



Sandwich
Computer
Users Group

Scug News

July 2009

Newsletter of the Sandwich Computer Users Group

WWW.SCUG.ORG

Last Month

Last month, for our June program, Bob Greenwalt demonstrated how to checkout audio books from NetLibrary. He also talked about various MP3 players needed to play them.

July Program – Annual Pot Luck / Swap Meet

July will be our annual Pot Luck / Swap Meet. The potluck supper consists of bringing your favorite dish to pass and your family (optional). (*See “July Pot Luck Dishes” for the entries that were on the sign up sheet to help eliminate duplication of entries.*) For the swap meet bring your extra unused computer treasures to sell or swap with others.

Setup will start at 5:00pm and we will eat at 6:00pm. *Table Service, Coffee and Iced Tea will be furnished.* This meeting is always a fun/low tech gathering and has more to do about socializing than computers so be sure to attend and get to know the other side of our members.

We meet at the Federated Church in Sandwich 403 N. Main Street on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00pm unless noted otherwise. The meeting is a great place to learn about computers and meet new friends. Next meeting is July 16, 2009. Visit our web site at www.scug.org for more info.

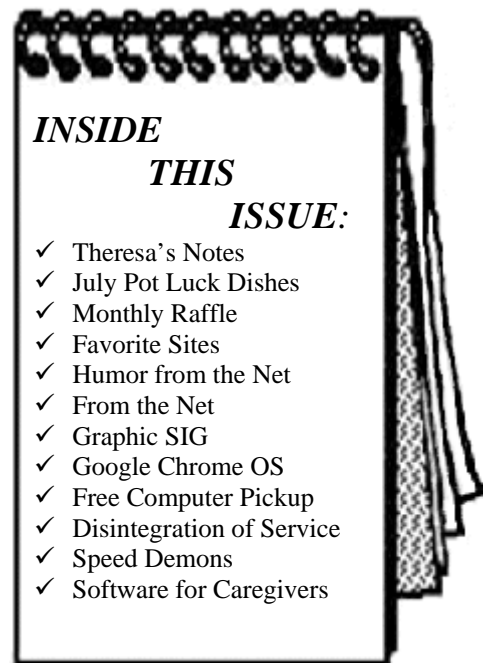
Membership forms are available at:

http://www.scug.org/About_us.htm

Local Business Celebrates 25th Anniversary



The Office Works in Plano is celebrating 25 years in business this year. *Congratulations to a great local business.*



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Hours:

Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m.— 6:00 p.m.

Sat 9:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m.

Sunday Closed

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July Birthdays

7/2 William Hacker
7/8 Art Fehrman
7/21 Bill Beer
7/6 Roberta Dykstra
7/20 Debbie Olson
7/24 Margaret Lyman
7/26 Don Kiminky

August Birthdays

8/4 Gerry Black
8/7 Kathy Weekly
8/18 Jerry Grommes
8/24 Dutch Harkins
8/28 Alice Michalowski
8/29 Hugh McDermott
8/4 John Fleming
8/12 Nick Scull
8/20 Linda Coffin
8/25 John Niemann
8/28 Evan Bagg
8/31 Stacey Johnson
8/31 Phyllis O'Connell

Theresa's Notes

Theresa's Notes:

Bob Greenwalt did a very nice program reference Net Library. We had 35 members present and no guests. We will have our Potluck in July. Set up is at 5:00 p.m. and anyone that is available to help would be greatly appreciated. We will eat at 6:00 p.m.

Do not forget to bring your raffle item for the Club Raffle.

Theresa Bagg

July Pot Luck Dishes

The following have signed up for what they are bringing for their dish to pass:

Alice M.Casserole-pineapple
Jerry and Deb KellDessert
Louise.....Salad
Roberta.....Stuffed shells
Theresa.....Working woman's salad
George Bell.....Homemade bread
Sandy HenneCauliflower salad
Mrs. Hacker.....Casserole
Deb OlsonBaked spaghetti
Betty.....Hot cups, plastic silverware
Laura Caupert.....Couscous salad
Gail Mikyska.....Pasta salad
Tom SmithVegetable salad bowl
Jerry G.....Potato salad

Monthly Raffle

Monthly Raffle

Ah, Summer - picnics with great food, swimming, gardening, fresh vegetables and the member's raffle, what more could you want? I am looking forward to the July raffle.

My top ten reasons:

10. It's a surprise - don't know what's coming...
9. You shopped, not me!
8. A great chance to get rid of the Christmas gift you did not like.
7. Clear profit for our Christmas gift fund.
6. Chances are, that something will catch your eye!
5. No hauling in the raffle prizes!
4. No thinking of a theme!
3. Jerry promised to give me my crown back as raffle queen.
2. July special - buy 5 tickets for \$5 and get a sixth ticket FREE!!!
1. If you don't like the raffle prizes, you can't blame me!

Don't forget to bring your donations. If you don't bring them, I can't raffle them off and then you know what comes next! Either I will have to cry or I will get laid off again as "Raffle Queen!"

Shop early - buy often...

*Debbie Olson
The Queen on the throne again!*

Favorite Sites

Looking for some good deals in our local area try the online version of WSPY's Trading Post.

<http://www.mytpost.com>

A celebration of American life in better times. Grab a Slice and a Coke and enjoy!

<http://www.billsretroworld.com/index.htm>

GrowingBolder.com the world's first multimedia lifestyle and social networking portal for the 50+ demographic.

<http://growingbolder.com>

This 89-year-old woman has a car that has outlasted 3 husbands. She has put more than 540,000 miles on her Mercury Comet and whenever possible buys parts that carry a lifetime warranty. (*Her lifetime battery has been replaced 16 times - Watch the Video*)

<http://tinyurl.com/ltj4c>

Jerry Grommes

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Humor from the Net

A Catholic guy goes into the confessional box. He notices on one side a fully equipped bar with Guinness on tap. On the other wall is a dazzling array of the finest Cuban cigars.

Then the priest comes in.

The man says, "Father, forgive me, for it's been a very long time since I've been to confession, but I must first admit that the confessional box is much more inviting these days,"

The priest replies, "Get out. You're sitting on my side."

From the Net

Subject: Wasp Spray

I have a friend who is a receptionist in a church in a high risk area who was concerned about someone coming into the office on Monday to rob them when they were counting the collection. She asked the local police department about using pepper spray and they recommended to her that she get a can of wasp spray instead. The wasp spray, they told her, can shoot up to twenty feet away and is a lot more accurate, while with the pepper spray they have to get too close to you and could overpower you. The wasp spray temporarily blinds an attacker until they get to the hospital for an antidote.

She keeps a can on her desk in the office and it doesn't attract attention from people like a can of pepper spray would. She also keeps one nearby at home for home protection. Thought this was interesting and might be of use.

Editors Note: Check out Snopes for the Pros & Cons before using Wasp Spray as a self defense.

<http://www.snopes.com/crime/prevent/waspspray.asp>

FW: Save US Jobs

Hi Everyone,

I want to share with you some great information that I found out purely by accident. I believe it can also save and create jobs in America while giving people better customer service.

So how many times have you called a companies service phone line and found that the representative can barely speak English? Once with a major mortgage company it was so bad I demanded to speak with someone who spoke English. Right at that moment I broke the code, the secret password for customer service.

Come to find out that every American company using overseas operators must transfer you to an American representative by saying..... "I want to speak to a representative in America". (Don't take no for an answer on this)

This was confirmed by the American representative that they must transfer you after that request. I've tried it on a half a dozen major companies including cable, bank, phone and mortgage companies. It works every time and I actually get my issues taken care of.

Editors Note: This one is "*Undetermined*" but certainly worth a try.

<http://www.snopes.com/politics/business/servicerep.asp>

Subject: Illinois to start using Photo Radar in July!

Illinois will begin using photo radar in freeway work zones in July. One mile per hour over the speed limit and the machine will get you a nice \$375.00 ticket in the mail. Beginning July 1st, the State of Illinois will begin using the speed cameras in areas designated as "Work Zones" on major freeways. Anyone caught by these devices will be mailed a \$375.00 ticket for the FIRST offense. The SECOND offense will cost \$1000.00 and comes with a 90-Day suspension. Drivers will also receive demerit points against their license, which allow insurance companies to raise Insurance rates.

This is the harshest penalty structure ever set for a governmental unit involving PHOTO speed enforcement. The State already has two camera vans on line issuing tickets 24/7 in work zones with speed limits lowered to 45 MPH. Photos of both the Driver's face and License plate are taken. Pass this on to everyone you know who might be affected!!!

Editors Note: While this is true, the law dates back to 2004. Take the time and read this June 2009 Press Release that explains what is going on this summer. (*They now have 5 vans deployed across the state.*)

<http://www.dot.state.il.us/press/r062409.html>

Graphics SIG

May Graphics SIG

There were nine people at June's Graphic SIG and they had lots of interesting questions. Of course, Jerry answered them all. Among the answers and demonstrations, topics covered were "searching for 'things' "in BING – Microsoft's new search engine. "Things" were found more readily there than in any other search engine.

IE8 was discussed and loaded onto Laura's computer and a short tour was given. Speakeasy, a program for testing speed was demonstrated.

Then – we finally got around to graphics! Pictures were edited for increased sharpness, and then printed with different resolutions, both through Windows Live Photo Gallery and Microsoft Digital Image Pro. The use of Faststone Capture was also demonstrated. It was a great SIG.

Laura Caupert

Google Chrome OS

Introducing the Google Chrome OS

7/07/2009 09:37:00 PM

It's been an exciting nine months since we launched the Google Chrome browser. Already, over 30 million people use it regularly. We designed Google Chrome for people who live on the web — searching for information, checking email, catching up on the news, shopping or just staying in touch with friends. However, the operating systems that browsers run on were designed in an era where there was no web. So today, we're announcing a new project that's a natural extension of Google Chrome — the Google Chrome Operating System. It's our attempt to re-think what operating systems should be.

Google Chrome OS is an open source, lightweight operating system that will initially be targeted at netbooks. Later this year we will open-source its code, and netbooks running Google Chrome OS will be available for consumers in the second half of 2010. Because we're already talking to partners about the project, and we'll soon be working with the open source community, we wanted to share our vision now so everyone understands what we are trying to achieve.

Speed, simplicity and security

Speed, simplicity and security are the key aspects of Google Chrome OS. We're designing the OS to be fast and lightweight, to start up and get you onto the web in a few

seconds. The user interface is minimal to stay out of your way, and most of the user experience takes place on the web. And as we did for the Google Chrome browser, we are going back to the basics and completely redesigning the underlying security architecture of the OS so that users don't have to deal with viruses, malware and security updates. It should just work.

Google Chrome OS will run on both x86 as well as ARM chips and we are working with multiple OEMs to bring a number of netbooks to market next year. The software architecture is simple — Google Chrome running within a new windowing system on top of a Linux kernel. For application developers, the web is the platform. All web-based applications will automatically work and new applications can be written using your favorite web technologies. And of course, these apps will run not only on Google Chrome OS, but on any standards-based browser on Windows, Mac and Linux thereby giving developers the largest user base of any platform.

Google Chrome OS is a new project, separate from Android. Android was designed from the beginning to work across a variety of devices from phones to set-top boxes to netbooks. Google Chrome OS is being created for people who spend most of their time on the web, and is being designed to power computers ranging from small netbooks to full-size desktop systems. While there are areas where Google Chrome OS and Android overlap, we believe choice will drive innovation for the benefit of everyone, including Google.

Computers need to get better

We hear a lot from our users and their message is clear — computers need to get better. People want to get to their email instantly, without wasting time waiting for their computers to boot and browsers to start up. They want their computers to always run as fast as when they first bought them. They want their data to be accessible to them wherever they are and not have to worry about losing their computer or forgetting to back up files. Even more importantly, they don't want to spend hours configuring their computers to work with every new piece of hardware, or have to worry about constant software updates. And any time our users have a better computing experience, Google benefits as well by having happier users who are more likely to spend time on the Internet.

We have a lot of work to do, and we're definitely going to need a lot of help from the open source community to accomplish this vision. We're excited for what's to come and we hope you are too. Stay tuned for more updates in the fall and have a great summer.

Posted by Sundar Pichai, VP Product Management and Linus Upson, Engineering Director

Free Computer Pickup

While surfing www.mytpost.com, I came across the following ad:

Wanted - Junk or unwanted outdated computers. No need to haul your old computer stuff away I will come to you. Any data on hard drives will be wiped securely. All equipment will be recycled responsibly. Please email me with what you need hauled away. Thanks!

Taking the following but not limited to: laptops, desktop towers, monitors (LCD & CRT), mice, printers, scanners, power cords, loose parts, fax machines, copiers, network servers etc.

The e-mail address for the selected item is:
mpaclair@mchsi.com

So I emailed Mike for permission to run his ad in our NL and here is his reply:

Yes that would be great. I was looking at your website and that would nice of you. Even if you want to work something out like at I meeting every once in awhile if people want to bring stuff in all the same day.

Just a thought to save me some trips. Mike

Jerry Grommes

Disintegration of Service

The Disintegration of Service.

Written by Jerry Goldstein, Vice President and Newsletter Editor, The PC Users Group of Connecticut
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Want to make a free over sea calls to India? Just call for technical support on your computer, Internet service, or cable service. You are likely to be routed overseas to India. You then get the pleasure of talking to the "well trained" script readers. About the only thing they are trained for is to tell you: "Yes, very much I can help you". You hear this phrase whenever you call for tech support. The techs use that phrase to hide the fact that they are spending that time to check their index sheets for key words in what you told them was your problem. They then turn to that page in their script book and start reading off a page that is supposed to match your problem. The key word is "supposed". Reality is far from tech support fantasy.

Tech support used to mean reaching a person knowledgeable in the problem you were calling about. Now it is a means the manufacturers and utility suppliers use to avoid dealing with customers. There was a time when the support staff knew and understood computers. But then the corporations came up with the idea of making support calls difficult. They figured we would be less likely to complain if doing so was difficult. It is not bad enough instructions are written by non-English speaking people. Now we have to get the instructions interpreted by someone who failed a course in English as a second language. Which is pretty tough to do in India, a country where English, along with Hindi, is the official language. (I won't even go into how all those people in India suddenly have American names like Jack and John when they join tech support.)

I know my patience has a limit. I test it regularly when I call for Tech Support. Thanks to the service quality of my utility, cable, and Internet providers I get to test my patience all too often.

Tech support did get smarter, though not for the better or to the benefit of the consumer. Used to be you could ask for a supervisor and be moved up to someone in the states. Now tech support in India has their own supervisors who are as good as the base level worker at helping. Pretty much no help at all.

If you are lucky enough to be moved up the ladder to what is often called the "corporate escalation department" you will find your anger escalate as well. Corporate only works business hours and Monday through Friday, sometimes. Holidays or any other excuse, means you won't reach corporate help. What will corporate escalation do when you get there? Route you to the technical support staff in the states you needed from the beginning. But first you need to wait 24 hours for a return contact. Oy*

How do I know so well how tech support fails to work? I am my family and business's IT person. That means I am often on the phone with tech support. I recently spent five days without Internet service thanks to Earthlink's outsourcing it's tech support to India. After days of trying to get Earthlink to fix the problem I called the line provider that Earthlink uses and had them fix the problem myself. Total outsourcing.

Is there a way to avoid all this? There are less chances everyday as corporate America outsources its human interface with its customers. Can we do anything about it? Sure. When looking at what to buy, or a service to use, take into consideration how the manufacturer or provider will support its product. Use products and services that support you as a human and not as a joke.

* = For those few unfamiliar with "Oy" please click [HERE](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oy_vey) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oy_vey)



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Speed Demons

Speed Demons

Written by Bill Roman, Advisor to the Board of Directors,
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There is an issue that I feel must be addressed, since the issue continues to come up on a regular basis. As a PC technician I constantly get asked why the clients' computer has become so slow, and if there is anything wrong with it.

The first thing I tell the client is that there are two main culprits that contribute to a PC becoming very sluggish. The first being lack of RAM memory. This answer usually elicits a quick response from the user that they "only do e-mail, Internet and word processing" or some similar response. I then go into a discussion with the user that there are two kinds of memory in a computer: hard drive storage, which holds all their music, pictures, documents, etc. and RAM, or working memory. A user could have plenty of hard drive space to store all of their documents and stuff, but when they don't have enough RAM, the computer will, over time, become slower and slower.

Why you ask? When the computer was originally purchased (usually somewhere between 2 and 5 years ago) Windows XP, in this case, required about 512MB of RAM to run properly. As Windows critical security updates and service packs are installed, as well as upgrades and updates to all sorts of programs used on a daily basis (antivirus, Internet Explorer, AOL, Adobe Reader and Flash Player, printer updates, etc), the programs NEVER get smaller, always bigger.

Now, several years later and the programs being used are double or triple in size, but the computer is the same one with the same specs as when it was purchased. Adding more

RAM memory is a quick, cheap way to improve performance to an aging computer, and extend life before a replacement is in order. Windows XP should have at least 1024 MB (1GB) of RAM to run properly, and Windows Vista (32bit) needs 3GB of RAM. More is not better in the case of Vista for technical reasons I will not go into in this article.

This is only half the battle. The other half is to beat down what I will call the "moochers". Years ago when I would inspect a computer for sluggish performance, it was usually because of a rogue game that was installed. Back then quite a few games adopted the theory that the only reason you owned your \$3000 or \$4000 computer (yes, it was that much back then, even more depending on how far back you go) was to play some ridiculous \$49 game. The game would change many settings that allowed the game to work properly, but made it miserable to perform simple tasks like type a letter.

Now, in 2009 every program under the sun assumes that they are the main focus, and must be given priority at all times. What does this mean to you, the end user? Each time when an upgraded revision of Adobe Reader comes out it always wants to include the new "MSN Toolbar" or "Yahoo Toolbar" etc. This adds unnecessary junk to your browser, which slows down getting online. In addition, many of these programs load an additional program when Windows starts to speed it up when starting it. This is just lousy practice that is a very poor substitute for tight efficient programming. If the program was small and lean there would be no need for "speed loaders," which make your computer take an exorbitant amount of time for Windows to start.

Not to pick on, but a classic example of this is how much Apple's iTunes has grown through the years. iTunes 6 which was released in January 2006 was about 35MB in size. iTunes 7.5 was 52MB and iTunes 8.1 (the current release) is now up to 70MB. The program is twice as large only three years later, and loads a number of programs when Windows starts to aid loading this memory hog.

What to do about this? In short be mindful when installing updated programs to unselect add on toolbars and, if available, to kick them out of starting up when Windows loads. I have discussed at our local computer club meetings to do your best to keep running processes to a minimum. By clicking control, alt, delete once (with no programs active) will bring up the task manager and show how many processes are running. A good number for Windows XP is less than 35, and for Vista it's about 45.

Startup Cop and the free CCleaner utilities have the ability to disable or remove programs from starting, but I would check online in a Google search before disabling anything unless certain. I do hope this article sheds some light on the subject of pokey computers. Remember, it's not so much the hardware as it is software that kills a computer! Until next time!

Software for Caregivers

Free Software Helps Caregivers

Written by Mike Morris
Editor, Front Range PC Users Group, Fort Collins, CO
kByte™ Newsletter, June 2009
<http://www.frpcug.org>
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An article with the title “Caring for the Caregiver” appeared in the November/December 2007 issue of AARP magazine¹. Here is an extract from that article:

“A cascade of studies in recent years has shown that caregivers stand at particular risk for a host of mental and physical illnesses, many of which have roots in stress, exhaustion, and self-neglect—symptoms some medical professionals have begun calling caregiver syndrome. . . . According to a 2004 national survey by AARP and The National Alliance for Caregiving, nearly 23 million households are currently home to a caregiver, most often a woman who is taking care of someone 50 or older. Some 43 percent of these caregivers are over 50 themselves—13 percent are over 65—and they spend good chunks of their weeks on a heady range of chores, from medication management and bathing to feeding, clothing, and arranging health care services. . . . Unfortunately for many friends and family members of caregivers, it is difficult to know when to step in—or what to do. . . .”

I recommend this article to all caregivers, and to friends and family members of caregivers. Yes, it is difficult for friends and family members of caregivers to know what to do. It can also be overwhelming for a caregiver to add another task—coordinating help from those friends and family members—to an already burdensome schedule. Both caregivers and those willing to help may find a scheduling solution with a web site called Lotsa Helping Hands.com. This web site allows a caregiver or family member to: “Create a free of charge, private, web-based community to organize family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues – a family’s ‘circles of community’ — during times of need. . . .”

<http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com>

There are three primary templates:

1. Caregiving
2. Eldercare and Long Term Care
3. Military and Veterans Families

There are four additional templates:

1. Volunteering
2. Parenting
3. Schools
4. Religious Groups

These templates allow one person to coordinate the activities of others by identifying the needs and allowing volunteers to accept tasks. All of this activity takes place online, relieving the caregiver of the burden of many phone calls and separate schedules. For those familiar with Google Documents™, there is a slight similarity between the two. However, the Lotsa Helping Hands templates are designed specifically for caregiving situations:

“Each community includes an intuitive group calendar for scheduling tasks such as meals delivery and rides, a platform for securely sharing vital medical, financial, and legal information with designated family members, and customizable sections for posting photos, well wishes, blogs, journals, and messages.

Now, when someone asks ‘what can I do to help?’ the answer is ‘give me your name and email address’ – the system takes over and allows people to sign up and start helping.”

A web based service such as Lotsa Helping Hands is certain to generate questions about privacy and security. You will find answers to these questions in the “Terms of use” page of the web site. Included in the Terms are descriptions of the data security, data integrity and access (among other) protections.

[Note: The scheduling features are not dependent upon the use of private information. It is not necessary to include medical, financial or legal information on the web site—although that information is protected].

Lotsa Helping Hands has many non-profit partners, including the Alzheimer’s Association, the Family Caregiver Alliance, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and many more. Check the Partners page of the Lotsa Helping Hands web site for more information.

You can read what national media, such as Business Week, NY Times and others have to say about Lotsa Helping Hands by clicking on the links on the Media page of the Lotsa Helping Hands web site.

I have not personally used this service, although there was a time, not so long ago, when I would have used it had I known about it. After reading the description of the service, and the “How It Works” section of the web site, I am convinced that the service is, indeed, very valuable and also secure. I recommend that caregivers try this service. There is at least the potential to reduce your levels of stress and exhaustion associated with your role of caregiver.

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1. Crute, Sherre, “Caring for the Caregiver.” AARP Magazine, November and December, 2007