

# NATGUG News March 2003

## Digiscoping

I became interested in digital photography because once you purchased the camera you only needed to put batteries in and away you went, it only became expensive if you wanted to print them out, otherwise it was quite inexpensive.

The draw back with digital was the resolution was not that great, now with 4 megapixel cameras not costing the earth reasonable quality photos are easy, but you still need some skill in getting good results.

That is where I don't qualify too highly, but it costs nothing to take lots and get rid of the duff ones, so I end up with some reasonable ones that I would dare to let others see.

Another advantage (so I've been told) is that digital cameras will work well with much lower light levels and still give good colour and contrast definition, that fact coupled with the ingenious experimenting of someone to stick a camera on the end of a telescope and take pictures is where Digiscoping begins.

I've always liked to have good selection of lenses on my 35mm film camera, I liked to get unusual shots (it made up for the lack of quality in my photographs), a 200mm lens with a 2X converter gave me 400mm a 35mm wide angle plus the 50mm that came with the camera gave me all I could need, (needed a good size bag for that lot and a strong woman to carry it) anything above 400mm would be expensive and light quality had to be very good to get reasonable results.

A friend of mine is a bird watcher (the feathered kind) and has been for some time, he has used his computer quite extensively to get info on good places to go and what you would be likely to see, what time the high tide was and keep records of what he had seen and when and the conditions etc.

When I recently visited him; he was full of his latest addition to this hobby, a digital camera, and a telescope. He then produced the results of his efforts, He said I am not a photographer and have never taken photographs before, but I am quite pleased with what I have taken.

Well, I was astounded with the results, so much so I ventured into the Digiscoping hobby myself, and I have been pleased with the efforts I have produced.

I've taken shots of the moon and Jupiter & moons reproduced on page one of this newsletter, the quality produced by the colour laser printer is only 300 dpi and will not do it justice but will give you some idea of the capability of the set-up.

On page two there is a picture (top left) taken from the top of the hill on a misty March morning overlooking Wroughton and is just past the sharp bend you would have gone round on the way to the Villiers inn, it is some 3 miles from Princess Margaret Hospital. The conditions were a long way from being good.

The first photo is the view of the hospital from my vantage point, the second with 2X zoom and third 8X zoom.

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The last picture is taken with the digiscope set at 20X with the zoom of the camera set at 4X zoom giving a total of 80X zoom, the scope has a zoom from 20X to 60X. The shot I took of Jupiter with its Moons was shot at 60X on the scope and 4X on the camera I did shake the camera a bit it takes some skill not to shake even with a shutter release cable attached.

I got most of the advice on equipment needed for good results and at good prices from Warehouse Express on 01603 626222 their web site is:-  
[www.warehouseexpress.com](http://www.warehouseexpress.com).

I ordered what I wanted around 10:30 one morning and it was delivered to me next day before 10:00 they told me it would be no later than 12:00 noon.

The best price for camera memory is at the Digital Depot, 3 Queen Victoria House, Victoria Road, Swindon. I purchased 128mb compact flash memory for £24.90 [www.digitaldepot.co.uk](http://www.digitaldepot.co.uk). Another good web site for all the web site addresses and information I have obtained is [www.fatbirder.com](http://www.fatbirder.com)

## Editorial

I hope every one who makes the effort to come along to the spring meeting will enjoy themselves. I know the cost of the week-end will have put some members off coming but unless we have reasonable support for these events we may have to end the long running twice a year event.

The cost of the meetings is largely outside my control, I have been in negotiations with several

hotels over the winter, Actually ever since our last meeting I've been doing my very best to get the lowest price for members, both the Villiers Inn and the Landmark I have negotiated the charges and they are the same. I have booked the Landmark this time because by the time I had negotiated the lowest possible prices The Villiers Inn were already booked up for the week ends that we would have wanted, the only weekend available to us would have been the last weekend in April and several members had been telling me that that weekend would be too late in the year for them and would have been no good.

I look forward to this coming Friday, a new hotel but old friends and a good fun week-end for everyone, see you all then.

Bob Sparling  
Editor

## E-Mail From Peter Kyle

Hi Bob

Have just received this by E-mail and thought you might like a copy if you haven't already got one.  
[PeterjeremyKyle@aol](mailto:PeterjeremyKyle@aol)

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If any of you are wondering why the internet has been so slow since the weekend, this is why  
(from  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/story.jsp?story=373056>)...

HOW A COMPUTER HACKER AND AN INTERNET VIRUS CALLED SLAMMER GAVE THE WORLDWIDE WEB A SERIOUS COLD

By Charles Arthur, Technology

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Editor

27 January 2003

Before you turn on your computer this morning, you might like to reflect that all may not be well with the internet today. Since early on Saturday, a virulent worm called Slammer has been paralysing web servers that use Microsoft's Windows operating system — the second time this has happened in 18 months.

The timing of the attack has led to claims of cyberterrorism but so far nobody has worked out who was behind it. In the US, the effects of the worm were widely felt: most of the Bank of America's 13,000 cash machines went offline. Five of the 13 "root" servers, which translate names such as amazon.com into a string of machine-readable numbers, were overwhelmed by the traffic generated by infected machines, estimated at more than 22,000 at one point. It clogged up networks, making sites slow to load and interfering with e-mail.

For Microsoft, the latest attack is embarrassing on two counts. First, it comes just as it wanted to push its SQL web-server software harder. While it dominates the desktop, with Windows installed on more than 90 per cent of the world's PCs, it runs less than half the servers on the Net; many instead use a free web server called Apache that has never seen an attack like this. Selling SQL Server will now be harder.

Second, in January 2002, Microsoft's founder, Bill Gates, sent one of his rare company-wide e-mail memos. In future, he said, the behemoth must emphasise security and reliability over showy features; it should be able to resist attacks from outside, and retain users' privacy. "If we don't do this, people simply won't be willing — or able — to take

advantage of all the other great work we do," he wrote. A huge team of programmers was redirected to checking the company's products in search of security holes, and to closing them.

All in all, Mr Gates was lucky that the latest attack happened at a weekend. It began about at 5am GMT: a few, then more, of the web servers on the Net that run the SQL Server 2000 database software were infected. Just like a real virus, the code infected the systems and started them replicating itself — by sending out thousands of probes every second looking for other computers running the same software which could be vulnerable to infection.

Though the probes were tiny — only 376 bytes of code — there were so many that the spreading infection saturated many data links. In Korea, SK Telecom and Korea Telecom Freetel shut down, claiming they were the victims of a denial-of-service attack — in which outside computers freeze a web server by making repeated demands for its status — by unknown hackers. It turned out to be the new worm, Slammer.

Experts at once noted the similarities between this and the September 2001 attack by a worm called Code Red, which infected 300,000 servers running Microsoft's Integrated Internet Server.

Examination of that code showed that it was programmed to launch an attack on the White House website; it was fought off. Even so, it was estimated to have caused \$2bn (££1.25bn) of extra work.

Slammer seems to have had no aim, although experts warned that within a couple of days — that is, by today or tomorrow — hackers will have examined its code and come

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up with versions that have vicious payloads. Even without it, it led to widespread problems. "I walked into the server room and was greeted with a ton of orange lights [that are normally just blinking]. That [worm] can really cook out the damage!" wrote Matt, a systems administrator, on the programmers site Slashdot. "Someone really has carefully crafted this worm to try to bring down the net. And what better time than on a Saturday morning when all admins are away and not planing to work the next day!" "This is like Code Red all over again," said Marc Maiffret, an executive with eEye Digital Security, whose engineers were among the first to study the attack software. "The sheer number of attacks is eating up so much bandwidth that normal operations can't take place." But the Net generally is much closer to collapse — in the sense that companies and organisations are at the mercy of random events such as this — than most people are aware. Take two examples. Nominet, the non-profit organisation that handles registration of every domain in the UK — such as independent.co.uk — found its database servers struggling to cope with an abrupt spike at the end of last week in the number of demands for details of the owners of the domains. "There were about 20 per second," said Lesley Lowley, the managing director. "In essence, the person behind it was getting websites all over the world to send queries to us asking for details of huge numbers of owners of website names." Nominet has about three million such websites registered — "UK domains are still healthy," Ms Lowley said — and it became clear quite quickly what the attacker was

after. "We traced it back to Australia. We think it was a spammer who wanted to get e-mail addresses to send junk mail to."

At almost the same time, thousands of people throughout Britain found that various sites "vanished", and that they were unable to send or receive e-mail, after a systems administrator at WorldCom deleted some files in the course of "housekeeping".

While Nominet has taken action to have the suspect spammer cut off the Net, and the problems caused by WorldCom unwound themselves by the end of Friday, these cases illustrate both how reliant we are on the Net — where losing connectivity can make businesses judder towards a halt — and how unceasing is the war against the people who use computers against the Net's better-natured users. For example, the spread of broadband connections in the past year has brought thousands of people connections that download up to 40 times faster than a standard phone line. Yet only a fraction of them know that such machines — especially if they are running Microsoft Windows — are an open door for a hacker. A random e-mail can plant a "Trojan" program that will give them control of your machine or, more worryingly, let them watch everything you do, including typing your passwords for your banks.

Yet hardly any UK internet service providers supporting broadband offer or require customers to install a firewall. And if customers do get hacked, the ISP will say it's their own fault.

Similarly, spam — junk e-mail — threatens to overwhelm users: estimates suggest that their volume will overtake that of legitimate e-mail

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this year. But without a way to identify and root out, and block the spammers, the internet is at the mercy of the people exploiting its open nature.

But the system doesn't have to be so liable to collapse. A next-generation system for letting machines on the Net communicate with each other — called IPv6, for "internet protocol version 6" — has been under discussion for a decade. It could replace the current system, IPv4, allowing more systems, including phones and even fridges, to communicate over the Net, while giving more security and traceability to it. Everyone knows what it is and how to use it. But nobody does.

"The actual implementation is still theoretical," said Roland Perry, a spokesman for Linx, which represents the companies that keep the internet ticking over in the UK. "I would be surprised if it was the norm to have IPv6 in use in five years. Something else will happen to make it obsolete first."

Christian de Larrinaga, the director of the IPv6 Task Force UK, agrees that without an incentive, getting it used is "something of a chicken and egg situation". Yet it would probably have made tracing the source of the weekend's attack a lot simpler.

"People need to do a better job about fixing vulnerabilities," said Howard Schmidt, President Bush's deputy cyber-security adviser. But the question is, which people? Microsoft? The operators? The Net's users? The answer is unlikely to come in a hurry.

## VIRUSES THAT SHOOK THE INTERNET

November 1988: The Sendmail worm, written by Robert Morris, below, then a student at Cornell University in the US. In the days when the internet was almost

exclusively used by academics, Morris wrote a small program that exploited flaws in two widely used internet programs, Sendmail (which sends electronic mail) and Finger (which checked if someone was online). A bug in Morris's code made the worm spread faster than he expected; many sites took themselves offline to avoid being infected. Morris, the son of a high-ranking official at the US government's National Security Agency, was fined \$10,000 (££6,000) in 1990.

June 1998: The Chernobyl virus was spread in pirated software disks. It made the computer's start-up chip burn out, rendering the machine useless. The writer was never found.

March 1999: The Melissa virus spread around the Net by exploiting a weakness in Microsoft's Windows operating system. Released on a Friday, it brought down several corporate networks, and had a new lease of life when people turned on their machines again on Monday.

May 2000: The Love Bug virus, above, spread like wildfire around the world by e-mail attachment. It exploited flaws in Windows: opening the attachment automatically sent a copy to everyone in the PC's address book, and deleted the user's music and image files.

A Filipino, Reomel Ramones, 27, was arrested on suspicion of releasing the virus but was freed because the Philippines had no law against spreading computer viruses.

September 2001: The Code Red (aka Nimda) virus/worm infected desktop PCs running Windows and servers running Microsoft's IIS Web software. About 300,000 computers were infected, although a fix had been available before the attack started. Even now,

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some "unpatched" computers still fall victim.

January 2003: Simon Vallor, below, from Wales, was jailed for two years for writing three viruses that infected thousands of computers worldwide running Windows in 2001. Some could destroy all the data on a hard drive. The judge said "so many people use and rely on computers these days, any interference with that use must be regarded as a very serious matter".

## **WOW! Being found on web is getting expensive**

by Steve Wilson - APCO Inc.

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In the last few months, the "price" for being indexed on the search engines has gone from being free to becoming downright expensive. Since dot.coms have moved from being in an environment where they weren't expected to make a profit to today's environment where they must make a profit or die, we are seeing significant changes in what it takes to be listed on the various search engines.

Yahoo! started the new way of doing business by creating a one-time, non-refundable processing fee. They tested the market with several different pricing levels but finally priced the fee at \$199. They guarantee the site will be reviewed within 7 business days. If you are

turned down, you have a one-time opportunity to reply and explain why you should be included. This is the only way a commercial web site can be considered for inclusion in their Yahoo! directory.

Shortly afterwards LookSmart followed suit and established their Express Submit for \$199. They also encourage you to include interior pages of your site and they charge \$199 for the submittal of each interior page. A new twist that is buried in their FAQ section is that you only have 30 days to submit a suggested correction to your already listed site, after that you must submit to Express Modify and pay a fee.

LookSmart states the site will be listed in the search directories of MSN, AltaVista, Excite, WebCrawler, Magellan, CNN, IWon, Juno and more than 370 ISPs. If you go to any of these search engines and go to their Submit a Site area, they all start off by encouraging you to submit via the LookSmart Express Submit process. LookSmart guarantees submission review within two business days and you have a one time right to reply if your site is rejected.

LookSmart does have a one-time payment program they call Basic Submit for \$99 and they state the submission will be reviewed within eight weeks.

Yahoo! and LookSmart both state the submission fee does not guarantee placement within their directories, but covers consideration for inclusion in the directory. They state their editors review each site individually and expend time and effort on each submitted site. For this reason, the fee is for the service

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an editor provides in reviewing a site, not for the inclusion in their directories. Therefore, once this service has been rendered, regardless of its outcome, users will not receive a refund.

NBCi initially copied the Yahoo! and LookSmart plans but has now come up with a different approach. You must first submit to their free LiveDirectory and then they encourage you to drive even more traffic to your site by paying a one-time \$99 processing fee to be listed in their Top Sites Directory. Of course, the Top Sites Directory will be positioned above the LiveDirectory listing when you do a search on NBCi.

Inktomi, a search engines that claims to make your content searchable through 125 partners, including AOL, IWon, MSN, and HotBot, has a totally different plan. They charge annually and the fee is \$30 for the first URL per domain and \$10 for URLs 2-1,000. They spider your site every 48 hours and the subscription period is for one year.

GoTo.com, a search engine that charges for placement in its listing, has also make some significant changes in their pricing. First, this is the company that paid AOL fifty million, that's right \$50 million, to be featured on AOL. When someone conducts a search on AOL, the first three listings called "Premium Listing", will be the GoTo listing if someone has paid for the keyword. The GoTo pay-for-placement listing will also be shown on AltaVista and Lycos. Until March of this year, you could pay as little as 1" with no minimum number of clickthroughs per month. Now, the minimum bid is 5" and each keyword will have a

minimum monthly charge of \$20. You can establish an account for as little as \$50.

In a related matter, you should be aware that GO.com is in the process of going out of business. In early February, I had submitted one of my client's websites to their Add URL Premium service for the amazingly similar cost of \$199. Upon learning of the closure, I contacted my client and advised him of the situation. To my surprise, I received an e-mail a few days later from GO.com that stated since I had just recently purchased the product they were issuing a full refund. I want to thank Disney for this.

I believe this is just the beginning of changes that we can expect to see from the search engines. I wouldn't be surprised to see all the search engines charging to be listed and instead of being a one-time fee to be an annual fee. Finally, I think this will be the year that many more will go out of business.

Steve Wilson has over 35 years as a senior level marketing professional and is the owner of the local Worldsites.network franchise. Worldsites is the world's largest and fastest growing full service Internet Marketing Company with over 550 consultants in 76 countries. Steve is focusing on helping clients to "Be Found", as well as dynamic website and e-commerce development, database integration, targeted marketing, and economical hosting. He can be reached via e-mail at [sjwilson@worldsites.net](mailto:sjwilson@worldsites.net)

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## To XP or Not to XP

by Steve Bass - PIBM-UG

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If You're Going to Upgrade, Get Ready Now ...

I'm going to upgrade. Yep, I'm breaking one of Bass International's number one rules, but I think it's going to be worth it.

I can't give you all the details because it's coming out in December's PC World Home Office column (hey, they pay the mortgage). What I can do, however, is share parts of my upgrade experience, things that I didn't have space to say in the PC World column.

DOS Programs: Every legacy application I tried worked. A 1988 version of FoxBASE+ 2.10, WordStar 7.0, Norton Commander, and even a 1984 copy of Autodex 1.0, something few of you could possibly remember.

More intriguing is Win XP's ability to run these programs better -- faster and with more stability -- than Win 9x. Why? Who knows, folks, magic maybe, but it does. I had trouble with only one program -- an early Windows version of Ventura Publisher. It turns out that even the current version of VP won't run under Windows XP. Advice: Read MS's "Reliability Improvements" article that explains why XP's more stable than Win 9.x. It's at

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/techinfo/planning/reliability/prevention.asp>

Then read "Windows XP Application Compatibility Technologies", a very comprehensive article that explains how to tweak apps so they'll run in XP. Pay special attention to the QfixApp, a tool that gets you to the database of compatibility fixes included with XP. <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/techinfo/planning/appcompat/default.asp>

Drivers and Upgrades: My Turtle Beach Santa Cruz sound card wouldn't work with XP. Advice: As with any Operating System upgrade (excluding Amiga and GEOS), dig out the drivers and upgrades before you start the upgrade. If you can, burn them onto a CD-ROM.

Networking: Lots, lots easier than in Win 9.x with one proviso ... you'll have to dump NETBEUI on the other PCs in the network. Win XP relies totally on TCP/IP. Advice: Hone up on your networking skills or hire a consultant to get up to speed. Read MS's "Home and Small Office Network Topologies", article at: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/techinfo/planning/networking/topologies.asp>

Internet Explorer: IE 6.0 doesn't support Netscape-style plug-ins. The only one I missed -- and was annoyed with MS's removal of -- Apple's QuickTime player. That meant I couldn't play MOV videos. MS claims it's for security. I say it's hogwash and a way to lock out Apple. By the time you read this, MS and Apple have probably tweaked the QuickTime Player to

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support ActiveX controls for IE 6.  
Advice: If the QuickTime player doesn't work, find the patch on MS's site.

Getting a Jump: One good place to see if your PC is ready for XP is with PC Pitstop. They have a neat-o XP test site that examines your PC's operating system, CPU speed, BIOS version, amount of memory, available hard drive space, and video capabilities. The results tell you how your machine matches up to XP's minimum and recommended requirements. The tool is available for you to try at <http://www.pcpitstop.com/xpready>

MS also has many good articles if you're a tinkerer:

+ The "Consumer Desktop PC Design Checklist for Windows XP" provides technical details for building a new PC for XP. <http://www.microsoft.com/hwdev/pcdesign>

+ You might want to continue using W2K while experimenting with XP. Read "Multibooting with Windows 2000 and Windows XP". <http://www.microsoft.com/windows2000/techinfo/administration/management/mltboot.asp>

I'll have more to say about my XP upgrade experience next month.

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## Virus Control

by John R. Clark - NWA-PCUG  
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One of my good ex-students sent this to me.

Everyone needs some kind of protection against virus infection. But if you often download files from the Internet, your risk is even greater. Also, if you're connected via cable or DSL, your system is always connected to the Internet whenever it's turned on. So, you have a still greater need for some virus protection.

The following virus protection systems were compiled from PC World which tends to indicate they are pretty good. However it should be remembered that no anti-virus program can protect you from a brand new bug written after you got your last upgrade. Do your best to keep your backups up to date. They are your best insurance.

Think you got viruses licked ? Think again. These downloads pick up where Norton and McAfee leave off. <http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/collection/0,collid,304,tk,picks,00.asp>

AVG Anti-Virus System

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This free download even keeps your system free of 'undefined' viruses. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,15202,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,15202,tk,picks,00.asp)

VCatch

Protect your computer from damaging code, regardless of how you're connecting to the Internet. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,15381,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,15381,tk,picks,00.asp)

F-Prot

Keep your system virus-free with this free, DOS-based application. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,5567,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,5567,tk,picks,00.asp)

eSafe Desktop

Protect your system from viruses and vandal programs. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,6680,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,6680,tk,picks,00.asp)

Norman Virus Control

Schedule and conduct virus scans and backups across your network. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,8401,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,8401,tk,picks,00.asp)

Sophos Antivirus

Keep both small and large networks free of viruses. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,8405,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,8405,tk,picks,00.asp)

The Cleaner

Block Trojan horses and worms with this specialised program. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,8183,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,8183,tk,picks,00.asp)

[www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,8183,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,8183,tk,picks,00.asp)

HouseCall

Let this free utility scan your hard drive for viruses while you're on-line. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,8115,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,8115,tk,picks,00.asp)

Trojan Remover

Remove Trojan horses from your hard drive and repair damaged files. [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_description/0,fid,8171,tk,picks,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,8171,tk,picks,00.asp)

## **Making Forwarded E-mail More Presentable**

by Grant Wales - NWA-PCUG  
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Making the content of an e-mail free of the ">" symbols, and making the line endings of the text layout be determined by the width of your e-mail browser composing screen is a breeze with a freeware program called emailStripper. It will restore "forwarded" or "replied" e-mails back to their original state so they're easier to read.

The download URL is <http://www.printcharger.com/emailStripper.htm>. The executable file is just over 150 KB. In use, just access the executable file from your hard drive, and it presents a simple screen with

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a few buttons, which include "Copy" and "Paste". The message to be "cleaned" is pasted into the window of the screen. Hit the "Strip It!" button, and the temporary text file will be stripped of the ">" symbols and hard line endings, without losing the separation between paragraphs. The cleaned version of this text can then be copied into the desired application, which will often be an e-mail message.

The emailStripper.exe executable program file needs no installation except to be available on the hard drive, and a shortcut icon on the desktop may be desirable.

To use it, open the emailStripper.exe program and see a "scratchpad" window and a few buttons below it. The message to be converted is brought into this scratch pad and converted there -- then copied to the composition screen of the mail to be forwarded. Means for doing this are described below.

The message to be stripped should be highlighted, then copied. From the virtual clipboard, use the emailStripper "Paste" button to enter it into the scratch pad area. Click on "Strip It" to convert the message, and use the "Copy" button to place the converted message on the clipboard so it may be entered into the e-mail browser composition screen.

To do this, place the pointer (or its equivalent) in the message window and left-click to put a cursor there, then click on "Paste" in the toolbar. Note that the > symbols are gone from the converted message and that the text lines wrap when they

get to the right side of the browser window.

There are alternative means for highlighting, copying, and pasting.

### Other uses

In addition to its use for "cleaning" e-mail, it may be used for other purposes, such as pasting the content of an e-mail message into a word processor document. Also, for those who wish to archive the text (only) portion of the HTML content of a web page, it may be necessary to remove hard-line endings (if they are present) so the message can take on a width as great as permitted by the word processor's left and right margin settings. Some documents will benefit from this change, as they won't occupy as many pages.

A user that chooses to archive text with lines wider than those in the source document may wish to have more control of the process than is provided by emailStripper.

EmailStripper converts the Shift + Enter paragraph symbol to the regular paragraph symbol. In addition, where multiple spaces appear in succession in the source document, each of these spaces will be deleted. For certain applications where the end result won't tolerate these modifications, the user can resort to a custom approach.

A more labour-intensive and customised way of modifying text is to use the "Replace" function of a word processor. When removing paragraph symbols to let the text lines wrap when they reach the width allowed in their new environment, certain notations must

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be entered into the "Find what:" line of the "Replace" dialogue box. Things to remember are that the usual paragraph symbol is represented by ^P, while the "Shift + Enter" type of paragraph symbol is represented by ^L. The ^ symbol is obtained by doing Shift + 6.

## You might be an engineer if ...

Larry Grannis writes:

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... choosing to buy flowers for your girlfriend or upgrading your RAM is a moral dilemma.

... you take a cruise so you can go on a personal tour of the engine room.

... in college you thought Spring Break was metal fatigue failure.

... the sales people at the local computer store can't answer any of your questions

... at an air show you know how fast the skydivers are falling

... you bought your wife a new CD-ROM drive for her birthday.

... you can quote scenes from any Monty Python movie.

... you can type 70 words per minute but can't read your own handwriting.

... you comment to your wife/husband that their straight hair is nice and parallel.

... you sit backwards on the Disneyland rides to see how they do the special effects.

... you have saved every power cord from all your broken appliances.

... you have more friends on the Internet than in real life.

... you know what "http" stands for.

... you look forward to Christmas so you can put the kids' toys together.

... you see a good design and still have to change it.

... you spent more on your calculator than you did on your wedding ring.

... you still own a slide rule and know how to use it.

... you think that people yawning around you are sleep deprived.

... you window shop at Radio Shack

... your laptop computer costs more than your car.

... your wife/husband hasn't the foggiest idea of what you do at work.

... you've already calculated how much you make per second.

... you've tried to repair a \$5 radio.

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## **Software Review: MemoKit**

by Brian K. Lewis - SPCUG

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MemoKit is a small software package (485K) designed to optimise your computer's RAM. When you work on your computer, you open and close various applications, sometimes repeatedly. With time the RAM in your computer becomes fragmented just like your hard drive does. Unfortunately, Microsoft doesn't provide a RAM defragmenter. Instead, your only solution is to reboot your PC, which clears out the RAM or purchase a third-party RAM defragmenter. Most RAM defragmenters have not been highly successful until now.

You can quickly download and install MemoKit. There are no special settings needed. MemoKit will install itself and put a shortcut in your startup folder. The first noticeable difference is the new icon in the system tray. It is a vertical bar with red, yellow and green sections. In my case it shows more red and yellow than green. In fact, much of the time my RAM is never in the green. As MemoKit runs, it analyses your RAM and sets target and trigger levels. The target level is the RAM percentage that the program considers to be ideal for your system. The trigger level is the low point where RAM must be recovered either manually or automatically to prevent a possible system crash or a slow down in system operation. Of course,

Windows uses a hard disk swap file as virtual memory. However, you want to limit this usage as reading/writing to a hard drive is much slower than reading/writing to RAM.

MemoKit does recover RAM. I have been running MemoKit for about a week and have watched with interest what it does to free RAM as I use different applications. The time vs MB graph for today shows a low point of 27MB of free RAM and then a recovery to 48MB. When I opened Internet Explorer, the value dropped to 35MB. What I find interesting about this is the fact that before I had MemoKit, Windows System Monitor generally showed that I had less than 20MB of free RAM.

MemoKit also provides a current list of running applications and you can review those that were running at earlier times. So when the RAM levels change, you can find out which program was opened. The program list also tells you how much RAM the application is using and how much virtual memory is required by that application. You can print out the list of applications anytime. You should be aware that many applications in RAM are system programs and DLLs. For example, on my computer MemoKit shows 29 applications running. The main ones are WordPerfect, Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, ZoneAlarm and PC-Cillin. The rest of the programs are Windows system files and DLLs. The biggest memory hogs are IE and Word Perfect. Word Perfect is using 7MB of RAM and 23MB of virtual memory. IE is using 1MB of RAM and 16MB of virtual memory.

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The other things that MemoKit reports are the various system resources (system, user and graphic). These are displayed on a time vs percentage graph so you can see when they are used and released. To identify the programs using large amounts of resources or not releasing all the resources, you move a cursor to the graph location and identify the program from the application list. Newly started programs are colour coded and closed programs are in gray. However, although you can identify resource hogs and leakers, MemoKit cannot recover resources. The information can be quite useful to you. Once you have identified applications that use too many resources or don't release all their resources, you can change the way you use them. Instead of opening and closing them repeatedly, you should open and close them as seldom as possible. That will enable you to conserve the resource memory. Remember that Resource Memory is limited and the only way to recover all of it is to reboot your system.

Overall, MemoKit is a very simple way to improve the RAM usage in your computer. The non-technical user doesn't need to do anything once MemoKit is installed. You can just let it function in automatic mode. Even this way, it will function to optimise your RAM.

MemoKit is available for downloading from ALS Software ([www.memokit4all.com/order.html](http://www.memokit4all.com/order.html)) for a price of \$29.95. When ordered and registered, you are eligible for free upgrades for an unlimited time. The upgrades are e-mailed directly to the registered user. Technical support is available through the ALS

Website and is listed in the user guide which comes with MemoKit. It will run with a computer using Win9X, ME, 2000, NT or XP. :

## Phone Call From Leo Knaggs

It was very nice to hear from Leo after quite a few years. Leo had been prompted to ring me because he had read the last Newsletter, In that newsletter I had asked if anyone could help with the Bios Password lost problem I have, He suggested a couple of web sites that may have an answer, unfortunately the Bios is an unusual one its SystemSoft BIOS for Opti Viper 557/558E Version 1.01 (2681-12) the notebook is a HP OmniBook 5700CT, so if anyone has an answer I would be very very pleased. Leo did say he may come to our next meeting. It would be really nice to see him again.

While I am on the subject of help, some of you out there must have problems at times, why don't you write your problem down, let me have it and I will put it in the News letter free, of course, also have you any old equipment for sale?

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