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Editorial

Have you booked in for the next Computer Week-End? I Sincerely Hope You Have, as always, we need all of you to support this week end.

Nothing stays still in the computer business, would you a few years ago have believed one gig memory sticks were possible and today cost only 12.00, If you took out a contract for internet access you would get a free laptop? And the things I use my computer for was not even possible back in the TRS80 days, Things like Editing Music loading LPs on to the computer, Editing Photographs and Video and putting all on to CD & DVD disks and the disks costing around 10p to 15p each. Price, Power, Capability and Size both in amount of memory and smaller physical size are the most noticeable changes.

Well that all for now folks see you all at the meeting.

Simple But Powerful Tools Find Misplaced PC Files

by Gabe Goldberg
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As PCS have gotten more powerful in every dimension -- faster

processors, larger memories, and (especially) giant hard drives -- software developers have kept pace by bloating their applications. Where PCS once ran happily with 10 megabyte (not gigabyte!) disk drives, now most applications are many times that size, containing hundreds or thousands of files. As applications proliferate and users create their own blizzards of data files (documents, pictures, sound and video files, etc.) PC files become needles in a haystack.

Or, more annoyingly accurate, PCS are like gigantic haystacks hiding needles, since a PC's pile of files is always much more visible than the one file that's missing. Windows versions include a built-in tool for locating files. It's sometimes called Search and sometimes called Find; I guess that Finding sounds more optimistic than Searching. But they share problems: they don't search inside all filetypes (files' types are the second part of their names, what follows the dot, such as "doc" for Microsoft Word files), they don't always find all copies of files, they may completely skip files, and they run slowly.

Picking a file search tool is like choosing a Web browser or your favourite ice cream flavour: a matter of very personal taste. The search tool (or browser or ice cream) you favour matters less than your knowing about choices.

Sometimes it's hard to escape an already-made choice, to try the unfamiliar -- though the pleasure of discovering a new favourite flavour helps the process along. This article describes two powerful utilities that can be your PC's lost-and-found. But remember that

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many other choices are available on software download sites such as www.tucows.com/.

Agent Ransack (a free download) and FileLocator Pro (\$25), near-twin-brother file-find utilities, greatly surpass Windows' native tools: they're faster, friendlier, more flexible, and more accurate. Both programs are easy downloads (less than two megabytes) and install by simply executing the downloaded .exe file. They offer many tasty features. For example...

1) They display file lines containing your search string with their filenames: an overdue facility, and much more useful than displaying only filenames!

2) They can search multiple unrelated (non-nested) folders: what a concept, and so much better than having to repeat searches!

3) They can save and reuse search criteria. So if you ever repeat file searches -- for example, to find all files containing your family name -- you'll save time.

4) They allow saving and printing lists of files found: very helpful if a file search is the first step in a larger process which manipulates found files.

5) Both programs provide basic and expert interfaces. This choice allows using only simple search functions or enabling more detailed search criteria.

6) The programmer's tool "regular expressions" provide a more powerful wildcard notation than "" for specifying matching search

strings and filenames. Nearly everyone gets along just fine without using these, but people who like them *really* like them.

You'll be encouraged to register Agent Ransack. This is optional but a friendly gesture towards the developer who makes the program available.

Big brother FileLocator Pro -- whose registration cost includes a year of updates -- adds several features: it searches additional filetypes (PDF, ZIP, etc.); it displays found file lines as they appear in the file, with customisable numbers of lines above and below each one; it allows immediate inspection of found files with a built-in viewer or tailorable external editor; it provides a detailed status line with found-file statistics; and it's programmable via scripting and plug-ins.

While it's perhaps a little unfashionable, I appreciate the 24-page FileLocator Pro manual. Full of screenshots illustrating basic and advanced facilities, it's a quick read revealing tips and nuggets that might otherwise be missed.

After paying for and downloading FileLocator Pro, you'll be given a registration key that enables using the program past the free evaluation period. You'll apply the key by executing a small registry update file or by copying a string from an e-mail into a dialogue box. Note that while you're safe executing the registry update file from a trusted vendor, caution is required with such files and they should *not* be accepted and executed from strangers.

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A minor oddity is that invoking either product via right-clicking a folder in Windows Explorer -- a handy facility -- starts a new copy of the search tool rather than making an open copy the active window.

Until PCS can read our minds and do what we want without detailed instructions, tools like Agent Ransack and FileLocator Pro are great productivity enhancers. And don't neglect options available in Windows built-in search tools: they can tailor and refine searches to be more effective.

Specifications

Company: Mythic Software
Programs: Agent Ransack,
FileLocator Pro
URL: www.mythicsoft.com
Price: Free (Agent Ransack); \$25
(FileLocator Pro)
OS: Windows 95 or newer

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Educating the Luddite

by K. Joyce McDonald

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Luddite isn't exactly the term I'm looking for, but I can't think of anything more accurate. The part of the term Luddite that refers to sabotaging technology does not necessarily apply, although one might do it unwittingly by misunderstanding the technology rather than fearing or despising it.

Thus Luddite is a reasonably accurate term to describe myself in relation to my newest high-tech toys. Ignorance certainly played a part, as did the possibility of using the technology wrongly. The annoyance that comes with misunderstanding a technology might have even led to acts of sabotage.

So call me a Luddite. Call me a dummy. Maybe even call me a fool. But if I'm a fool, what would you call the person who hasn't owned three Palm devices, three cell phones, ten computers and a hybrid wired/wireless home network? Judge for yourself from the following confession.

Every few months I get e-commerce itch. The only cure for e.c.itch involves visiting a technology Web site and ordering something new for my office or road warrior armoury. I had in mind a dictionary for my Palm M130 and a graduation gift for my daughter, Laura, who recently finished her Master's degree at UCLA. Lucky for me, the Palm Website offered the dictionary as a free gift with the purchase of an

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M130, exactly what I wanted for Laura.

In addition, I wanted a small expansion card, also for my Palm. Sixteen MB would suffice, since that is twice the size of the standard memory in an M130. The expansion card, I was pleased to note, came with a freebie called a Bonzai USB Mini Drive. I had read about key-fob-sized drives, so I was eager to try one.

When the items arrived, I checked the dictionary and expansion card for my own M130. It took about two minutes to figure them out, after which I loaded my library of books and Palm Reader onto the expansion card, freeing up about five megabytes of main memory. I moved my e-books one by one over to the card. When you have an e-library of sixty volumes, this process can be tedious.

After I moved my books, I moved the Palm Reader, which promptly moved all of my books with it, overwriting the ones that I had previously moved. Nothing was damaged but my pride -- and the laundry, which wasn't getting done while I was moving the sixty volumes.

Next I opened the package that held the Bonzai drive. The drive came with no documentation at all, not even an advertising card with a picture of the drive. The package included a small key-fob-sized drive, a USB extension cable, and a lanyard (I'll get to that in a minute.)

I had read that a USB drive has only to be plugged into a USB port in order for your computer to

recognise it. So I plugged it into the USB port on my laptop. XP recognised the hardware immediately and loaded the drivers. But I couldn't find the drive anywhere in My Computer or Windows Explorer.

I moved the Bonzai over to my Win98 desktop. Here, Win98 prompted me to download the drivers, an easy task with a cable Internet connection. After the drivers were loaded, however, the Windows 98 system didn't display the Bonzai as a drive either.

I finally opened the tiny door to the Bonzai drive and took a look inside. The drive looked like it was supposed to have a media card in it, but it was empty. I checked out the Bonzai drive customer support web page. I downloaded the instructions manual and read the parts list. The Bonzai drive was supposed to come with a media card.

Why would someone ship an empty drive? It didn't make sense to me unless this was part of an elaborate scheme to sell the media cards (which are not cheap). I was composing an irritated letter in my head to fire off to Palm when I took another look at the drive.

The slot in the drive looked about the size of one of the Palm cards. I thought about inserting one in the tiny bay, but if the two were not compatible, one, or perhaps both could get fried. Back on the Simple Tech Website, I looked at the specs for the Bonzai drive. It took SD (Secure Digital) and Multimedia cards. On the Palm website, I looked at the specs for the expansion card. The Palm

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expansion card was an SD card. Ergo, it should work in my Bonzai drive.

My clumsy hands had a certain amount of difficulty inserting the postage-stamp-sized card into the drive. A younger less-Luddite would have no difficulty. After inserting the card, I plugged the Bonzai into my USB drive and got ... nothing. At this point I read the manual. I admit, even people who write manuals don't read them until they have to.

After rebooting my computer, as instructed, I inserted the Bonzai drive again. Its contents immediately popped up on My Computer and Windows Explorer as the E: Drive (the DVD drive being D:). I could see all the files that I had loaded onto the drive via my M130. I could also save this article to the Bonzai drive. The drive had a little more room, but anything else I put there would take away space needed for my Palm library, in case 60 volumes isn't enough.

That mystery solved, I fooled around with my expansion card for a while. Then I began to put my toys away. At this point, the lanyard drew my attention. You probably already know what a lanyard is, but since this particular column is directed at novices, I'll explain further. The lanyard has replaced the pocket protector as de rigueur geek fashion. It is a cable of a width somewhere between a belt and a shoestring, usually made from fabric, with a company or favourite team logo applied. The cable is worn around the neck with a clip to hold the ID badge required by many companies. Simple Tech

has adapted this technology to another purpose: a convenient way to carry your Bonzai drive. The Bonzai drive on its lanyard might even be a convenient place to carry your SD card, since the card tends to run the battery down if you keep it in your PDA -- something else I learned the hard way.

I also learned another down side to miniature devices. I was digging through some past copies of my local user group's newsletter. I didn't find what I wanted, so I closed the file drawer and went on writing. An hour or so later, I couldn't find my Bonzai drive. Since the expansion card and drive cover were on my desk, I wouldn't, even in a senior moment, have carried it off somewhere. My husband and I spent a considerable amount of time crawling around on the floor under my desk without finding it.

After a while, I realised that I had been looking through my newsletters when I last saw the drive. I opened the file drawer -- and there it sat, on top of the files. I can be thankful that it didn't slip down between the folders and become a tiny time capsule of technology suspended in time, to be later discovered as an artifact reminiscent of a remote past when we carried our files on enormous, postage-stamp-sized media.

So now this Luddite is educated, perhaps a bit late, in the workings of SD media technologies, and also that those tiny beggars are easy to lose. I read recently that technology is getting so smart that it is outsmarting most of us. It's certainly ahead of me. I was mulling this concept over the

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dishwasher, wondering if I had been too hasty to dismiss in a past article the idea of an Internet fridge and clothes washer. With current technology as it is, a surgeon in Los Angeles can use a remote robotic arm to operate on a patient in Anchorage. It is comforting to think that when I'm too much of a Luddite to run my own dishwasher, someone across the Internet can do it for me.

Screen Capture Tools Put Windows Data At Your Beck and Call

by Gabe Goldberg
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When you have a problem with your car, you bring it to the repair shop. When you're sick, you visit the doctor. But computer problems sometimes show up as nasty messages plopped in the middle of the screen. So it's hard to capture information needed to research and fix the problem. And someone trying to help you via e-mail or phone may ask questions about system settings or application options which may be tedious to record and communicate. A previous article describes information that's useful for solving problems

[<http://www.aarp.org/computers-howto/Articles/a2004-07-12->

getanswers]. But sometimes the best information is a picture of what happens or what is wrong.

The good news is that all Windows versions provide basic tools to capture the entire screen or just the active application window.

You may have tried to use the PrintScreen (or PrtScr on some keyboards) key and not seen anything happen. This is because that key doesn't really *print* anything, it simply copies the entire screen (or just the active window if you press Alt-then-PrintScreen keys) to the Windows clipboard (an invisible Windows area for storing temporary data). Here's a tip: if you're capturing the entire screen and you'd like to date-stamp the image, move the mouse cursor over the time shown at the right side of the Windows taskbar. That will pop up the date, which will be included in the captured image.

While you can't see the clipboard, you can paste the captured image from it into a word processing or graphics program from which you can print or save it. Open an application you like -- Microsoft Paint or its equivalent (included with Windows), Microsoft Word, or any graphics program. Position the cursor where you want to place the image and press Ctrl-V (Ctrl and V keys simultaneously). The image will appear. If you like, you can add descriptive information such as the date, the nature of your problem, your Windows version, applications which were running, etc.

You can now print the image from the application (click File and Print); you're also close to being able to

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save or e-mail the captured image! To save it, within the application click File and Save As. Specify a location (hard drive, floppy disk, USB key, etc.). Programs may offer different choices of filetype for saving. Common choices are JPG (good for photographs, can be compressed), PNG (new/free standard format, good for non-photos), GIF (commonly used, produces relatively small files, limited to 256 colours), and BMP (produces large files, Windows-only format, usable if files won't be transmitted). Once the file is saved you can attach it to an e-mail.

But Windows' built-in screen capture is primitive and inflexible. That's led many people and companies to develop tools providing more functions. Searching Google for "screen capture" produced about 227,000 choices! Many of these are free, available for download. You can find good choices at Web sites such as Tucows Downloads [www.tucows.com]. Some are shareware -- free to try, priced to continue using. A modestly priced choice that is powerful and easy to use is CaptureWizPro from PixelMetrics [www.pixelmetrics.com].

Costing \$30 and requiring a one-megabyte download, it provides a small toolbar that allows capturing any part of the screen, not just the full screen or the active window. The toolbar can be docked anywhere on the screen edge. It will hide until you mouse near it, then several selection tools (area, frame, scroll, etc.) allow precisely selecting what to copy.

Area selection allows simple selection of a rectangular section to copy. Frame selection displays rulers that show the selected area's size in pixels and inches; the frame border opens fast, remembers its position, and lets you interactively prepare applications below it. Scrolling selection tools solve a nasty problem: how to capture an image that doesn't fit on the screen. You can select a scrollable area, energise Full AutoScroll, and the image will scroll before your eyes as CaptureWizPro collects it.

Once an image is captured, you can copy it to the clipboard for saving as described above, or you can do many more fun things with it: save it directly to a disk file, print it directly, make an on-screen PostIt-style note out of it (to keep visible something needed for reference), e-mail it directly, manipulate it with a built-in editor, etc.

CaptureWizPro installation offers a friendly list of tips for use. It also does something I wish more applications did: allows printing a one-page guide including capture basics, Q&A, and suggested uses. The tool is handy for recording configuration changes, comparing results of testing applications, sending information to people who don't have the same applications as you, creating paper checklists from screen lists, etc. A little imagination will suggest many more uses for the friendly fly-out capture tool bar.

No matter how you capture information -- with Windows' built-in PrintScreen handling or any of the many add-in tools -- you'll never have to describe what you saw on

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the screen; you'll be able to show it. You'll never laboriously transcribe option settings to report to a help desk; you'll send a picture. You'll wonder how you did without this powerful and simple tool.

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Product Review:

SpinRite 6

by Chris Moriarty -- CPCUG

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SpinRite 6 \$89 Download Gibson Research Corporation (www.grc.com)

SpinRite is a program that accesses Intel or AMD PC hard disks, floppy disks, and Iomega Zip and Jaz disks, at a low level, to detect problems and fix them. SpinRite 6, released in 2004 June, is the first version of SpinRite that has the capability to access and repair disks with NTFS (Microsoft Windows NTx, 2000, XP) and/or Linux file systems (the previous version worked on FAT and FAT32 partitions). SpinRite 6 achieves operating system independence by

the incorporation of the open source FreeDOS operating system.

SpinRite was first developed on the late 1980s. New versions have kept pace with advances in hard disk size and technology (details are available at #www.grc.com#). My first-hand acquaintance with SpinRite is recent, but I've heard over the years of "miraculous" recoveries of data by SpinRite from disk drives that had experienced various types of catastrophic failures. After purchasing SpinRite this year, I saw it successfully repair an installation diskette for an old word processing program I still like to use. I had started to notice that the first diskette in the word processing program's installation set sometimes would give read access errors during installation, and often this ultimately led to failure of the installation. SpinRite detected the problem, recovered the data from the area where the problem was occurring, moved the data elsewhere, and the installation now works fine.

SpinRite 6 requires complete control of a machine to do its low level access, and rebooting is necessary after SpinRite runs. Execution can be terminated by the user at any time, and SpinRite can "remember" how far it progressed, if interrupted.

The program has five levels of operation, with two presented by default as suitable options to choose from in most situations: option "2" for a faster operation that focuses on recovery of lost data, and "4" for a longer-running operation that does a thorough test by writing and rewriting to all disk sectors (in addition to locating and

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recovering lost data). SpinRite can be run on either an entire drive at once, or individual partitions if multiple logical partitions are present (e.g., drives with dual boot operating systems, etc.).

DOS or Boot

SpinRite 6 can be run directly from an MS-DOS system, or a Microsoft Windows 9x system that has been restarted in MS-DOS mode. The most common way of running the application, however, is by the use of boot media such as a floppy disk or a CD-ROM, that contains the SpinRite software. Generally, one can start a machine with SpinRite boot media without having to make any adjustments. However, it is necessary to change the BIOS settings if a machine is set up to make a hard disk the first device in the boot sequence. In this case, the boot sequence must be changed in order for the media containing SpinRite 6 to precede the hard disk in the boot sequence. The way to access the BIOS settings to make boot sequence changes varies from machine to machine, but typically, you must press one or more keys quickly to access the BIOS "setup" when the machine first powers up, prior to the loading of an operating system.

SpinRite 6 offers several choices of boot media. One option is to have SpinRite 6 format and create a bootable floppy disk. Other options involve the creation of image files for either floppy disks or CD-ROMs. A floppy disk image file can be transferred to a Linux system to create a bootable floppy disk using a Linux diskette imaging program. SpinRite 6 itself cannot "burn" a bootable CD-ROM, but the ISO

image file created by SpinRite 6 can be used by "burn" software to create a bootable CD-ROM (for machines that have the capability to boot from CD-ROM). SpinRite 6 also provides other options for creating boot media for machines that can boot from USB drives, Zip drives, and so forth. An advantage to using writeable media such as a floppy disk is that SpinRite can save a log with the results of its analysis.

Run Time

The amount of time that SpinRite requires to run depends on a number of factors, such as hard disk size, hard disk speed, etc. The level "4" run time on a 1.7 Gigahertz (GHz) Intel Pentium 4 machine 2.5 years old with two hard drives, was 22 hours for a 120 Gigabyte (GB) hard disk (7200 RPM) and 8 hours for a 20 GB hard disk (5400 RPM). The run time for an older machine with a Powerleap 1.4 GHz Celeron upgrade (from a 400 Megahertz Pentium II), was 5.5 hours for a 7200 RPM 40 GB hard disk (multiple partitions, dual boot setup) and 2.5 hours for a 5400 RPM 6 GB hard disk (3 logical DOS partitions). I was pleased that SpinRite did not find problems on any of the disks, and hope they all still have a lot of useable life remaining.

SpinRite is purchased and downloaded directly from the Gibson Research Corporation web site (www.grc.com). The program is very small by today's standards, about 170 Kilobytes, so it downloads very quickly even with a dialup connection. Documentation for SpinRite 6 is still being developed, but the web site has the

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the documentation for SpinRite 5. Thus far, I've found that the menus appearing throughout SpinRite 6's startup contain ample explanation. A personal SpinRite license extends to all hardware personally and privately owned by the purchaser.

I recommend visiting the Gibson web site to learn more about SpinRite (documents at various technical levels are available), and to access the information that is freely available on the web site for testing and enhancing the security of any Microsoft Windows-based computer that is connected to the Internet. I was happy to purchase SpinRite to help provide a little financial support for all of the security related work that Steve Gibson has done.

Chris Moriarty is a member of CPCUG. He does not consider himself an IT professional but he has set up two home computers that are networked with dual boot Windows/Linux operating systems. He can be reached at chrismor@cpcug.org.

Cyber Security in 2005 ?

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As more and more computer users gain fast, always-on, broadband access to the Internet via cable or ADSL telephone lines, computer security becomes a critical issue. This was convincingly illustrated in an article in USA TODAY (2004-11-30, thanks to Duane Morrow). The paper teamed up with Avantgarde, a tech marketing and design firm, to see what kind of attacks were attracted by variously equipped computers hooked up to a broadband DSL connection. Relatively unprotected computers, wide open to the Internet, underwent attacks at a sustained rate of 340 per hour, or once every 10 seconds on average. These computers consisted of a Dell Windows XP with Service Pack 1, and an Apple Mac X. Most of the attacks were no more than "door knob rattlers" and did not result in actual penetration. Nevertheless, out of 139 thousand attacks in two weeks nine managed to take over the Windows XP computer and started to tie it into a larger network of hijacked systems. Another computer, equipped with Windows Small Business Server, underwent 25 thousand attacks in two weeks, 61 per hour on average, of which one managed to take over the system. The Apple computer was not compromised, probably because it uses an operating system not targeted by most intruders.

Computers protected by an active firewall underwent far fewer attacks, from 2 -- 4 per hour, because firewalls hide the presence of a computer on the Internet from casual passers-by. These computers used Windows

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XP with Service Pack 2, Windows XP with the ZoneAlarm firewall, and a Microtel Linspire (Linux-based) computer with a basic firewall in the operating system.

Note that these "honey pot" systems were totally passive. Attacks did not depend on users' actions, such as visiting infected Web sites or downloading e-mail attachments that might cause infiltration by worms and viruses. It is also clear that fairly simple protection measures, such as a firewall, thwarted the vast majority of malicious attackers.

The foremost obstacle to achieving a safer Internet is the ignorance and/or indifference of too many computer users, especially those with a broadband connection; but notice that with an attack rate of once every 10 seconds even Internet browsers using a limited telephone connection can be vulnerable!

Here are the important safety measures once more:

A firewall, stand-alone as in ZoneAlarm, or part of a package as in ZoneAlarm Plus, Windows XP SP2, or Norton Internet Security (combined with anti-virus and more). Optimally also a hardware router, even if you don't need one for a home network, to add additional firewall protection.

An anti-virus program, if not already included in the firewall software. Norton is good, or you can use a free program such as AVG from www.grisoft.com. It is essential to update the virus data files weekly or more often.

Regular updates of your operating system and Office programs with newly issued patches from the providers (e.g. Microsoft).

A spyware blocking/removal program such as AdAware (free) or AdAware Plus (extra features), or the excellent, free Spybot Search and Destroy.

Disconnect from the Internet when not needed, or turn the computer off altogether when not in use for a longer period (use Hibernate with Windows XP for faster start-up).

Use common sense! Don't trust e-mail attachments unless you expect them. If you have any doubt whatsoever, ask the sender to confirm that it is OK. Even then, be skeptical. Delete obvious chain mail unread.

Knoppix to the Rescue!
Sooner or later something is likely to go wrong with your computer. A nasty virus or spy program may take over and lock you out, or Windows starts acting weird and refuses to be of service any longer. Maybe the Knoppix rescue disk can help you to recover your precious data files, at least, and maybe to remove a virus or restore Windows to good health.

Knoppix is the brainchild of Klaus Knopper, a guy who makes it his business to go around fixing peoples' computers. In doing so he uses a variety of software tools that he carries around on CDs and floppies for use on the affected systems. He also carries a boot CD to start computers that won't start up because of a nasty virus or other problems. Knopper eventually added his repair tools to

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this boot CD, running Linux. The CD includes programs to detect peripherals, including networks, USB ports, Internet connections, sound and graphics cards, as well as Open Source programs such as OpenOffice and The Gimp to make it possible to access and copy text and graphics data on the infected computer. In the spirit of Open Source programming, he invited others to join in the effort. The resulting CD goes way beyond being a technician's repair tool; with the addition of numerous utilities, games, emulators, sound and graphics programs, the current CD, called Knoppix, is a full-fledged Linux distribution for non-Linux geeks, comparable to Linspire and Xandros. The difference is that the whole program can run from the CD without using the computer drives.

Some 1700 MB of programming is contained in compressed form on a single 700 MB CD. The latest version of the program can be downloaded for free or you can order a CD from a variety of vendors for \$5.00 and S/H. Booting the program takes only a few minutes; as many of the essential features of the program as possible are copied to RAM. As a result, the programs run surprisingly fast. The Linux-based KDE windows program is a clone of MS Windows and easy to use by non-Linux users.

Next time your computer suddenly goes on the blink, you might be able to continue some work and copy your data to a safe location simply by booting from the Knoppix CD-ROM. I have recently received a review copy of the book "Knoppix Hacks" by Kyle Rankin from its

publisher (O'Reilly, ISBN 0-596-00787-6, \$29.95, user group member discount available) and I hope soon to discuss more details of this interesting program.

Pim Borman is Web Site Editor and APCUG representative of the SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc. (SWIPCUG). The above article appeared in the January 2005 issue of the P-See Urgent, SWIPCUG newsletter. Permission is granted to other non-profit computer user groups to use this article in their publications with credit to the author and the SW Indiana PC Users Group.

The Computer Corner

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Protecting Your Computer During the "Flu and Virus" Season

With all the viruses and other malware around, I have accumulated a group of software that I consider to be necessary 'protection' for any computer that connects to the Internet.

The software I recommend consists of:
Ad-Aware
<http://www.lavasoft.com/>

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Spybot Search & Destroy

<http://www.safer-networking.org/en/mirrors/index.html>

CWShredder

http://www.intermute.com/spysubtract/cwshredder_download.html

Zone Alarm

http://www.zonelabs.com/store/content/catalog/products/sku_list_za.jsp

AVG Antivirus

<http://free.grisoft.com/freeweb.php/doc/2/Ing/us/tpl/v5>

Pop-Up Stopper

http://www.panicware.com/product_psfree_download.html

All of these programs are FREE. Millions of people are using them. For Ad-aware alone, there have been more than 90 million downloads just from Download.com.

Once these programs are on your system, you need to make sure they are updated. AVG and Zone Alarm have automatic updating; the others need to be updated by clicking a button.

Ad-Aware and Spybot specialise in removing spies and malware from your system. They each will remove some bad things the other does not, so I use them both.

When running Ad-Aware, first do an update to check for the newest definition files. After updating, run the program. If the program finds items which need to be removed, you'll see a display of the items suggested for removal. If there are no check marks in the boxes to the left of the item name, right-click in the frame and choose the "Select All" option. This will check all the items for you. Click on "Next" to move the items to a quarantine

area. Once quarantined, the items are removed and will refrain from causing you any problems. If you remove something you really need, you can go to the quarantine area and recover the item to have it restored.

Upon installation of Spybot, the program will search for updates and give you the opportunity to download them. Do so. Updates are good. After updating, run the Immunizer to make sure you block about 2,000+ bad sites. Once updated, go to "Search & Destroy" to begin searching for more than 24,000 (as of this writing) spies, malware, Trojans and other bad things, which if found, will be removed from your system.

One of the features included with Spybot that I recommend is called "Tea Timer". This feature advises you every time a change is proposed for your startup files. Viruses, worms and Trojans will often insert instructions into the startup files. By utilising Tea Timer, you can determine if a change to these files should be permitted or not. The logic of whether or not to allow a change is simple: if you just installed some software and you're prompted for a change, it's probably ok. But if you're prompted for a change and you did not just install new software, just click NO. When in doubt, keep it out. You can always add it in later.

CWShredder can be used to remove a specific group of web search files that can hijack your browser to take you to certain websites and use specific search engines, whether you want to or

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not. The shredder removes those web search hijackers.

Zone Alarm is a terrific firewall that advises you of every attempt made by your computer to access the Internet, and of each attempt by the Internet to access your computer. At first it may seem like an annoyance, but once you catch on to the rhythm of how it works, it will greatly reduce the number of unauthorised Internet accesses without your consent. The program runs in the background, and gives you the chance to let it learn which Internet sites are acceptable and which aren't. For example, the first time you go to do on-line banking, you may see a message asking you if you want to go to a specific site. If you say "NO," you won't be able to reach your bank's web site. Don't be alarmed. Try your bank again, and when you're prompted to see if you really want to go to the bank's site, then check the box "Remember this site" and click on the "Allow" button. The next time you want to go to the bank's site you'll get right in.

AVG Antivirus is a good antivirus program, self-updating, and will scan e-mail as well as perform a regular antivirus scan. You can even setup automatic virus checking to have your system scanned when it's convenient for you. With AVG you can, as Ron Popeil says, "Set it and Forget it!"

The last component of my protection package is Panicware's Popup Stopper. This handy pop-up blocker actually works. And if your bank's web site uses pop-ups which are being stopped, you can hold down the control key to temporarily disable the stopper to

let you receive pop-ups you actually want. You can also open the control center and disable the stopper at any time if the handy control key feature doesn't do the job for you.

So this flu season you can get added protection by using the software described above, and minimise your downtime.

Driver Banned 12 Months Fine Five Thousand Pounds

Reported in the Daily Express a man used garage opening device to jam speed trap, he claimed it was fitted by accident when he had a Sat Nav fitted, he was charged with perverting the course of justice and could have faced a lengthy term of imprisonment, the fine 5.000 and 12 months ban was imposed was, under the circumstances very light.

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