looking for good deals, and who may purchase other items while they are in the store. It means higher sales figures for the retailer since these mail-in rebates are underwritten by the manufacturers, and they cost the retailers nothing. It also creates a cadre of unhappy customers. Why? Consider this: according to the Wall Street journal, up to 95% of people forget to claim the rebate.

They end up paying more for the product than they would have without a rebate. For those who make the claim, there are a variety of reasons why the claims go unpaid. Some of these reasons are detailed below.

Let's start with this premise: manufacturers don't want to rebate money to you, so they put a number of obstacles in your way. Sometimes the rebate forms are hidden in the store or you have to ask the cashier for a copy. The rebate form lists the submittal requirements in great complicated detail so that a simple non-compliance error on your part will void your claim. You must include a copy of your purchase receipt (sometimes with the purchased item circled or underlined) along with the original UPC code from the package. Be careful here, as some packages have multiple UPC codes with different numbers. Then you must mail the completed rebate form, with inclusions, to a specified address (usually a fulfillment house hired to handle the rebate). There is always a window of opportunity; i.e. an "offer expiration date" and a "postmark before" date. Most mail-in forms tell you to expect your rebate in eight to ten weeks.

Very seldom will a rebate cheque arrive by the promised waiting period: you are forced to call their 800 number (although some don't have a toll-free number) to find out what the holdup is. The manufacturer is counting on you to forget that a rebate promise date has passed. If you do remember to call them, this is generally when the excuses start. Typical excuses are: "We didn't receive your UPC code or register receipt", "We never received

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your letter", "You didn't complete your rebate form properly", "The offer has expired ... or is no longer funded by the manufacturer". The fulfillment houses are experts at not paying, and as a matter of fact are hired by some manufacturers just because they are so tough. Many times you will get a postcard, not a letter, saying you were denied a rebate. Postcards are easy to lose or throw away in the trash, which is why many rebate cheques are mailed in the form of a postcard. They don't even look like cheques! Most people will stop trying once they have been rejected. The manufacturers count on this. At a FRY's the other day, a customer relations representative pointed at two 4-drawer filing cabinets and said they were full of customer complaints about rebates. That's eight drawers of unhappy customers, and they represent only that five percent (according to The Wall Street Journal) who actually sent in their rebate forms. After all is said and done, probably 2% of the customers receive a rebate cheque.

Manufacturers and retailers make more money from us when the items they are selling have mail-in rebates, so it doesn't seem likely that the practice will end any time soon. The number of items using rebates appears to be rising exponentially, and the customer is the loser. It is just plain unfair. How can we fight back?

Fighting Back

There are two ways to fight back: (1) Politically, through our Legislatures, Better Business Bureaus, Federal Trade Commission, Retail Store Managers, etc. We can write letters or call and complain; (2) The second

method is to make it so costly for the manufacturers to offer these rebates that they will abandon the practice. We can do this by making sure we get every one of the offered rebates. If you follow the directions outlined below, you will get every one.

1. Make sure you have the rebate form before you leave the store. Check the form to be sure you fall within the offering's dates. Also ask the cashier for a second copy of the purchase receipt.

2. As soon as you get home, remove the UPC code from the container or wrapping before you throw the packaging away. If you intend to try out the product first to make sure you want to keep it, and don't want to remove the UPC code yet in case you want to return it, see No. 7 below.

3. Read the form carefully so that you will comply exactly with their requirements. Read it a second time before you fill it in. Don't forget to circle or underline the item on the receipt if required to do so.

4. Make copies of everything you send, including the UPC code. This is where most people falter since they don't have copy machines. They set it aside to take to work or to a copy store and forget about it. But, most of us have scanners! Use them to make your copies. Even most fax machines will work.

5. Staple together all the pieces: receipt, UPC code, rebate form. Then they can't say they were not with your submittal, or must have fallen out of the envelope.

6. Mark the mailing date on your copy.

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Also mark the date when the waiting period ends, 8 to ten weeks later.

7. This next step will help you to remember. Go to:
www.memotome.com (memo to me) and sign up for their free e-mail reminder service. Have them to send you an e-mail when the rebate cheque was promised.

If you are trying out a product prior to sending in the rebate form, ask for a reminder in a couple of weeks.

8. If you haven't gotten your cheque after the promised time, call the telephone number listed on your copy of the rebate form. Try to talk to a live person. Tell them the waiting period has passed and insist that you be paid. Keep on insisting if you get the brush-off. Ask to speak to a supervisor. Mark the names of those you talked to, the dates and excuses on your rebate copy. If necessary, send another copy of your submittal in case they deny receipt of all submitted items.

9. If all else fails, go to the retail store where you purchased the item. Bring your paperwork and insist that they do whatever is necessary to get you the rebate cheque.

Roger A. Poverny is on the Board of Directors of The Users' Group Network (TUGNET) in Granada Hills, California. If you use this article, please send him an e-mail to let him know. rogerp@socal.rr.com
Thanks.

Quick: Delete

the jdbgmgr.exe file!!

by Gabe Kingsley

This article was reprinted from the 2003 July issue of "SYDTRUG News", newsletter of SYDTRUG Inc., PO Box 75, PANANIA NSW 2213, AUSTRALIA, where it was brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organisation to which SYDTRUG Inc. belongs. There is no restriction against any non-profit group using the article as long as it is kept in context, with proper credit given to the author.

I've received a few of these dumb alerts over the past week. You haven't received one? It's an e-mail hoax pretending to be a virus warning that tells people to delete their Java Debugger Manager file, called jdbgmgr.exe.

What really ticks me off is the open list of recipients, often 30 to 50 of them, that become fodder for all sorts of junk through the systems of others.

So I'm on a one-man crusade to get people to use Blind Ccs for all mail, unless there is a compelling reason (such as a work group, etc.) in which they need to know who else received the message. Heck, I even send out tutorials for most e-mail programs to eliminate any excuses they may have.

Here's what I tell people whenever they forward me an ALERT!!
ALERT! About any virus:

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Hey, Klez ?

The most recent e-mail virus you're asking about is the Klez, and it has powers not seen in earlier types.

Klez can select an e-mail address at random from a CC list in a message on your or someone else's computer and send itself to the recipients of other messages. It's not limited to those addresses in your address book. In addition, it can "spooof" the return address, so that even if you were not the sender of a message infected with the Klez virus, your name and address may appear as the originator.

This is bad stuff and we should expect a raft of "me too" versions to come along!

Another, less harmful but no less irritating offense is the warning running around the world, advising you to delete a specific file from your system because it contains a virus. This is a hoax! The file, jdbgmgr.exe, is one that Windows put there and enables certain Java scripting capabilities. You need it!

You may receive either the Klez virus or the relatively innocuous hoax warning described above because your name and address were in someone's CC list.

One of the greatest potential dangers is in the e-mails that are forwarded, forwarded and forwarded again by unwitting people. I'm sure you get them every day, and may even pass them along. The result is list after list of available addresses the Klez virus can use to send itself to people you don't know, and for people you don't know to send it to

you, possibly giving the impression it came from you.

When you forward a message, COPY ONLY THE TEXT into a new message and send it to your friends. DO NOT just forward the existing message, complete with the previous lists of recipients and their addresses. If you want to forward a message, take care to manually remove the list of previous recipients to preserve their safety. It's really easy.

Learn and Use Blind CC

When sending messages to a group of people, unless it is REQUIRED that each one see the names of all others who received the message, PLEASE USE A BLIND RECIPIENT list. I am not aware of an e-mail program that does not allow you to send messages to a list of "blind" recipients, in which each person who receives the messages sees only their own address, and not the entire list of recipients.

If you have AOL, it is the easiest thing to do: Simply bracket all recipients in a pair of parentheses (address1, address2) each separated by a comma.

If you use Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express, there is a special field for "Bcc" (Blind copies) just below the "To" and "Cc" rows. If you do not see it when you open the program, click on View and select "Bcc Field". Eudora and Netscape Navigator also have blind recipient capabilities.

Yahoo! and Hotmail users can find the "Bcc" field for entering addresses in the on-line address header.

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The Juno mail software works very much like AOL, in that you can enclose multiple addresses in parentheses to make them blind, and as with AOL, they must be separated by a comma. By doing this each recipient will see only their own address, and not anyone else's, just as with this message. Homeland

Security on the Net

by Ira Wilsker

[This article is reprinted from the 2003 August issue of "SYDTRUG News", newsletter of SYDTRUG Inc., PO Box 75, PANANIA NSW 2213, AUSTRALIA, where it was brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organisation to which SYDTRUG Inc. belongs. There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context, with proper credit given to the author.]

There have been a lot of hoaxes and urban legends mixed with the facts about our current threat level, and things that we as citizens can do to protect ourselves. At a time like this, it is imperative that we get our important and critical information from reputable sources, and not from spam e-mails or rumourmongers.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has set up a website at www.dhs.gov where the latest news and information on the topic can be found.

A variety of topics are available from this official source, including information on the new "Operation Liberty Shield".

According to the DHS web page, "Liberty Shield is a unified operation that integrates selected national protective measures with the involvement of federal, state, local and private responders and authorities from around the country Operation Liberty Shield is a comprehensive national plan designed to increase protections for America's citizens and infrastructure while maintaining the free flow of goods and people across our border with minimal disruption to our economy and way of life. Operation Liberty Shield is a multi-department, multi-agency, national team effort." Included in the "Liberty Shield" statement is information explicitly on increased security at our borders, stronger transportation protections, and ongoing measures to disrupt threats, greater protections for critical infrastructure and key assets, and increased public health preparedness. Detailed information about these and other important topics is available on the DHS site.

Many of us are justifiably concerned about possible personal threats from terrorists. From the "Threats & Protection" link on the DHS site is comprehensive information compiled from a variety of resources, including the FBI, CIA, National Security Agency (NSA), Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Department of Defense, and other resources. On this web page is also information explaining the Homeland Security Advisory System, which, as I type this, is at "Orange - Threat Advisory High - High Risk of Terrorist Attacks". Advisories are also posted on cyber-risks, and other public health and safety threats.

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Tips are available for home and community protection, schools, computer protection, and the mail service.

Threats from biological, nuclear, and radiological resources are also included. Risks encountered by our telecommunications, power, water, and other utilities are discussed, as well as possible threats to our transportation system, and our agriculture. Financial threats, such as counterfeiting and credit card fraud, as well as identity theft and other financial threats are explained, and precautions to protect against such risks are disclosed. Potential threats to leadership and symbolic targets are posted.

An affiliated website from the DHS is on-line at www.ready.gov. With the heading "Terrorism forces us to make a choice. Don't be Afraid - Be Ready". This site contains a variety of personal protection resources, including emergency supplies, emergency planning, and information resources. Details on appropriate emergency supplies needed in an "Emergency Kit" include food and water, air quality and safety items, materials necessary for first aid, a supply checklist, and special needs items. The special needs' listing includes items for babies, family medical needs such as prescriptions, contact lenses and accessories and eyeglasses, dental needs, and related materials. Some seniors and disabled individuals may also have special emergency requirements, such as communication and mobility necessities that must be provided for in times of emergency.

Appropriate additional resources are listed, with links on the web page.

The necessity of an emergency family plan is explained, including information on what to do if a terrorist attack or natural disaster occurs while at home, school, in a vehicle, or in a high-rise building, with an emphasis on "common sense" planning. Information on decision making about whether to evacuate or stay at home in a time of crisis is also included.

Critical information on a variety of explicit threats, and what to do in the event those threats become reality is listed. The types of threats covered include biological, chemical, explosive, nuclear, and radiological.

For those wanting a detailed printed brochure on this information, the DHS has a comprehensive one available for download on the ready.gov website, titled "Preparing Makes Sense. Get Ready Now". This brochure is illustrated and in colour, prepared in the Adobe PDF format, and suitable for local reproduction and distribution. Alternatively, the brochure is available for free in a published format by calling 1-800-237-3239.

If anyone is interested in being trained in dealing with these threats, or wishes to volunteer for community service, links are available on the ready.gov site.

Other useful and related official links are available on the ready.gov site. These links include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (www.bt.cdc.gov), Department of Education Emergency

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Preparedness Plans for Schools (www.ed.gov/emergencyplan), the FBI (www.fbi.gov), Department of Health and Human Services Disasters and Emergencies (www.hhs.gov/disasters), Disaster and Terrorism Help (disasterhelp.gov), Environmental Protection Agency Emergency Preparedness (www.epa.gov/eftpages/emergencies.html), Federal Emergency Management Agency (www.fema.gov), and other similar links.

Unlike any other major threat previously faced by our country, the Internet has now become a valuable resource of reliable information that may literally be lifesaving. As has been said many times in the past, "information is power", and in this case, information may mean survival.

So far, because Mac's represent such a small percentage of the computers in use, the people who create the worms and viruses do not make them work with Mac computers. However, anyone using a Mac who does not hide the recipients of their e-mails makes their recipients vulnerable to the possibility of being hit with a virus from someone else on their CC list!

Anyone who wants to protect their privacy and safety will appreciate your doing this.

Few things about e-mail bother me more than when something I sent gets forwarded to a large list of people I don't know,

and because my address is now in their message base, I am then vulnerable to receiving a virus or one of those hoax warnings from them ... or anyone to whom they forward that message.

Please try to use blind recipient lists. It will make us all safer from viruses, worms and hoaxes.

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