

This is being written in March so I can produce the Newsletter to hand out to our attending members at the spring meeting, thus saving postage costs. I just say that because members who were unable to attend may be wondering what has happened to the NATGUG Project, obviously I am unable to say as the old crystal ball has failed to work for many years now. That brings me to my next point of interest, the future!

What will happen next? I could speak for hours on this subject, Space, The Stock Market (Oh I wish I knew), Transport, Health, Home Entertainment, Household Labour Savers, Safety, Security, Communications. Almost all of these subjects can be related back to I.T. That is where I think we could start to make our mark on the future with our NATGUG Project. I have been watching the series of programs on TV, Inventors are given the chance to show what they have invented, three are presented each week and a winner is selected to get help to further the invention. I have been inspired by this and have invented the solar powered torch, the Braille speedometer (I have seen drivers who could find this one useful), but seriously, I know inventing is not something that is easy to do, but with the expertise the club members have the chance of using our NATGUG project to come up and perfect something useful is a possibility.

The next challenge to win the Free Week-End at Swindon in spring 2003 is for members to use the NATGUG Device to use the computer to usefully do something around the home.

I would like to have a program to start at dusk and randomly switch lights on, yes I know you can buy things that will do just that but not with any intelligence.

The lounge light should be on all evening the kitchen light on and off for short periods (as if you were cooking or getting evening snacks and making tea) the same with the toilet (but not for making tea, perhaps a pee) and when the lounge light goes off the bedroom light would go on along with the bathroom light then all lights off with the bathroom occasionally on and off through the night (if you feel the need) . The lighting sequence being set up the same as when you are at home.

The deluxe version could also control a camera or two and keep watch on the garden or driveway, starting the recorder when movement is detected.

The super deluxe version could be use to auto detect movement and switch lights on as you entered a room and off when you leave. It could monitor all devices in the home and turn everything off as you closed the front door, you would have no doubt that you turned the cooker off before you left home. A further advance on this would be to have central door locking for your house so all doors and windows are locked and all household devices are switched off by a remote control.

Another project could be to monitor temperature both inside and outside the house and keep the inside at a level that you feel comfortable with, running low at night, up a bit during the day and higher in the evening when you are less active and need it a bit warmer, thus saving heating costs.

I know you can buy some of these things now, but my thoughts are we all have old computers which are no longer useful because they are too slow or not big enough, this could be just the thing to inexpensively to the job and be tailored to your requirements.

The possibilities are endless, I am sure you will have your own ideas about what would make your environment safer or more secure and automatic, labour saving, or just flash and unique. I will look forward to see what ideas you will come up with.

Bob Sparling
Editor NATGUG News
How Do We Manage Large
Amounts of Photos ?

by Richard T Robusto - LVPCUG
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I dare say that all of us have numerous photos that have been around for years. Some are becoming yellowed and are deteriorating more each year. I, myself, attempting to be an amateur photographer years past, have accumulated an immense amount of photos. Starting with the old reliable "Brownie" camera, which did a pretty good job for its time, and gradually using better equipment that allowed sharper focusing and better depth of field. Then on to the development of colour photography and through the lens metering with electric eyes, we were rewarded with a much better end product.

So we've taken all these mementos of our families, children and friends through many occasions and holidays as the years passed and carefully sorted, segregated and preserved them in photo albums. But time and humidity has taken its toll and the realisation occurs that we cannot preserve these forever. Then we are faced with the spectre that after we are gone, what we have treasured might not be treated with the same care. Also, there is always the possibility of tragedies happening. This comes to mind when we see the homes that were lost at Los Alamos during a disastrous forest fire. It is very doubtful that these unfortunate residents were able to save all their photos and mementos when they had to evacuate. Others have lost everything to floods. An incident that has always stuck in my memory is of a fellow worker who became very despondent one day. Upon asking what was wrong, she informed me that she had to pick her parents up at the airport as they returned from a vacation in Europe. But the kicker was, that she had to inform them that while they were gone, their house burned completely, leaving nothing to be salvaged. Lost was every photo in their possession, plus all their other mementos.

Today, however, computer technology has given us a surefire method to preserve these photos and other important documents. Scanning is a fairly easy operation to perform. A familiarisation with the scanner and its accompanying software will not take much effort and then the procedures to begin preserving your photos and documents can begin. The scanner that I have is the Visioneer One-Touch purchased a year ago for \$149.00. Today the price is about \$80.00. I have found this unit to be very easy to use and quite satisfactory. It came with Paperport software, which makes the task easy to accomplish. The scan window will offer a few settings to be made. First of all, the scan mode and resolution has to be set. The first rule of scanning is that the resolution is determined by the final output. If a scan is to be printed out, then the requirements of the printer will determine the scanning resolution. However, if you are scanning only to archive, then output determination can be set aside. Using archiving as your end result, then other parameters can be undertaken. Assuming we start with our oldest black and white photos, the mode should be set to Gray Scale, and the resolution to 75 or 100 dpi (dots per inch). The main idea is to have the scan so it looks good on the monitor and keeps the file to a moderate size. The larger the file, the longer it will take to move through your system after scanning. For coloured pictures, an appropriate resolution would be 100 dpi to 150 dpi. Coloured prints stop yielding additional data at about 200 dpi. Scanning at a higher figure will produce a larger file but not more detail.

Doug Gennetten is the engineer with HP Home Imaging Division who did the HP PhotoSmart printer and scanner introduction.

At this event, he posted a message on the web that, among other things, said that 200 dpi is the maximum resolution you need if your original is a normal silver halide colour print. After scanning, the file can be sent to a graphic application, usually through a link on the Paperport screen. I currently have 3 graphic applications with links on the Paperport screen. They are MGI Photo Suite III, Microsoft Picture It 99, and Photoshop L. E. (limited Edition). I have found that Photo Suite III is the one that I prefer to work with. It makes easy work of the tasks required. You start by cropping the photo to size. Many times I will scan 4 or more, whatever will fit on the scan glass, then crop them apart one at a time. This saves scanning time and reduces the number of scans. After cropping, necessary tasks can be performed, such as adjusting brightness and contrast, (I am able to improve 90 per cent of these old photos), removing red eye, removing creases and unwanted blemishes. More complicated exercises such as cloning and removing

unwanted persons or objects can also be accomplished. All of these small graphic applications can handle all of these things. Also, Corel Draw and Adobe Photoshop will do an excellent job on all these procedures. However, that's a bit of overkill as these programs are large and expensive, and are used for much more demanding applications.

Finally, the pictures are finished and ready for labelling. It is a good idea, before starting labelling, to give some thought to how to identify many pictures. Set up some sort of system that will allow you to recall what each picture is about when viewing its description. As you get into the hundreds, this becomes a daunting task, as no two titles can be alike. A good way is to set up a set of folders that will allow sorting of pictures into various family groups or time line designations. The last description that has to be applied to the photo, is the format that it will be saved as. For general purposes, there are 3 or 4 common file formats, and for the home scanner type, these will be sufficient. They are TIFF, JPEG, GIF and PNG.

TIFF - Tag Image File format

TIFF has been a format of choice for use for master copies of images for several years. Not the only one, but a good one. TIFF format was developed by Aldus, before Adobe bought them, and is the most widely supported format across other platforms, PC, Mac, Unix, etc. TIFF writes a large file, and it optionally uses lossless compression meaning there are no quality losses. Ideal for important master images. If you might modify and save the file a second time, then use a non-lossy format like TIFF. TIFF files are large, but it's the price we pay, it's how large the data is.

JPEG - Joint Photographic Experts Group

This is easily the best format for scanned photographs to be used on web sites, or for sending your photographic images in e-mail, because the file is wonderfully small, often compressed to only 1/10 or 1/15 size, which is very kind to modems. However, this fantastic compression efficiency comes with a high price. JPEG uses a lossy compression (lossy meaning "with losses"). Lossy means that some quality is lost when the JPEG data is compressed and saved, and this quality can never be recovered. Even worse, more quality is lost every time the JPEG file is compressed and saved again, so even editing a JPEG image is a questionable decision. JPEG discards image pixel data that is inconvenient for its compression method, allowing phenomenal size results. This "lost data" is seen as lost purity, or lost integrity due to mild corruption of the data, rather like added noise. There is no magic answer providing both high compression and high quality, but some quality losses are acceptable for some purposes.

GIF - Graphic Interchange Format

This is an older format developed by CompuServe, and it was fantastic in its day, with relatively small LZW (Lempel-Ziv-Welch, same compression as used for PKZIP) compressed file sizes (but nothing like JPEG's small size).

However, GIF is limited to only 256 colours, a great match for the older 8 bit video boards, and for graphics, but which makes it poorly suited today for 24 bit photographic images. The file is also large if used for photographic images, as compared to 24 bit JPEG. And GIF files do not store the images scaled resolution dpi value, making scaling necessary every time the file is printed. GIF uses lossless compression like TIFF. JPEG is much better for 24 bit photographic images, and the JPEG file is very much smaller too (although lossy)

PNG - Portable Network Graphics

PNG was intended to be the replacement for GIF, due to LZW patent problems, and due to GIF being limited to only 256 colours. PNG was designed with the advantage of knowing all that went before. PNG supports 24 and 48 bit colour with an awesome set of technical specifications and features, sort of the modern universal "be all, end all" of file formats, including superior lossless compression. The PNG basic compression is called the ZLIB method, and is like the "deflate" method in PKZIP, but the big deal is that PNG also incorporates special preprocessing filters that greatly improve the compression efficiency, especially for typical gradient data often found in 24 bit photographic images. PNG may be of great interest for us today, because it is lossless

compression well suited for master copy data, and because PNG is noticeably smaller than LZW TIFF. Looks like about 30% smaller than TIFF LZW for 24 bit files, and is about 10% to 30% smaller than 8 bit GIF files. Web browsers Netscape and Internet Explorer at first did not support PNG on WEB pages, but they now include support for PNG files and it might become popular, not to replace JPEG, but to replace GIF perhaps. Most image programs like Photo Impact, Photoshop, Paint Shop Pro already support PNG, so compatibility for transferring files is probably not an issue.

I have picked PNG for saving all my pictures. I have no need to print any of them out and am only interested in archiving them. I feel that in the future, if these need to be reworked or printed out, then the PNG format will work out just fine. I also use the ACDSee program to save my folders with corresponding pictures in them. This program allows me to use thumbnail display and to make the thumbnails any size that I want. By making them small enough, I am able to view 32 photos at one time on the desktop. This is helpful in sorting and rearranging.

When I accumulate 650 MB of photos, I transfer them to a CD-R. Then it is a simple matter to duplicate the CD and make as many copies as I want. At this point, I can give a copy to everyone in my family. This makes the selection of photos available to all interested persons and assures that the pictures will never be lost due to any one incident. So far, I have scanned and put on one CD, 1900 photos, many of them black and whites. On the second CD, I have 1100 photos. I estimate that I am about 70% finished with all my photos. Then I will undertake to do the same with about 2000 slides that I have. That, however, will not be as easy, as I will have to see about acquiring a slide scanner.

I have also started to scan all my important documents and put them all in one separate folder. I got the idea about a year ago, when I could not find some very important papers, most notably my college degrees. I sweated about three months and really turned things upside down, and lo and behold, there they were in a very "safe place". At that point, I decided to scan every paper that meant anything. I dragged out all the birth certificates, my children's school and college records, military discharge papers, and anything else that I didn't want to have to search for again. Scanning text is much simpler than photos. You scan at line art mode. On some scanners, the designation is Editing text (OCR). Using this instead of Gray Scale will make the file about 8 times smaller. This should be scanned at 300 dpi. After scanning, the software can perform the "Edit for Text" operation. At that point, it can be transferred to a text program. There you can delete parts if necessary, label it and save it as a PNG file. I have done this with all my papers and put them into a folder that I named "Certificates". I now rest easy, and, of course, that folder of originals is always underfoot. I'll have to find another "safe place" to keep it.

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Challenges And Mysteries

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Hi, we're from the government. We're here to help you. I didn't really think this joke would come back to haunt me on the Internet, but alas, I have been shot down in flames by one of our very own State of Kentucky web sites! Or possibly my Xerox Docuprint P12 laser printer.

I located a form I needed on one of our state's Internet sites, but every time I tried to print it, my printer would stop dead in its tracks and tell me it was out of paper. I checked the tray, and beheld there was enough paper in there to print 150 copies. I looked for a paper jam, and the

innards of the printer looked its usual black self. So I tried to print something else, and the printer kept telling me that it was already printing this form, and until it finished that job, it wasn't gonna print another thing! Jeesh! I checked all the settings and purge print jobs I could find, and there just wasn't going to be any printing done today! Finally in desperation, I turned off the printer and restarted the computer. Again I checked the settings and everything looked right, and I asked the printer for a test page, which came through perfectly. So I decided to print the form again. The "out of paper" light came on again, with the same dreadful message that it was printing that form and I wasn't going to print another thing until it finished that one. After a couple hours of frustration, and a computer inferiority complex, I decided that this shoddy form was my nemesis and quit trying to print it altogether.

Enter an intelligent, charming, handsome, distinctive, extraordinary, etc., etc., <g> technodweeb who is infuriatingly right most of the time.... He tried to print out that darned form and got the same error message I did! Yeah! I suddenly felt smarter! However, he was able to print it out on two different HP printers at another location without incident, AND, with my Xerox printer, he was able to circumvent whatever it was that was denying me my printed form. I shouldn't have been quite so smug. The circumvention involved saving the document to my computer and removing the "locks" on the form, instead of printing directly from the web. In other words, he CHEATED by changing the rules!! But he did get the thing printed. <mutter, mumble> The problem was that whoever created the document also locked the form so it couldn't be modified. By doing that, the form was also locked into using a specific paper tray. Unfortunately, between Word 2000, the form, and the Xerox print driver, the software decided to use what is actually an optional paper tray for the Xerox printer.

I asked Xerox technical support for an answer, and after walking me through a LOT of the same steps I had already tried, they finally instructed me to install an HP IIP LaserJet emulation driver. When I asked for that printer to print the document, I was able to print out the gazillion copies I had stacked up in my queue! <g>

I have to wonder if other Internet documents have their own printing instructions hardcoded into the documents themselves, that don't necessarily fit all printers. For example if it required the paper to come from the upper tray, and your printer used the bottom tray. If this were true, many of us would take a hammer to our printers and use language we didn't know we could pronounce, without ever knowing why. Wouldn't it be more sensible to ask that a document be printed out with the default settings of any printer ?

My challenge goes out to whomever is reading this to submit their own personal mysteries and hiccups. Please send your thoughts to (your editors e-mail address) for inclusion in the next issue of (Your newsletter name) I know that it matters not how proficient you are with a computer, somewhere, sometime, one of these bumps in the road will strike and have you scratching your head. If you are too shy and don't wish to divulge your identity, use a pseudonym. I seem to remember reading an excellent article on home networking written by Ima Clueless and M.C. Essee...

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Show Me the Way to Go Home

by Steve Bass - PIBMUG

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I was talking to the tree trimmer about -- what else ? -- computers. You know how it works. The second you mention your line of work, they're asking if it's okay to pick your brain. Only this guy wasn't waiting for permission.

"You think AMI's new Double Duty Dual BIOS with VirusGuard is any good ?" he said, shouting over

the chain saw.

Oh, hell, lemme get back to work, I thought, hoping he wouldn't start asking about BIOS error beeps.

"I dunno much about..." I started, but he was turning off the chain saw, digging in for a one-way tete-a-tete.

"Well," he went on, "whaddya think of those mapping programs, the kind you type in an address and they tell you where to go?"

Of course, I was thinking the same thing, but telling him where to go wouldn't stop him. "Not worth a hoot," I said, backing towards the door, making a getaway. "Because you can do it for free on the Internet with MapBlast. It's just as good and, more important, it's up to date."

But boy, was I wrong.

Coincidentally, Microsoft had sent me a copy of their \$50 Expedia Streets and Trips 2001 a couple of days earlier. I stuck it under the desk, holding it for the monthly giveaway. But after that conversation, I decided to try it, figuring it wouldn't take more than an hour or so to install and play with it. Besides, the only deadline I had was hours away, and I needed something to help build the stress.

Streets and Trips is in an oversized box with, as you've guessed, a case with two CDs. (Don't worry about the waste, Bill, what's important is getting shelf space.) One CD's the installer, the other holds the data. You can choose to insert the data disk when you're ready to use the program, and that's a good choice.

But the tree trimmer said that when he got back to the office, he'd have 15 or more calls to return, some asking for quotes, others wanting work done. He didn't want to spend time asking directions of customers. So he'd likely put everything on the drive -- a hefty 750 MBs. That way addresses just popped on screen, he could verify, say, the cross streets, and move on to another call. Later he'd quickly crank out maps and directions so they'd be ready for his crew in the morning.

Take me Anywhere

The program claims to have every street-level map for the United States and Canada, (go ahead, try to test it!), as well as addresses and directions, although they coyly don't say how many they supply. Nonetheless, I took a stab at places I know -- my relatives' addresses, parents, friends, and landmarks, such as N.Y.'s Aquarium, Eliot Middle School, PIBMUG's meeting location, and Pasadena's La Fornaretta restaurant. Streets and Trips found them all. One question remains unanswered: Did the restaurants pay a fee to be included?

Once I found a spot, a right mouse click brought up Find Nearby Places, including restaurants, museums, hotels, movie theaters, and user groups. Everything I do, by the way, can be permanently saved to disk, printed in a dozen ways, or with a click, sent as e-mail. If you have a Windows CE handheld device (yeah, I didn't think so), Streets will download maps and directions to it.

Routing options include fastest, shortest, or preferred road. And I could figure in the amount of gas I'd need for the trip as well as the cost of the fuel. No surprises here. But what I liked lots was the program's real-time, drag and drop routing skills. I could plop a start and end point onto the map and see both the route and driving instructions immediately. If I want to make a quick sidetrip, a right mouse click adds a stop. Again, the route changes while I watch.

Danger Will Robinson, Danger!

A quick aside: When Microsoft demoed Windows 95, the presenter showed us an encyclopedia program reaching out to the Internet to get current information. Pretty silly idea six years ago. I mean, they asked us to believe that anyone would sit around and wait for their phone to dial and make a connection. At 33.6 Kbps, no less. (Ha ha, I thought shortsightedly.)

While broadband has made headway, the vast majority of people are still using 56 Kbps dialup accounts, making Streets and Trips an attractive program. That's because Streets is on your local drive and tremendously faster than anything available on the Internet, even with a broadband

connection.

The program also makes good use of the Internet, no matter what your connection speed. For instance, while I was routing a trip to Long Beach, California from here in Altadena, Streets asked if I wanted to check for construction problems or detours. A very cool feature. Read about Streets and Trips: www.microsoft.com/streets.

Listen, I've got to go. The gardener is tapping on the Window asking me about the USB port on his leaf blower.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World Magazine, frequently writes for Forbes ASAP, and is the president of the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He often writes with his tongue in his cheek. Write to him at stevebass@earthlink.net

A Very Brief History of the Internet

by Coco Johnston, F1 Computer Club, Shell Knob, MO

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The Internet had its beginnings with the launching of Sputnik. The Pentagon's Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) wanted to maximise the use of computers for national defense. Dr J.C.R. Licklider was chosen to head up the research project and find a way to achieve that goal. In the early 1960s, computers were little more than mathematical calculating machines. Licklider, with a background in psychology, saw computers as potential information processors and visualised a network of communities of people worldwide connected by computers. His position at ARPA and his commitment to transform computers into instruments of communication shaped the direction of research, affected how funding would be spent and eventually changed the direction of development within the computer industry. Designing network technology (hardware) and creating a universal language (software) that could move through that technology still lay ahead.

Building this network would be a monumental undertaking. The job was offered to AT & T, but they saw no potential for profit in it and turned it down. At first the computer companies also resisted the idea that computers would ever be used for communication, so they weren't interested in investing in research and development. It was left to the universities that had computers (Stanford Research Institute, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, UCLA and others) to invent the technology, develop the programming and build the network.

One of the first big hurdles was getting computers to talk to each other. In those days, a computer filled a large room, and users sat at terminals which connected to the mainframe. Most mainframe computers were self-contained, not networked to other computers. A terminal could connect to only one mainframe, and if the information a person needed was spread out in several different mainframes, then a user had to get up and move to another terminal. Going back and forth to different terminals was frustrating for Robert Taylor of ARPA. He came up with the idea of connecting mainframes so that he could sit at one terminal and access data from several mainframes. He called Larry Roberts at MIT for help with the problem. Together they worked out a solution and in 1968 sent their proposal to over 100 of the largest computing companies at that time to find someone to build the equipment. IBM and Control Data Corp., the two giants, saw no future in it and declined to take it on.

ARPA finally found a company, BBN Technologies, willing to work with them. State of the art Honeywell equipment was developed, but the first message sent across the Internet had to fit into the 12K memory of the computer. Ray Tomlinson created the first e-mail software used to send messages across the Internet. He also came up with the idea of the @ sign to signify where the message was going.

After many trials and errors, the first e-mail was exchanged in September of 1969 between University of California at Santa Barbara, University of Utah, Stanford Research and MIT. People at different terminals had been able to send messages to others on the same mainframe before, but this new technology was limitless; people could potentially communicate through any computer

anywhere in the world.

Within a decade, the traffic on the ARPAnet grew so heavy, improvements in hardware and software had to be continuously upgraded. Personal computers came onto the market in the 1980s, and the Internet just kept growing. In 1992, a Swiss programmer named Tim Berners-Lee came up with the idea of hypertext markup language (HTML) which "linked" together documents across the Internet. He named his group of linked pages the World Wide Web.

Marc Andreessen came across Berners-Lee's linking idea and thought he could improve on it. He and some partners came up with graphical interface (the pictures and graphics you click on to move from link to link). This replaced the all-text method of navigating the Net and made it user-friendly. Andreessen went on to develop Netscape. With Andreessen's development of graphic interface, Internet use exploded, growing 341,000 percent in 1993.

For the first twenty years of its existence, the Internet was restricted to use by military and universities for the exchange of information. In 1992, U.S. Rep. Frederick Boucher submitted a bill to Congress asking that the Internet be opened to the people, free of government restrictions, and President Bush signed it into law.

Businesses slowly edged into the new marketplace with mixed results; some failed, some thrived briefly and some are still going strong. The biggest money made from the Internet to date is by the Internet Service Providers.

According to The Internet: Behind the Web, a program which aired in January 2001 on the History Channel, the amount of data that travels across the Internet doubles every 100 days. In 1992, when Berners-Lee invented the link, there were 50 pages on the WWW; today there are over 70 million Websites and 11 million registered domain names.

In 1999, the first computers that could access the Internet were allowed into Saudi Arabia. A computer in an isolated village in India can bring in the world. The world grows smaller, and with this new medium of communication, it gets harder to maintain strict political control over a populace. No longer can something like the Iron Curtain keep people in isolation. The Internet has brought us into an information age where many geographical boundaries are no longer significant barriers.

In a paper he wrote in 1968, JCR Licklider predicted that by the year 2000, millions of people around the world would be communicating through a global network of computers. Licklider's vision was realised through the perseverance, imagination and genius of hundreds of people, but not, unfortunately, before his death in 1990.

Coco Johnson is editor of the F1 Computer Club please let her know when you have used her article. Her e-mail address is coco@mo-net.com

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Book Review:

Photoshop 5.5:
Get Professional Results!

by Gary Schweinshaupt - SPCUG

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Adobe Photoshop 5.5 has moved far beyond its original purpose as a mere digital darkroom. The program is widely used for prepress photograph preparation; for special effects; to reinterpret photographs as paintings; and for creating graphic elements for use in presentations, video, film and print projects. Version 5.5 is even more useful for isolating subjects from their backgrounds

to create what are called knockouts. In addition, for the first time, Photoshop is fully capable of preparing images for the Web and of creating interactive Web graphics.

We used to think of professional users of Photoshop as being either photographers, designers, or prepress production experts. As things have evolved, more and more business professionals of all sorts are discovering a significant need to do some or all of the things that Photoshop is best at. While this has always been true to some extent, two factors have contributed to making it more true today than ever: the omnipresent nature of the Internet as a means of informing people and promoting businesses, and the convenience and speed of digital cameras.

This book was designed to help two distinct groups of people: business professionals who need to bring their image-editing skills to a more professional level and experienced users of Photoshop or other graphics programs who may need a solution to a problem that (though commonly encountered by other photographers and illustrators) is not part of their usual routine.

This is not the "Everything You Never Wanted to Know" guide to Photoshop, I think they have intentionally avoided covering every single aspect of Photoshop and have kept the size of the book within limits that would make it affordable. Actually, you can obtain even more from the two bonus tutorials they have made available on the Osborne Website (www.osborne.com): "Working with Channels" and "Using Layers".

Photoshop 5.5: Get Professional Results starts with an overview of the interface environment and functionality, and then moves through the various specialised tasks that Photoshop is so good at performing. For those whose primary interest is in the new Web capabilities, you can start with the last two chapters and come back to the earlier chapters later.

The book is organised into four parts:

Image Processing: takes you through the Photoshop components, tools and techniques for processing images, starting with "What's New in Photoshop 5.5". It then goes through "Operational Basics", of the interface. It covers "Making Image Adjustments", "Image Retouching and Cleanup" and "Cutting It Down to Size and Flipping Out".

Image Compositing: walks you through procedures for making convincingly real scenes from multiple images using "Selections and Masks", "Bending and Twisting the Image" and "Incorporating Text".

Special Effects: shows you how to use filters and other Photoshop features to create special effects, such as blurring, lens flare and other treatments. They also cover "Creating Photopaintings", with instructions on techniques that can be used to abstract your photographs into impressionist illustrations.

Printing and Publishing Your Work: in this final section, they cover how to prepare images, animations and interactive elements using ImageReady 2, which is now included in the Photoshop 5.5 package. They tell you how to organise and annotate your files, how to tweak images for the best possible performance on a Website, and how to create animations, image slices, image maps and rollovers.

Unlike the colour sections in other Photoshop books I've reviewed, the images in this book are there for more than decorative purposes. In full colour, the "Image Gallery" explains which features were utilised to effect the end result, making it easy for you to learn to achieve similar results with your own photos. Most of the examples are from real-life assignments that had very specific professional requirements. Some of the actual images are available in the Bonus Tutorial mentioned above.

The second colour section, which consists of the "Filter Gallery" and the "Mode Gallery", gives you colour examples of Photoshop's filters and blend modes. By giving you examples of what each filter accomplishes, you can quickly decide which effect best suites your desired end result, much better than the trial-and-error method most go through.

I kind of like the "Professional Pointer" boxes spread throughout the book, they help to highlight ways of making the routines easier and more satisfying. Numbered steps clearly explain how to accomplish complex tasks. In many cases, they provide sample images for you to download when working through these exercises. Figures are annotated well, providing a visual guide to the

steps needed to accomplish various tasks in Photoshop.

Whether you're new to Photoshop or you just want to improve the results you're getting using your existing skills, this book provides plenty of information on how to use Photoshop's features. Author Ken Milburn is an award-winning graphic designer with several best-selling books to his credit, including Flash 4 Web Animation f/x and Design and Digital Photography Bible. He's written numerous articles on graphics and multimedia for national computer magazines over the past 13+ years.

The publisher is Osborne Press; ISBN: 0-07-212299-4; \$29.99 (Amazon.com had it for \$23.00); it has 454 pages; Web: www.osborne.com

Reboot ?

by Pat McAlister - NWA-PCUG P1TTYPAT@aol.com

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Don't you wish when life is bad
and things just don't compute,
That all we really had to do
was stop and hit reboot ?

Things would all turn out ok,
life could be so sweet
If we had those special keys
Ctrl, Alt, and Delete

Your boss is mad, your bills not paid,
your spouse, well he/she's just mute
Just stop and hit those wonderful keys
that make it all reboot

You'd like to have another job
but you fear living in the street ?
You solve it all and start anew,
Ctrl, Alt, and Delete.

Software Review:

PrintMaster Platinum 10

by Herb Goldstein - SPCUG

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You might start by using the old phrase, "It's bigger than a breadbox". Problem is that not too many folks would know or remember what a breadbox is anymore. In any event it's BIG, and there seems no end to its progressive growth. As sure as the sun will rise, a new version of PrintMaster will appear at regular intervals, and it is equally certain that each new appearance will be bigger and more robust than the preceding. The latest version, Platinum 10, is no exception.

As you are all aware, Broderbund's PrintMaster is our favourite application for all those many popular projects that include text and graphics. These include greeting cards, business cards,

post cards, note cards, stationary, envelopes, newsletters, brochures, signs, banners, labels, certificates, invitations, puzzles, colouring books, T-shirt iron-on transfers, stickers, masks, book report covers, recipe cards, flashcards, historical timelines, dioramas, origami and you-name-it. If the project includes text and graphics, PrintMaster is the can-do program for you.

No, it's not CorelDraw, Photoshop or PageMaker, but it will suffice for all three in meeting the needs of the vast majority of home computerists, is infinitely easier to use and infinitely less expensive to buy. In fact, you can probably pay for it in the cost savings alone for the antacids you might well need in using the others.

Platinum version 10 is a colossus that offers not only more of everything in both previous versions and competitive products, it provides for some impressive upscale functions. Its 190,000 images include 145,000 graphics on nine CDs, 45,000 images accessible on-line, 3,900 Master Art images, 100 National Geographic photos, 100 exclusive Hot Wheels images, and 10,000 professional project templates. Its templates include homework helpers, fun for kids, kitchen and other crafts, and photo projects.

A Photo Workshop is included which offers sophisticated photo image editing and management. They include artistic effects, painterly, colour and filter effects. These enhanced capabilities allow you to adjust colour, brightness, focus, as well as crop and fix flaws in your photo images. Special features include a photo organiser for creating photo albums and slide shows, and address book and event reminder, custom headlines and graphics, borders, sentiments, and year you were born text. In keeping with all our Internet involvement these days, with PrintMaster you can create and send on-line greetings, and design and create your own Web site.

PrintMaster comes in a huge box whose volume belies its relatively meager contents, essentially nine CDs in a plastic wallet. Gone is the manual(s) that accompanied earlier editions. Reference is instead contained in a robust help feature that includes multimedia tutorials and very extensive step-by-step instructions for every feature. You are going to need a hefty-sized hard drive for this installation. A complete install will encompass some 468MB, or 262MB for a minimal. Healthy features require healthy room. You can choose a much more economical minimal install and run most of the program from its CDs, but you will find it oppressive. Running PrintMaster is the essence of simplicity. The program opens on its "Hub" which offers three choices for proceeding with your project:

1. Ready Made -- You can choose from a variety of pre-formed layouts and designs which you can modify to include your own text and graphics in lieu of those on the template.
2. Start From Scratch -- You can design your own layout right from the get-go on a blank template.
3. Design Center -- Starts you off with demos and tutorials.

Additional buttons are provided that will take you directly to the Art Gallery, Address Book, or Internet. When you go to the art gallery, you can select your graphics by subject or key word. You will be presented with a gazillion clip art and photo images for you to make your selection. You can also import and export images from or to any other application. The rest is all a matter of your own creativity.

One of the most robust features in this latest version includes some sophisticated text handling. You can do many things like choose the spacing between letters and lines of text, and select a wide variety of pre-formed headline styles for replacement with your own text and artistic modification. A filled text box such as you might create in a newsletter provides for a continuation of overflow text. A font dialogue box permits wide text selection modification including typeface, point size, colour, attributes, justification, spell-checking and special effects. Similarly, wide variation of graphic modification and placement is provided for. Both horizontal and vertical button bars and extensive menus offer single-click ease of access to PrintMaster's many features.

The program is extremely easy to use for anyone who has used this type of software in the past. Total novices may need a little breaking in but should succeed handily. The software is fun to use and you will become elated with the professional looking results you will easily produce in a very short time. The overly-abundant help features will carry you right along.

Now considering the sheer volume of tasks you can accomplish with this excellent software, it is amazing that its street price is around \$40. Extremely good value! The Platinum edition is PrintMaster's top of the line flagship product. You will need minimally a 133MHz Pentium, Windows 95/98/2000/or NT, and Internet Explorer 4 or 5 if you want to use the program's on-line features. IE5 is provided on the install disk, or you can go to Microsoft's site for 5.5. For more information, go to expressit.com. You will find some other very nice stuff there as well. Of the three common graphics/ text applications, PrintMaster, Print Shop and Print Artist, each does an acceptable job, but PrintMaster is the most sophisticated of them all.

Software Review:

PageKeeper Pro

by John Mackey - SPCUG

[Reprinted from the 2001 October issue of "SYDTRUG News", newsletter of SYDTRUG Inc., PO Box 75, PANANIA NSW 2213, AUSTRALIA, where it was reprinted via the "APCUGNET" BBS of APCUG from the 2000 September issue of "Sarasota PC Monitor", newsletter of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group Inc. PO Box 15889 Sarasota FL 34277-1889, U S of A]

After loading this software, the first thing that caught my eye was that it looks just like Microsoft's Explorer utility. However, as I started to click buttons and look around a bit, it became apparent that this inexpensive package offers many enhancements. You may find that this is just the tool you have been looking for to manage picture files. Or, you may want to scan printed pages and intelligently store them into files and later find them by content. This product may provide a better way for you to easily access many different data types and conveniently hold them as a group in your workspace. I was particularly intrigued with the way that OCR (Optical Character Recognition) is integrated to allow text in scanned images to be recognised and utilised as keywords in file searches.

PageKeeper Pro gives you access to any of your computer documents and allows you to easily retrieve, organise, and use them from a very comfortable and familiar desktop window. To accomplish this, the program sets up its own folder system to which you add the documents that you want to work with. I initially thought this would involve a lot of file copying, but I discovered that this program just creates a shortcut that links to the undisturbed file. The Program also allows you to use your scanner to directly enter paper documents into its file system.

When you execute the program you immediately feel comfortable with the multi-panel layout you are used to with Explorer. However, you will also see a toolbar with icons for the applications that you will use with PageKeeper Pro. All you need to do is click the icon to launch the program that you want to work with.

The left side of the display is just like the Explorer's left panel, showing all the folders you are managing with this program. You can easily create folders and add any files you'd like to manage with this software. This folder/file structure is really a set of shortcuts to your actual files, along with associated information storage. This neat feature allows you to add keywords, annotations, "post-it" notes, scribbles and highlights, etc., which you see when viewing the file, but which are not actually added to the document. You can also add and manipulate files that exist on Web pages located on the Internet, not your hard drive.

The right panel is also like that provided by Explorer, but with some neat enhancements. You can select a folder and view its files as icons. You see your actual thumbnail pictures and text pages -- not just their titles -- and you can directly select or drag and drop them. You no longer have to open a document to see what it is. With my failing memory, this saves me a lot of time and frustration. PageKeeper Pro sure has made it easy for me to organise my collection of files into appropriate folders.

I know that words showing in a picture file are not really text, but just a picture of letters. To try to search for words such files is normally pointless. However, PageKeeper Pro automatically performs OCR on the pictures it manages and stores this information so that text based searches work! Now you can scan printed documents into picture files and manipulate them as if they were really text.

PageKeeper Pro uses an innovative system to collect and organise your files rapidly and easily. Its automated processing allows you to group files, collecting them by keywords, file extensions, names, etc. You can also use logical operators such as "should", "must" and "must not" to select the files in your groups. Then you can take this group, which PageKeeper Pro created for you, tack on a "post it" note or annotation, and then send out by fax or e-mail. PageKeeper will gather all the files it needs, initiate the fax or e-mail and attach them. You can also use this feature to copy the selected files to a floppy disk.

PageKeeper Pro automates this file collection via a "Smart Folder" concept, in which you set your search criteria with just a few clicks of the mouse. One of the features I liked most is the "Test Criteria" button. This allows you to see the results of your search logic in seconds, before you actually post the files. "Smart Folders" also allow you to modify or delete folder contents in seconds using this same method.

I have found PageKeeper Pro Version 3.0 to be a valuable tool for organising my picture files. It is easy to install and has an effective "getting started" presentation. The street price is \$29.99. It is now distributed by ScanSoft, Inc. (www.scansoft.com).

Software Review:

DriveCopy, ver 3.0

by Brian K Lewis - SPCUG

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DriveCopy from PowerQuest Corporation has been reviewed several times before as its original version has been around for several years. The various upgrades have allowed it to work with larger and larger hard drives as well as the various File Allocation Tables. It was originally designed to allow you to copy an entire hard drive to a new drive complete with the information needed to boot the new drive. This new version has some added capabilities. It can back up your existing drive to another drive even if the new drive is larger than 8.4GB. Each partition is automatically resized to fit the new, larger drive. Also, it can selectively copy drive partitions.

The installation of DriveCopy is quite unique among modern software programs. It does not install itself to your hard disk. Instead, it creates two floppy disks. The first disk contains the boot files and the second has the DriveCopy software. The reason for this is that DriveCopy runs only in DOS mode. It does not run under Windows. It can copy drives or partitions that have been formatted with all versions of Windows, DOS, OS/2 and Linux. However, the floppy disks must be created under Windows or DOS.

I found using DriveCopy to be quite simple. In my case, I needed to replace a 4.0GB hard drive with a 10GB drive. Usually, the new drive would be installed as the "master" drive and the older drive as the "slave" drive. This is done by changing a set of jumpers on each drive. The DriveCopy CD-ROM has a menu selection which takes you to a web site that is linked to pages with drive jumper information. Since the 4GB drive was a Micropolis drive, I needed information on its jumper setup and found it easily using this web link. Unfortunately, it did not work. The Micropolis drive could not be set as a slave drive. Luckily, this new version of DriveCopy doesn't care which drive is the master. So, I jumpered the new drive as the slave, after that the BIOS was able to identify both drives.

Next I booted the system with the floppy provided with DriveCopy. Then I inserted the second floppy and DriveCopy loaded. The program has a very nice graphic interface which leads the user through the process. The next step was to click on the "Entire Disk to Disk Copy" button. The next screen was used to select the source and destination drives. In this case the program had already checked the 4GB drive as the source and the 10GB as the destination. So on to the next screen. On this screen you select "Replace" or "Backup". So I selected "Replace". One more

choice had to be made on the next screen. Since I had already verified the integrity of the source drive and the destination drive was new, I selected "Fast Mode" instead of "Safe Mode". Using "Safe Mode" for the copy process results in verification of all disk writes and greatly increases the time required for the total process. Now click on "Finish" to begin the actual copying process. The copy process proceeded at about 200MB per minute.

After the whole process was completed, I shut down the system and removed the 4GB drive. Then I re-jumpered the 10GB as the "master" drive and re-booted the system.

Everything ran perfectly with no errors. Next, I ran ScanDisk and Defrag just to clean up the new hard drive. The user guide is quite well done with only a few minor errors. It has a number of very helpful screen shots. It also has a number of sample scenarios to help you with both normal and somewhat unusual drive copy processes. The guide also has an index. However, its reference to Linux in the index led to a page that had no information on Linux.

All in all, DriveCopy is like the other PowerQuest software I have used. It does just exactly what it says it will do. It is easy to work with and if you need to copy a drive to another drive, you can't find better software to do it.

DriveCopy is available directly from PowerQuest at a price of \$29.95 from their Website: www.powerquest.com. PowerQuest Corporation, P O Box 1911, Orem UT 84059-1911, 1-800-379-2566.

Software Review:

Easy Recovery, ver 5.0

by Brian K Lewis - SPCUG

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Have you ever needed to recover files from a damaged hard drive ? How about files cleaned out of your Recycle Bin that you now really need ? That's what Easy Recovery from Ontrack is all about. There are two versions, a personal edition and a professional edition. Essentially, they do the same job. They recover deleted files or files from damaged hard drive.

I installed Easy Recovery on an unused partition of my second hard drive. You can't install it on a partition where you need to recover data. Consequently there is also an option to create floppy disks which can be used to run the program. Additionally, you need to have a drive to which you can copy the recovered files. This drive can be a floppy, a Zip drive, another hard drive, or with Adaptec's CD-Creator, a CD-RW drive. Ontrack states that you can use Easy Recovery to recover files on a hard drive that is no longer recognised by the BIOS or that won't boot. To do that you must have a drive that is still spinning and you must boot from a floppy to run the Easy Recovery program. Naturally, in this latter situation file recovery can be very iffy depending on the actual condition of the hard drive.

After I installed Easy Recovery, I ran it just for testing. The first thing I noticed was the user interface. The windows and buttons were very clear and cleanly designed with helpful information in each window. It was much easier to follow and read than other programs of this type that I have used. It identified my hard drives and their partitions in a way that made it simple to identify which partition I wanted to recover. It even listed my Zip drive as there was a disk in it at the time. Since there was no actual damage to either of my drives I selected a partition where I knew there should be some deleted files that could be recovered. That took one mouse click. One more click and the recovery process was started. It took about 25 minutes on my four Gb partition. Then the program opened a window with a directory list on the left and a file list on the right.

By highlighting a directory, I could see the files in that directory. The first directory in the list was the "Lost Files". This contained files that the software could not match to a current

named directory. In the file list, there was a column containing the codes for the condition of each file. Most often, they were marked "XD". This indicated that the file had been deleted and was no longer recoverable. A few were marked "D" and these files could be recovered. By clicking on a check box to the left of the file name, the file was selected for recovery.

After scanning the file list and selecting a few files for recovery, I clicked on the "Next" button. This led to a screen that allowed me to select the destination for the recovered files. I selected my CD-RW drive. This was available because the disk in it was a CD-RW that CD-Creator had formatted to act like any standard writable drive. Easy Creator quickly copied the files to this disk. I could have also used a Zip drive as the location for the recovered files. Then, when I went to close Easy Recovery, it gave me the option of saving the complete file list. Something which I chose not to do at this time.

Overall, I found Easy Recovery, to be very simple to use even without any manual. In running the program for the first time, I didn't find it necessary to access any help files. I did go through them later just to see what they were like. Frankly, I thought they were written clearly enough and with enough detail to actually be helpful.

If Easy Recovery works as well with a damaged drive as it did in this instance, then it's certainly a tool that I want to have on hand.

Easy Recovery is published by Ontrack Data International. Easy Recovery software may be purchased directly from their web site (www.ontrack.com) at a price of \$89.00 for the Personal Edition and \$489.00 for the Professional Edition. You can also download a free trial version of the software.

Software Review:

Drive Image 3.0

by Brian K Lewis - SPCUG

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OK! Your hard drive has crashed! Wouldn't it be nice to replace it with another drive that had all of your software already loaded and ready to run, including all the necessary boot files ? With Drive Image from PowerQuest software you can almost do just that. With this new version of Drive Image you can copy your complete hard drive(s) to a partition on a second drive, removable drives such as Jaz, Zip, or other optical drives. Essentially, you can copy the complete information to any drive that has a drive letter assigned to it by DOS.

The installation of Drive Image under Windows follows the usual process. After inserting the CD-ROM you are presented with several choices. The first one is to install the program on your hard drive. The second one is to prepare the rescue disk that must include the necessary drivers for the Iomega, Syquest or other removable drives. The first rescue disk is bootable, but uses Caldera DOS. This means that it cannot see any FAT32 partitions. Usually, if you are using Windows 98 or version B or C of Windows 95, you will be using FAT32 partitions on your hard drive. Consequently, to restore any image files you will need to boot your system with a Windows rescue disk and not with disk number 1 prepared by Drive Image. After the system is booted, you can run Drive Image from the second disk.

The actual operation of Drive Image occurs under DOS, not Windows. So when you run the program, it will cause your computer to exit Windows (closing all open programs) and start Drive Image in a full screen DOS window. At this point the menu gives you a choice of making a drive image, restoring an image, or making a copy of the drive to a new drive. (This latter option is the same process used in DriveCopy, another PowerQuest application.) After you exit Drive Image your computer will be re-booted.

For my testing of Drive Image I decided to try making image files that could be copied to a CD-RW disk. So I selected "Image file" on the first screen, then I selected the C drive only to be

imaged. The destination file was the E drive and I selected "no compression". The next window was the "Ready to Create Image File". This allows you to verify the drives (partitions) being imaged and the destination for the image file. There is also an "Advanced Option" button. Clicking on this opens a window where you can select "check for file errors", "disable SmartSector copy", "verify writes", "setup up password protection" and "split the image file". Clearing the check boxes for "check for file errors" and "verify writes" will speed up the processing. I would not recommend disabling "SmartSector" copying. When this is enabled, only those sectors containing data are included in the image file. The only change I made on this window was to split the image file into 640 Mb segments.

Drive Image took 45 minutes to copy the contents of the C drive to three image files on the E: partition of my second hard drive. That was an average speed of about 34 Mb per minute. It then took me another 45 minutes to write the image files to CD-RW disks with a 4X CD writer. Since Drive Image has a compression mode, I also tried using high compression and imaging both the C drive and the D partition of the second drive. Selecting high compression really speeded up the total process. This time it took less than 30 minutes to copy both partitions at an average speed of 120 Mb/minute. The C drive imaging was much faster than the D drive process. Presumably this was due to the difference in reading one drive and writing to a different physical drive. The high compression mode reduced the 3.7 Gb of data from the two partitions to four files containing 2.2 Gb. That's about a 40% decrease in size. Without compression it would have required 6 CDs instead of four.

You can use Drive Image to restore a single file, multiple files or a complete partition. If you need to restore your boot drive then you must start with a bootable floppy that has the drivers you need to access the image files. In my case, the Windows 98 startup disk has the necessary CD-ROM drivers that will allow me to access the image files on the CDs. I just hope that this doesn't become necessary too soon!

The Drive Image program also has a component called Drive Image Editor. This program allows you to restore single files under Windows, compress or decompress image files, combine image files spanned over multiple disks and break image files so you can put them on removable media. The first thing I found in running the Editor was that it had to create an index file of the image files on the CD disks. That took only a minute or so. Then I had to find the file(s) I wanted to restore. If you have ever had multiple tape backups, you understand what I had to face. First it wanted the first CD, then when I selected a particular file folder, it wanted a different CD. Then when I selected another subfolder, it wanted the first CD back again. Finally, I could select the file I wanted restored. You wouldn't have all this shuffling, if you had a single image file on a large hard drive. I know, because I tried that also. Believe me, restoring was much faster even with multiple megabyte files.

I am convinced that if you want to make a complete backup of all your hard drive files, an image of your hard drive, then this program can do it quite successfully. If you want to backup only your data files, then you need something else.

Drive Image 3.0 is published by PowerQuest Corporation, P O Box 1911, Orem, UT 84059-1911. www.powerquest.com. The list price is \$69.95. It is available at a special User Group price of \$30 by mail from User Group Relations, P O Box 275, Orem, UT 84059-0275 or on the Web at www.ugr.com/order/. The special user group price code is: UGMAY00

Software Review:

Microsoft Home Publishing Suite 2000

by Diane Gillette - SPCUG

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Microsoft Home Publishing Suite 2000 is considered the next level of personal publishing. This program contains over 100,000 quality graphics, 10,000 project templates and 10,000 professional photos as well as paper projects, e-mail and Web projects.

In Paper Projects, you'll find a multitude that includes: greeting cards, invitations, envelopes, address labels, calendars, banners, crafts, (gift tags, stickers, recipe cards, activity booklets, bookmarks, masks), school reports, flyers, photo projects, postcards, stationery, posters and signs, party sets, and newsletters.

Why not add flair to your communications with multimedia. You can send e-mail messages using animations, pictures, sounds special effects, and fancy entrance and exit effects. You can also specify the timing of when you want your picture or animation to appear, disappear or start and stop moving.

I have a lot of birthday cards to buy this month, so my first project was to make those. Hallmark quality greeting card templates are included in the program, so you've got many to choose from for birthdays, anniversaries, etc. My first step was to select a theme, then select the style, (cute, funny, or serious), and then a card was chosen. A small, medium, or large picture called a thumbnail of each design that matches the theme and style is shown so you can see exactly what the card would look like. Once you see it, you can always go back and change anything on the card. Selecting a message for the front and inside of the card was the next step. I customised the back of the card by putting my own name on it as the creator, which made it unique. Once I was satisfied with my card, I printed it, and it looked great! You can even make your own envelopes with the envelope templates, or use quarter fold, half fold or special Hallmark envelopes to mail out your creations. My next project was address labels containing a graphic and then some stationery. They were so simple to make; the program walks you through the projects so anyone can have terrific results.

I then decided I needed a newsletter so I can e-mail it to my family. I'm starting a bit early, but I chose a Christmas theme with Christmas lights on the left hand margin of the paper. I put in my own newsletter title, volume and season and started typing. You'll find that many of the e-mail projects have sound icons that are included, and you can go in and tell it when you want it to play. If you don't want the included sound, you can record your own voice. I did this with a birthday card, and it was fantastic. An audio card with headphones or speakers for sound and a microphone is required for voice recording. Once you record your message, play it back, to see how it sounds and then e-mail it to your friend by using the send button. Depending on your e-mail program, Home Publishing will either automatically create a small program that your recipient can open, or guides you through the steps. One of the great things about this program is that the recipient will not need Home Publishing on their computer to open your project.

Need a new business card ... why not make your own? Recognise achievements by making your own personalised message, using your company logo on your award. Calendars are always useful. You can include special dates you want to remember and use Home Publishing "reminders" feature.

If you don't have a web page, Home Publishing Suite 2000 will get you up and running. Make your very own personal web page using the templates provided and use the web wizard to help you post to your Internet provider. You create the design and Home Publishing does the rest. Why not make a scrapbook of your family or relatives to enjoy, or make a page for your school, club or business so it can be viewed on the Internet.

We all want to use our own special pictures. Home Publishing can help. It has powerful built-in photo, animation and graphics editing tools that can help you create exciting print and multimedia projects. You can lighten, darken, rotate, sharpen, blur, soften the edges, emboss, antique, tint, or use the painted effect to get just the right picture for your project. You can adjust your photos all at once, fix red eye, and remove distractions.

MS Home Publishing 2000's web site, http://www.home_publishing.com, is updated weekly and can give you a lot of useful ideas and information for your projects. Add-on packs are available, some are free, and others require a fee.

I truly enjoyed reviewing Microsoft Home Publishing 2000 Suite. It was extremely easy to use for either novices or people of any experience level and yielded professional results. It walks you through everything, including how to put your paper in the printer for your cards and special projects. As with any Microsoft product, the help menu gave you lots of additional information. I would recommend this program to anyone who wanted to use their computer to make their own cards,

newsletters, Websites, or any project that employs a combination of text and graphics. Try it, you won't be disappointed.

There are so many positives to the program; it's hard to find something to criticise. The only negative I found was having to switch discs for the graphics, but that is understandable and common with almost all graphics software. You certainly wouldn't want to put all this data on your hard drive.

Check out your local Sunday ads in your newspapers for special rebates on this program. My box included a \$20 offer. I have seen some where the combination of store and Microsoft rebates result in a free box of software. You will otherwise find Home Publishing Suite at a very reasonable street price of \$27.

Minimum System Requirements: Pentium 166 MHz, Windows 95, 98 or NT (Service Pack 4 or later), 2 MB of RAM, 376MB hard disk space for minimum or 482MB for typical installation, 4X CD-ROM drive, Super VGA 256 monitor 14.4 modem, Windows compatible colour printer for full colour output, audio card with headphones or speakers for sound, microphone required for voice recording, Internet access required for Clip Gallery Live, Street Price: Approximately \$54.95 Microsoft Corporation, One Microsoft Way, Redmond, WA 98052-6399

Software Review:

Screen Saver Studio Deluxe

by Dave Gerber - SPCUG

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Eye Candy. Second only to games, my favourite thing about computers is Eye Candy. Most of us have one kind or another on our computers. One particular type is the screen saver.

Years ago, screen savers served a real purpose. An image that remained on your monitor for an extended period of time may have burnt itself permanently on its screen. By creating movement on the screen when a computer was idle for a predetermined amount of time a screen saver would prevent that from happening.

Windows comes with a number of screen savers. (What can I say except Boring!!) Some of the coolest screen savers can be found on the Internet where they can be downloaded and installed. Usually they expire at some point or have some intrusive text that can only be removed if you register the program.

Ever wonder how screen savers are created? The thought has occurred to me from time to time and quite frankly, I haven't a clue. But what if you could create your own screen saver? I've always thought you had to have programming knowledge so I never really pursued it. Then I came across Screen Saver Studio. The first thing I noticed was that "No Programming Required!" and "The easiest way to create your own screen savers" is printed on the front of the box. OK, just how "easy" is it? Making a simple straightforward screen saver is very easy indeed.

Installation was uneventful which is always a good thing. It became apparent very soon that the 62-page manual was something I would be referring to often. It starts you off with a step-by-step tutorial to make your first screen saver. I found this method invaluable since it gave me an opportunity to see how the different settings and personalisations work.

You choose the graphic, the background and the sound for each segment. Screen Saver Studio supports 40 graphic formats as well as .AVI, .WAV, MIDI and MP3 files. You can adjust the motion (bounce, stationary, left, right, up and down) and speed of movement for each graphic. You can then set the fading effects, if you so choose. Repeat these procedures for each segment of the screen saver, and then preview your work at any time during the creation process.

Once you've completed the construction, your efforts are saved with a .SSP (Screen Saver Project) file extension. The next step is turning that Project into a Screen Saver. Once you click the "Build" button confronted with a few more decisions to make. You can have the screen saver work with any version of Windows or just Windows 95 and later.

The latter will run faster since it will use 32-bit code. You are then asked if you would like the screen saver to have its own installer. Choose "Yes", and the installer packs all the information needed together into a single .EXE file. When run, it will automatically install the screen saver in the proper Windows directory.

Screen Saver Studio also includes modules to create 3D Objects, Slide Shows and Logos. Creating a basic screen saver may be a snap but I was very thankful for the on-line help and manual to get me through anything more sophisticated. I believe that most users should not have any problem creating and sharing their Screen Saver Studio Projects.

You are limited only by your imagination and the graphics and sounds you have on your computer. Screen Saver Studio will run on Windows 95, Windows 98 or Windows NT and recommends 20MB free space. A Pentium 100 or better is recommended if you will be working with large photos.

I have not seen Screen Saver Studio in any local store, but it can be purchased at www.screensaverstudio.com for \$39.95.

Software Review:

Voice Pilot PAL 1.0

by Vinny La Bash - SPCUG

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Before you try Voice Pilot PAL, it's important to understand that it is not a speech recognition program. A novel uses the English language as a means to tell a story. Voice Pilot uses speech recognition to control your computer by providing a hands free, personal management tool. Enter appointments, record a name and address, have Voice Pilot remind you to buy Grandma's favourite dessert. Simply talk to the computer. Voice Pilot does the rest.

There is a saying in the computer industry that most Geeks regard as Gospel, "Never buy Release 1.0 of anything". Voice Pilot PAL 1.0 is more or less a pleasant exception. Before installing the program, consult the README.TXT file on the installation disk. The file has important information that will keep you out of any minefields you might otherwise stumble into. Print and read the user manual. You need Adobe Acrobat because the file is in Portable Document Format. If you don't have Acrobat on your system, install it from the Voice Pilot disk.

Program requirements are meager. Anyone with an original Pentium or better will have no problem with installation. If you have an IBM Thinkpad or Packard Bell, contact Voice Pilot to see if these machines will work with the program. They have non-standard microphone inputs and a tendency to perform unnatural acts with Voice Pilot sound files. Complete installation will eat up about 100MB of your hard drive. Allow at least another 50MB for "growing room". If you use all the features, Voice Pilot will generate a host of data files.

Setup allows a choice of several voice recognition engines. You can use Dragon Naturally Speaking, Via Voice, Xvoice, or the Microsoft Speech Recognition Engine. Stay with what you're familiar with if you are already using voice recognition. If you are not currently using any voice recognition software, Voice Pilot provides Microsoft's engine for you. It's not as powerful as any of the others, but it doesn't matter since no training is required to get started and you probably won't be recording any cantatas.

After installation and program launch, you wind up with a small horizontal tool bar on the bottom

left corner of your screen. If you haven't read the users manual by now, there's a good chance your next move will be to stare at the screen, scratch your head thoughtfully, and wonder what to do next. This is where the "Voice" in Voice Pilot comes into play. The manual gives some very good pointers on adjusting recording and playback so you don't blow out your eardrums diddling with the volume controls.

Starting the action is as easy as saying "Computer", just like Scotty on Star Trek, but you have to watch what you say and how you say it. You might not be meaning to say anything, but the computer will try to respond to any sound it picks up, such as the TV in the next room, a cough or heavy breathing. Sneezing produces spectacular effects, leading to strange, unintended results. Most speech engines continuously train themselves to decipher your particular speech pattern. You don't want this training to be based on your casual breathing, or other outside influences. It's also a good idea to disable the microphone when you want to talk to someone else, answer the phone, or work on an application where you don't intend to use voice with your computer. When you're not using the microphone, turn it off. Otherwise you get "stop on occasion" instead of "Stop dictation", or worse.

Data entry can be confusing until you get used to how it works. Sometimes you enter data by typing, and sometimes by dictation. Let's hope Voice Pilot is more consistent in Release 2. Voice Pilot provides numerous comment areas in a Notepad like interface where you can add your free-flow thoughts using the dictation services provided by your speech engine. The Notepad module is only for dictation, but you can also paste your Notepad dictation into other Windows applications. Comment areas are included in the individual records of the following modules: Address Book, Appointments, Expense Manager, Memos, Projects, Remind Me, and the To Do List.

Don't be alarmed if your mouse pointer does strange things during dictating. As the speech engine interprets your words, it displays text on your screen. It may make adjustments by stopping, backing up, cursor dancing, and gyrating around aimlessly while redrawing the screen as it continues changing its mind about what you're saying. Several seconds may go by before the program finishes with the text before wheezing to a halt. I've never seen a cursor flop down on a screen in apparent exhaustion, but Voice Pilot appeared to be making heroic efforts to stamp out any errors. This doesn't mean that Voice Pilot will interpret everything you say correctly. Just give it time to slow down and stop before bellowing into the microphone and making things worse.

Voice Pilot Technologies has released a good first effort toward hands-free control of your computer. It's a decent personal management tool that is both easy and fun to use.

If you've never used voice recognition software before, Voice Pilot is an excellent way to get started. Voice Pilot PAL Requirements: Windows/95/98/NT, Pentium 166, 48MB RAM, 100+ MB disk space.

Voice Pilot, Inc., 12515 North Kendall Drive, Suite 200, Miami, Florida 33186, (305) 412-8129.

Software Review:

ZipMagic 4.0

by Herb Goldstein - SPCUG

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It's been an interesting evolution to observe.

Years ago, there were two major competitors in the utility wars--PC-Tools and Symantec's Norton Utilities. For my money, PC-Tools was the champion. Using the old adage, "If you can't fight 'em, buy `em", Symantec did away with the competition by buying PC-Tools. Since that time and until relatively recently, Symantec has ruled the roost. With the arrogance that accompanies a monopoly, Symantec did away with its user group support as it sat back on its laurels. Then along came an upstart organisation with the odd name of Mijenix and threw down the gauntlet to Symantec. From out of nowhere they introduced a set of utilities that blew the competition out of the water.

Not only do they have the best and most innovative utility software available today, they have provided outstanding and exemplary support to user groups throughout the country. God bless them!

Not too long ago, Mijenix merged under the banner of Ontrack, the software publisher responsible for that excellent program you received along with your new hard drive to make installation quick and easy. Ontrack has continuously introduced some superb utilities of the greatest value to computer owners. Their most recent introduction of ZipMagic 4.0 is yet another gem in their golden crown.

Short and simple, ZipMagic is a utility that will compress (zip) and decompress (unzip) files. However, that's an oversimplification. ZipMagic will do a whole heckuva lot more in the process. Let's mention some of the outstanding features of Ontrack's latest and greatest.

1. ZipMagic will apply the most effective available compression to files, reducing them to a small fraction of their original size. Compression will allow you to save files using the least amount of space for storage.

2. ZipMagic quickly and effectively zips e-mail attachments up to 95% of their original size making them both much easier and quicker to send and much easier and faster for the recipient to download. It can attach to Outlook to automatically compress attachments on sending with a new AutoZip feature. Both Outlook and Outlook Express present a check box you can click for zipping attachments. A right-click menu also appears in your files in Windows Explorer which will zip and e-mail. Select a file, right-click it, select the Zip and Mail command from the right-click menu, and that file will be zipped and attached to a new e-mail window. Similarly you can select, zip and backup any file you want to compress before backing up. An encryption feature is also provided that will positively keep your e-mail attachments completely private and secure.

3. ZipMagic will silently extract your downloaded .zip files without your having to choose a destination directory. One click on the EZ-Setup button will do the job.

4. A whole raft of "wizards" are provided to make every ZipMagic procedure completely effortless. Bring up the program's main screen and an entourage of zip file functions are available by either a button-click or a wizard.

5. New in ZipMagic is the creation of folders in lieu of .zip files. These folders appear under the directory in which they would normally appear as .zip files but they permit you to view compressed files without unzipping them, as well as perform a variety of normal file functions such as cut, copy, paste, rename, etc., and drag and drop into and out of .zip files. Once ZipMagic is installed, all .zip files appear as folders in Windows Explorer allowing you to manipulate them as though they were standard Windows folders. Certain procedures and precautions apply to compressing and uncompressing which are adequately covered in the documentation.

6. Simplicity in function. Just add or remove a .zip extension to a folder's name to compress or decompress that folder.

ZipMagic permits the normal access of an antivirus program to a .zip file the same as to an uncompressed file.

ZipMagic also provides a number of tools that perform some extremely useful functions. You can span your large zip files over several floppies. You can add and edit comments to your zip files. The program supports not only .zip files, but the full range of all of the other archive types like arc, cab, arj, pak, and much more. It also enables you to view archived (compressed) files directly without decompressing using over 60 types of built-in file viewers. Furthermore, it will decode e-mail attachments that you receive in Uuencode, MIME, Base64 or BinHex formats. All users, especially novices will appreciate ZipMagic's Zip Surfer which takes all the effort out of downloading, managing and installing programs in either Internet Explorer or Netscape. From inside your browser window, you can delete, save, extract, view and install downloaded files. You can also test and repair damaged .zip files. Some users are confused between .zip files and the .exe files they download from the Net. Those particular .exe files are also compressed, but they are termed "self-extracting" because all you need do is double-click on them from inside Windows Explorer to decompress them. You can use ZipMagic to create a self-extracting .exe file so that you can compress it and then convey it to someone who may not have a decompression program.

ZipMagic is unique among similar utilities in the vast variety of functions it performs and in the efficiency with which it compresses and decompresses files. It certainly solved an ongoing headache for me. I monthly prepare the reviews section of the Monitor using a spacious Pagemaker template. When I am finished, I need to transmit the huge resulting file of several megabytes size to our Editor via e-mail. Since I am close to or over the maximum size of file attachment allowable by Comcast, it had become a monthly battle of slight of hand and goodly frustration to send it. ZipMagic compresses it so efficiently and affords transmission in "bite-size" packets so that my problems are over. Other .zip utilities were not up to the task. I could not be without this superb utility anymore.

As does all the other Ontrack utilities, the program also contains an Easy Update feature which connects you to the Net to find and download any updates or revisions. Easily worth the price of the ZipMagic alone, Ontrack includes their unbeatable file management Power Desk Utilities along with ZipMagic. There is nothing on my computer that I use more often and continuously for a thousand different chores than Power Desk.

A welcome addition these days, a top-notch manual accompanies the software. It not only fully explains the installation and use of all the program's features, it also provides a solid understanding of the archiving process and related areas. Additionally it offers step by step instruction for various procedures although for most it is almost superfluous, since they are easily performed by ZipMagic's wizards.

This outstanding zip management utility belongs on everyone's computer. At a street price of less than \$40 (\$20 as an upgrade to current users), you can have ZipMagic on yours. Like all the other great Ontrack offerings, it's worth more than every penny.

Ontrack Data International, Inc., ontrack.com, (800) 645-3649

A Book Review:

Build Your Own Home Network

by Brian K Lewis - SPCUG

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How many computers do you have in your house. If it's more than one, you have probably wondered about how you can share a printer, scanner, and/or Internet connection. This book gives you most of the gory details on how to set up your own network.

Overall the book is well written and does include many details needed for setting up a standard, wired, Ethernet network. The authors start by explaining many technical terms used in networking. Probably the most useful part of this book to the beginner is the explanation of the terminology involved in networking. There are also many photographs throughout the book. The hardware photos are generally of excellent quality. Unfortunately, the computer screen shots are generally quite fuzzy. The text does contain all the information needed to interpret the screen photos, but clearer pictures would be helpful.

For those who wish to set up a wired network for more than two computers this book would be very useful. If you only wish to setup a network for two computers, the book recommends a 10BaseT crossover cable. There is a little confusion in their references to this cable. The statements on pages 66 and 67 imply that you need a cross-over cable to connect all the computers to the hub. Actually, standard cables would be used for a network hub connection while the crossover cable would connect a two-computer system.

You can also use a 10Base2 coaxial cable for a two-computer system. However, they do not mention this in the text. They do mention that coaxial cable networks can be used for a more than two computer network. They also state that in a coaxial network the computers are connected "in-line". So when one in the middle is powered off, the network goes down. Whereas with an Ethernet 10Base T network with a hub, individual computers can be powered off without affecting the entire

network.

Although the book purports to be about all forms of home networking, only the wired Ethernet system using a hub (Star topology) really gets any space. There is mention of wireless systems, telephone line and power line systems, but it is very brief and not too helpful. The authors call these "kit systems" and then ignore any positive aspects of these alternative networks. For those who are unable or unwilling to string ethernet cable throughout their house or apartment, these alternate systems do have something to offer. The telephone line systems do work without interfering with either incoming or outgoing telephone calls. The wireless systems work up to 150 feet apart. However, the entire network must be wireless. You cannot mix wired and wireless systems. I have no doubt that will change with time. After all, we are now installing business systems with combinations of wired and wireless stations.

The book also discusses setting up the software for your network using Microsoft Windows networking functions. In this section they lead you through the setup in sequence. They also tell you how to use Internet Connection Sharing that Microsoft provides in Windows 98 SE. They also have a short section on using DSL for your Internet connection. In this section they mention the need for installing either a hardware or software firewall. They do recommend the use of ZoneAlarm as a software firewall, something I know you've all read about here.

The last item in the software section is the setting up of file and printer sharing. I know that this is frequently the main reason for a home network. However, the book recommends setting up your internal network using the TCP/IP setting. Since TCP/IP is the protocol used for all Internet traffic, most network advisors recommend that IPX/SPX or NetBEUI be used as the protocol for the internal network. That adds an additional layer of protection from possible intrusion from the outside. I would suggest using NetBEUI as it restricts the traffic to within a single local area network.

While searching the Web for information on home networks, I found the following URLs which provide more details on other types of networks. Anyone who plans on setting up a network should check out the information on these sites as a supplement to the information in this book.

www.sohoware.com, www.technocopia.com, www.zdnet.com, www.helmig.com, www.cable-modem.net/tt/networking.html, www.hnsolutions.co.uk, www.compnet.working.miningco.com, www.microsoft.com/homenet

These sites will also lead you to many others, all of which provide valuable information on home networks.

"Build Your Own Home Network" written by Ron Gilster and Diane Gilster, published by the Osborne Division of McGraw-Hill. The company's Website address is: www.osborne.com. The list price is \$24.99, but the book is available for \$19.99 from Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble (bn.com).

A <STYLE> Primer

by Jim Gaffney - SWIPCC

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If you have no interest in the creation of hypertext <HTML> pages, stop reading now. Likewise, if you are happy with letting a WYSIWYG package create your HTML for you and have no interest in how it works, you also may go on to the next article.

One of the terms that gets bandied about in the land of Web Authoring is Cascading Style Sheets -- CSS for short. We'll get to the cascading part some other time, but exactly what are Web styles? Most of us have dabbled in word processing in one form or another. Web styles are analogous to word processing styles -- they change the appearance of how text will appear when it is printed. In this case it changes how text will appear in a web browser. Now if some of you are saying "But that's what HTML tags do!" you are absolutely correct. Web Styles are an extension of HTML tags that let you "roll your own", customising HTML to you own tastes, if you will.

A style is implemented using (surprise!) the HTML tag <STYLE> and one or more style rules. A style rule consists of a selector and one or more declarations. A rule may appear something like this:

```
* H1 {color: red;
* font-size: 150%;
* font-style: italic;}
```

The rule can be written on a single line, but it is usually easier to read if each of the declarations is started on a separate line. In the example, "H1" is the selector -- the HTML tag that you wish to modify. Most commonly selectors are the tags for HTML elements. The remaining information is a group of declarations. Each declaration must end with a semi-colon. A collective set of declarations must be enclosed by curly-brackets {} as must a single declaration. We are here telling the browser that anytime it encounters the <H1> tag (which in the "vanilla" form increases the font size to about 24 points) to display the content in red, italicised, and in a font that is fifty percent larger than the default font size. Hey, this stuff is easy -- right ?

OK, how do you add it to your web pages ? There are three ways; in-line, embedded, and imported. In-line styles are placed within individual HTML tags which you want to modify anywhere in your document. They might look like this: <P style="font-family: sans-serif">

This, of course, will display the paragraph following it in the system default sans-serif font. It works, but since it does essentially the same thing as and you have to add the modified tag every time you want to use it, you really haven't gained much.

Embedding styles within your document allows you to repeatedly use a stylised selector throughout the current document. Since you want to use it throughout, the browser must be aware of the style before it starts processing the <BODY> of your document. The embedded style rules must therefore be placed with the <HEAD> element of your HTML document -- before the <BODY> element. A placing of styles might look like this:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
* <TITLE>A Stylised Page</TITLE>
<STYLE>
* [a list of style rules goes here]
</STYLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY>
* ...etc.
```

This technique is very useful and will produce a web page that has a uniformity of appearance -- with a professional look. But what if you have a web of several pages rather than a single page ? Happily, we don't have to repeat the same set of rules in the <HEAD> of each document. Instead, we create a cascading stylesheet file and import the document into each page with a single <LINK> HTML tag.

First we need to create the set of style rules that we wish to employ. Developing them in a one-page HTML document is a good technique; it allows us to make sure that we like the results that the style rules create as well as allowing us to de-bug the syntax of our rules. What you might end up with might look something like:

```
<STYLE>
BODY {background-image: url(background.gif)}
H1 {color: red; font-family: helvetica, sans-serif}
H2 {color: orange}
H3 {color: green; font-style: italic;}
</STYLE>
```

From your source document, copy the style rules to the Windows clipboard and then paste them into Notepad or any other ASCII text editor. Delete the opening and closing <STYLE> tags (if you copied them in the first place) and save the rules stylesheet to an ASCII file with the file extension of ".css". The hard work is done; now all you need do is insert a single line into each

HTML file in which you wish to use your stylesheet. You'll use a LINK tag that appears something like this:

```
<LINK REL=STYLESHEET TYPE=
"text/ss" HREF="my_styles.css">
```

This tag will go in the same place you enter embedded tags (i.e., within the <HEAD> element) so that styles will load before the BODY of your document. With the REL attribute specifying it to be a stylesheet, you can now see why we didn't copy the <STYLE> tags into the CSS file.

Once you have created a web with universal styles across all the pages, it is an easy matter to quickly alter the appearance of your web site. If we wanted to change the background image and the color of text tagged with the H2 tag, all we need do is load the CSS file into an ASCII text editor and make/save two changes. Hopefully, this will give you some appreciation for the power of styles.

Before I wrap up this introduction, I should mention at least one of the special rule selectors. There are, obviously, a finite number of HTML tags that we can use as the selector for style rules. We can, however, create a CLASS rule that can be used to modify any HTML tag -- perhaps you might consider it to be similar to an adjective. A CLASS is written like any other style rule except that the selector will have a name beginning with a period and at least one alpha character. After that character you can use any number of alpha or numeric characters. You could have a style rule like `.Iwanttomakesomethingblueonlortwooccasions {color:blue;}`

I don't, however, recommend a selector name that long as you have to type it in every time you want to apply it. Something like
* `.blu {color:blue;}` is much more useful. To apply the class to another tag, say a paragraph, enter `<p class="blu">`.

Text in the following/tagged paragraph would be blue in colour. Subsequent paragraphs would not be blue unless you also included the "blu" class in their paragraph tag. If you wanted to make all paragraphs blue, then you would define a universal style rule for paragraphs like:

```
p {color:blue;}
that would affect all paragraph tags and not just the ones with the "blu" class added.
```

About this point you should be wondering just what properties you can change in a style declaration. The answer is not simple; there are hundreds of them. You need, therefore, a reference -- either in the form of a book, help file, or (perhaps best of all) a nice application that writes your CSS files for you. I heartily recommend the program TopStyle from Bradsoft Software, LLC. The application comes in two varieties, TopStyle Pro and TopStyle Lite. The Lite version is freeware and will more than satisfy the needs of most web authors. You can download it from <http://www.bradsoft.com/topstyle/index.asp>

Now you know what stylesheets can do for you. Maybe it's time to add a little style to your web pages ?

Jim Gaffney spent 25 years in the US Army. His last assignment prior to retirement was as Chief of a software center for automated command and control systems and digital data links. His first personal computer in 1989 was a Radio Shack TRS-80 with 16K RAM and cassette recorder storage. He holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in Mechanical Engineering and is currently a faculty member in Computer Information Systems at El Paso Community College.

Jim has spent 5 years as the Sysop of the SWIPCC BBS, two as Vice-President and three as President of SWIPCC. He is currently SWIPCC Webmaster. He can be reached at jgaffney@elp.rr.com.

The Handy Four

Using the Keyboard for Editing

by Jim Gaffney - SWIPCC

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They've been around since MS-DOS (Microsoft Disk Operating System, for those of you who came aboard since Windows 95 hit the scene). They can make your work a whole lot easier. Yet, they are largely ignored. Computer users have become so addicted to the mouse that they frequently ignore using the keyboard. I'm referring, of course, to "keyboard shortcuts" - keystrokes that will accomplish common editing functions (and more). Let's revisit the most common. The "Handy Four" are the four keys just to right of the left-hand shift key.

The functions they accomplish are among the most common and frequently used.

<CTRL>+Z Undo. This is actually a "Break" key. Old-timers may remember it as the escape from "ED", the original ASCII text editor. It accomplishes from within Windows applications the same thing as that funny looking left-hook button on the toolbar.

<CTRL>+X Cut. Why didn't they use Control and C ? Well, then what would you use for Copy ? Next best choice is X - when you "X" something out you are deleting it. And besides, the X looks a little bit like an open pair of scissors.

<CTRL>+C Copy. All right!!! We finally got one that is logical.

<CTRL>+V Paste. V = Paste ? Well, aside from the fact that it is in a group next to the previous three shortcuts, you can think of it as an inverted caret or a wedge. Thus, the combination will insert whatever has been placed on the clipboard (copied or pasted) into the application at the location of the cursor.

So why do I use these keystrokes in preference to the mouse ? Actually, I use them in concert with the mouse. If I select text with the mouse, I can easily cut or copy with my left hand using the shortcuts. I then reposition the insertion point with the mouse, and paste back in using the shortcut keys via my left hand. (OK, so you "lefties" have got a problem - but you've probably already given up and started using the mouse with your right hand, anyhow).

I use the technique a lot in capturing information from E-mail messages and pasting it into my address book or a database. Then, too, there are a lot of applications out there whose authors have carelessly neglected to include undo, cut, copy, and paste on their menus. Or maybe you have the toolbars turned off at the moment ? Or perhaps the application window is scrolled up where you cannot see the toolbar on the screen ? If you forget the "Handy Four", just click "Edit" on the menu bar of almost any Windows application - from that drop-down, you can quickly refresh your memory of Ctrl-Z, Ctrl-X, Ctrl-C, and Ctrl-V. And while I'm at it, let me throw in three more handy key combinations that, while not part of the "Handy Four, will help you work faster.

<ALT>+F4 This combination will exit an application. I use it frequently in the classroom for closing programs that students have carelessly left open at the end of a class period. It does the same thing as selecting File, and then exit or clicking the "X" button on the program title bar.

F2 The F2 key is an universal edit key. If you have selected a filename in Explorer, a cell in Excel or perhaps field data in Access, striking the F2 key places you into the edit mode.

F5 The F5 key is an update key. If you find that your desktop icons or MS Office shortcut bar buttons are incorrectly displayed, striking the F5 key will frequently rescan and correct the problem. Likewise, if you have recently created a file and it appears at the bottom of the directory, the F5 will rescan and display the filenames alphabetically.

Use your keyboard. It may not always be the best choice, but frequently it can be.

Book Review:

Using Microsoft Windows Me

Special Edition

by Jim Gaffney - SWIPCC

[Reprinted from the 2001 November issue of "SYDTRUG News", newsletter of SYDTRUG Inc., PO Box 75, PANANIA NSW 2213, AUSTRALIA, where it was reprinted via the "APCUGNET" BBS of APCUG from the 2001 January issue of "Throughput", newsletter of the SouthWest International Personal Computer Club, PO Box 371236, El Paso Texas 79937-1236, U S of A]

Ed Bott's treatise on Windows Millennium Edition (aka Win ME) is pointed squarely at the everyday user. The first chapter, Windows Essentials, begins with the evolution of Windows (to better understand the nature of the beast), continues with instruction for installing and/or updating to Windows Me, and then addresses troubleshooting and maintaining the latest version of Microsoft's personal operating system.

Extensive coverage is given to areas in which there have been significant changes from previous Windows versions. There is a section on home and small-business networking. A chapter is devoted to customising the interface to include managing the look and feel, controlling fonts and installing and managing applications. The use and customisation of Internet Explorer 5.5 comes in for special treatment, as does information on putting Outlook Express to work for you.

A particularly useful fold-out card is just inside the front cover. It contains instructions on troubleshooting startup problems using the System Configuration Utility. There are also instructions on how to better make the Scandisk and Defrag utilities work together. (Don't you get tired of seeing the message "Scandisk has restarted 10 times because ... has been writing to this drive"?) Here, finally, is a discussion of the cause of, and cure for, this problem.

Included with the text is a CD-ROM that contains copies of several "standard" Windows utilities - WinGate, WinZip, TurboZip and Acrobat Reader as well as content from other Que publications addressing Windows Me.

If you are about to take the leap and "make the move" to Windows Me, you may well find this book very useful. And if you need an informative reference volume on Win Me for your library take a peek at this one while browsing your favourite book store.

Using Microsoft Windows Me, Special Edition Ed Bott Que Books, ISBN 0-7897-2446-4, MSRP \$39.99

The Book Beat

by Jim Gaffney - SWIPCC

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Microsoft Office XP 8-in-1

Habreken, Joe; Que Books, Indianapolis, IN

ISBN 0-7897-2509-6, MSRP \$29.99

Well, having seen Microsoft's Allen Childress demonstrate the wonders of the recently released Office XP -- are you ready to run out and upgrade to the latest version? There are many nifty features in the suite and it certainly is attractive.

SWIPCC President George Holloway was lucky enough to win a copy of the suite at the Microsoft demonstration. In talking to George, I've learned that the package comes with documentation about the size of that which came with Office 2000 -- i.e., about 1/4 of an inch thick. I personally detest the "you can learn everything from the help file" philosophy, so George -- I've got a solution for you.

The good folks at Que have published Joe Habreken's Microsoft Office XP 8-in-1, a thorough (921 pages), well-illustrated, and well-written tome addressing Microsoft's latest suite. As the

"volumes" displayed on the cover indicate, there are sections dedicated to each of the applications included in the suite. The first section is devoted to XP innovations such as "Smart Tags" and Speech Recognition. Subsequent sections, in turn, guide the reader through a series of successive lessons designed to walk the reader through mastery of each suite's application modules. The book is suitable for both the newcomer to Microsoft Office as well as the veteran who needs to be brought up to speed on the latest advancements from Redmond, WA.

Attractively priced, "8-in-1" is a recommended addition to the library of anyone moving to the latest generation of Microsoft Office.

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Special Edition -- Using JavaScript
McFedries, Paul; Que Books, Indianapolis, IN

ISBN 0-7897-2576-2, MSRP \$39.99

Java and JavaScript -- the same thing, right ? Far from it! While you will find both employed in many Web pages, they are beasts of a different colour. Java is an applications programming language from Sun Microsystems; it can be used to create stand-alone applications for most operating systems. JavaScript, as the name implies, is a scripting language that is interpreted by the host machine.

One can do things in Java that can't be done in JavaScript -- principally Graphics manipulation. But there are many useful web functions that can be accomplished using JavaScript; and the interpreter for the scripts is built into most web browsers -- no add-ins are required and page download times are shorter.

If you want to increase the attractiveness of your Homepage, JavaScript is a good way to go. Paul McFedries has created both an excellent tutorial and an excellent reference in his Special Edition -- Using JavaScript.

Beginning with sections on script programming and objects, Mr McFedries leads his readers through an increasingly intricate series [of] techniques and examples. Code snippets and examples abound. And so you don't have to key in everything yourself, the author provides a URL where files containing all the book's examples may be downloaded.

Finally, the reader is introduced to DHTML (Dynamic HTML), a close relative of JavaScript and a method that is finding ever-wider presence on the Web. At 896 pages, this is a comprehensive way to learn a very useful language at a reasonable price.

Did you get the ANNAK worm yet ?

by Rod Ream - PIBMUG

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Here's a quick and easy way to trick the worm

Visual Basic Scripts (VBS) are popular with virus writers. That's because they're easy to create and will launch if sent as an e-mail attachment. And the recipient double-clicks on them.

But there's an easy, free way for you to defeat Visual Basic Script viruses.

Every file type has a default action that takes place when we double click on a file. The default action for double clicking on a VBS (Visual Basic Script) file type is to open and execute the script file. That means double clicking on the attachment runs or launches the script. This

default action is the mechanism that can result in system infection if a user unknowingly launches an infected attachment received in an e-mail message.

You can easily change this action and stop the accidental launch and execution of a VBS file by making it do something else when double-clicked on.

Some users have disabled or removed the capability of the system to run a VBS file out of fear of potential viral exposure. However, there's a relatively easy fix for this that will still permit a web page or other application to run a VB script when such function is actually needed, but will block the double click action. The fix is to change the default action to Edit, which causes the file to open in Notepad rather than execute.

Here's the Step-by-Step

In Windows Explorer (not Internet Explorer), open Folder Options under the View pull-down menu (moved to Tools in Windows Me). Select the "File Types" tab and scroll to VBScript Encoded File. Click on the "Edit" button ("Advanced" in Windows Me).

What happens is another window will open showing the possible file actions, with the default action indicated in boldface type. The default action is likely "Open". Highlight instead the word "Edit" and click on the "Set Default" button. "Edit" should now appear in bold face.

In some older systems the Edit function may not be listed. In such instances, click the NEW button and enter "Edit" in the action field and "NOTEPAD.EXE" in the application field. When "Edit" has been added make it the default action as shown above.

While in the file type screen, also make sure the boxes for "always show extension" and "enable quick view" are also checked. Click "OK" to close the open windows.

Windows usually has several example VBS files on the system, in a folder named "sample". Find one of them and double click on it. If the action caused Notepad to open and display the content of the file, you've done it correctly and are now safe from an accidental VBS infection.

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Windows ME and DOS

by Steve Bass - Pasadena IBM PC Users Group
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When Microsoft released Windows ME, they decided to protect you from Real DOS-Mode. The truth may be that they didn't want to continue supporting DOS. Actually, Windows ME architecture allows it if you know the trick.

Download a free patch (and back up your PC before you do, eh?) to modify "IO.SYS", "COMMAND.COM" and "REGENV32.EXE". The patch will unhide the Real DOS-Mode on Windows ME systems and let you boot just like you did in Windows 98. That means you'll be able to get to a startup menu and DOS by pressing "Shift-F8" at boot-up, use "CONFIG.SYS", and "AUTOEXEC.BAT" before Windows loads. The patch is here: www.geocities.com/mfd4life_2000

The 10 Commandments of E-mail

by Uncredited

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Thou shalt include a clear and specific subject line.

Thou shalt edit any quoted text down to the minimum thou needest.

Thou shalt read thine own message thrice before thou sendest it.

Thou shalt ponder how thy recipient might react to thy message.

Thou shalt check thy spelling and thy grammar.

Thou shalt not curse, flame, spam or USE ALL CAPS.

Thou shalt not forward any chain letter.

Thou shalt not use e-mail for any illegal or unethical purpose.

Thou shalt not rely on the privacy of e-mail, especially from work.

When in doubt, save thy message overnight and reread it in the light of the dawn.

And, here's the "Golden Rule" of E-Mail:

That which thou findest hateful to receive, send thou not unto others.

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