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Media Show 4 by Cyberlink

**A review by Terry Oden, President, Mountain Computer User Group,
Young Harris, GA. www.mcug.org**

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There may be hundreds of ways to gather, store, view, edit and show off your pictures and videos. This is one of the best and easiest I have found so far. Your own operating system will do a fairly good job of getting your pictures and videos into your computer for you. On the net you also have programs that are free like Picassa, Flickr and YouTube which all do a very good job of storing and displaying your own work to family and friends.

One of the things that I liked best about Media Show was ease of operation. There are only 5 buttons to control the whole program.

Starting with the # 1 button, or the Home button, here you can see all of your different folders and how many pictures or videos you have in each folder.

For the # 2 button you have Create. Here you can do things like make your own Screensaver, compose a movie or DVD. You can print your own pictures or order prints online.

Next you have the # 3 button or the Share button. Here you can share your pictures with friends and family or upload them to Flickr. Also, you can upload them to YouTube with a single click of your mouse, if desired.

The next button # 4 is the View button, here you can adjust the size of your thumbnails or add any captions to your pictures. You can

also change the color of the skin of the program (appearance).

The last button or # 5 is the Folder Tools button. Here you edit, sort, locate, delete or hide some pictures if you like.

Media Show 4 is one of the top programs when it comes to ease of operation, not to mention what the finished product will look like. To create a movie or slideshow with sound, motion and fading, you only have to make about three clicks of the mouse. First you have to decide if you want background music or not, next select what format you want to use, and where to save your work in your computer. Yes, you do have to tell it what pictures or videos to use! At last, all you do is click the Burn button and that's it. Zap you're done!

To create a DVD it's very easy. First decide on a name for your DVD. Then pick out a menu style for your DVD. Now comes the hard part. You must decide which videos you want to use and if you want any still pictures in it or not. Yes, once again you have to tell the program which videos or pictures you want to use. Next, click on the preview button to see what your work looks like. If you like it, click on the Burn button and you're done.

System Requirements

- Windows Vista/XP (with DirectX 9 or above)

- 800×600 Screen Resolution
- Printer
- Intel Pentium D 3.0 GHz, AMD Athlon 64 3500+ or above
- PCI sound card or onboard audio
- 512 MB RAM minimum, 1GB recommended
- 1 GB hard disk space required, 20 GB recommended for DVD production
- Intel 945GM or above, 64 MB VRAM or above graphics card
- DVD burner (DVD+R/RW or DVD-R/RW) is required to burn content onto DVDs
- Cameras via removable disk interface—cameras support Windows; Camcorder DV devices via IEEE 1394 (Firewire)
- An Internet connection is required for some upload/download features.

As for the overall way the program works, I've not found a program this large at this cost that operates so easily and simply. I have found no shortcomings with this program yet. This is the best program for the money that can be found, under \$50.

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Hacking 101

by Marjie Tucker, Editor, Mountain Computer User Group,
Young Harris, GA, www.mcug.org

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We are being bombarded with warnings about securing our data and the entry to our computers. Do you ever wonder what the big fuss is all about? How can a hacker possibly get into your data? And, what would he be looking for? Let's spend some time answering those questions.

How Does A Hacker Get In To Your Computer?

When you give your computer access to the Internet, you need an IP (Internet Protocol) address. The IP addresses that we are currently using have 4 octets with periods between them. They will be something like 192.168.100.1. When you access the Internet, that address is read by the router, modem, whatever that links you to your Internet Service Provider. Then it is read by the routers that route all the data through the Internet. This address makes it possible for you to send data, such as email or requests for web pages. And, in turn, that same address is used to direct incoming email and web pages into your computer. There are several websites and programs available that will translate these IP addresses into the name of the company that purchased them. In many cases, like our residential usages, the company name will be the ISP. For commercial use, it will be the name of the company that rents the block of IP addresses. Hackers use this IP address information to find their targets much like we use a physical address to find a house or office.

Once a hacker finds out your IP address, it's relatively simple to send your computer a Trojan horse program, spyware, or a virus that will open a port that you usually don't use. Once that port has been opened, he

can freely enter into your operating system and browse around just like he was there in person. He would look for programs that store valuable data like social security numbers and credit card account numbers. (Do you have that information entered into your Quicken or Money program?)

He would look through your My Documents folder for password lists and search your Internet Explorer favorites for financial sites where you saved the username and password. And, before he leaves he usually plants another Trojan horse that will give him the ability to take control of your computer in the future.

Commercial Websites

The most common way to hack into a company's website through the Internet is by using a Denial of Service attack. These DoS attacks use multiple computers to overload a website with bogus requests for information. The hacker usually creates a Trojan horse program that he sends into the computers of unsuspecting people (remember that program that was left behind when your computer was invaded above?) The message that he creates usually contains a header saying that it comes from an IP address that doesn't exist. When he is ready to attack, he calls up all the computers that he infected with his Trojan horse and tells them to contact a specific IP address. Those computers follow his instructions and send his preprogrammed message to that website. Servers that control websites always check to verify that IP addresses requesting information or webpage downloads are legitimate addresses. When a server is hit by a bombardment of these false address

requests, it tries to track down every one of the fake addresses. Before long the server becomes overwhelmed by the fruitless process and crashes. When it crashes, the website will vanish and the hacker will be given access to a prompt for the server. He can then use Linux or DOS commands to request and view information on that server.

How About Wireless?

Let's put this hacker into an airport where hundreds of people are sharing a wireless network. It's like leaving a child alone in a candy store. In this case, the airport's wireless system usually provides the IP addresses through DHCP and he can easily look at the list of addresses that have been supplied. He can test each of the addresses for available ports, and it's quick work to access the most vulnerable. The same principles apply in hotels and restaurants that provide wireless Internet access. If you have a wireless network in your home, our hacker can drive down your street using a laptop or PDA to search for wireless networks. This process is called Wardriving. If he finds one that has not been secured at all, he doesn't even have a challenge. If you have added a password, he simply has to crack the password.

What Tools Do They Use?

It's very easy for a potential hacker to find the tools of his trade. There are many websites that offer program tools and tutorials for using them. Here are some of the most popular:

Anonymizers and Remailers—

Anonymizers are online services that eliminate the trail of information that

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FastStone Capture

**A Review by Ron Hirsch, a Member and Contributing Editor
of the Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida, www.brcs.org**

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The Best Screen Capture Program I've Ever Used

Since it is possible that some of you may not know what a “screen capture program” is, I'll start off by defining that program type.

What is a Screen Capture?

When you are working on your computer, the material you are working on/looking at, is displayed on your monitor screen, as a bunch of pixels. Often, it is nice to be able to “save” the info onscreen, or parts of it, for further uses.

Windows does offer a “Print Screen” capability, to send info to the clipboard or printer, but as with many of Windows utilities, it's a pretty barren utility, with very few options. Fortunately, there are several third party utilities out there, one of which I consider the best I've ever used.

My History With FastStone

When I started using FastStone Capture in early 2007, it was still freeware, with a request to send in a “contribution,” if one liked it. I liked it so much, I sent off a contribution immediately, and received a very nice “Thank You.”

Shortly after my contribution, it became a “paid for” utility. For \$19.95, you get the program, and updates are free forever. There is a 30-day free trial period, during which you can use a fully functional version, to convince yourself that this is indeed a program that you want to keep using.

Links

FastStone Main Site—The link to the FastStone site is: www.faststone.org. While here,

check out the other excellent programs, all of which are free, or click on the Download button for FastStone Capture to download it.

FastStone Capture Page—The link to the page for this program is: www.faststone.org/FSCaptureDetail.htm, or just click on the “capture” program when you are on the first link noted above.

Ways To Use Screen Captures

Below, I've included some of the ways I use this screen capture program—which, by the way, I use just about every time I'm on my computer.

Remember, this program can capture a wide variety of areas on your screen—see the listing below in one of the screen captured images.

1. Have you ever installed something where a variety of screens and dialog boxes came up, and had to be filled in with info for various options, etc.? Sometime later on—weeks, months, or even years, you need to know what info and options you filled in. No problem—just save each screen and store the saved screens in a named folder. Then all that info is available at a moment's notice. All you have to remember is where you stored it. And you can also print out each of the screens after saving them, and file those pages in a looseleaf notebook.

2. You have some digital photos that you'd like to send to someone in an email. If you just “insert” the pix into the email message as many people do, they may come out to a very large size—much larger than you wanted, or expected. There are

of course a variety of ways to “resize” image files, but there is one that is pure simplicity. What I do is display each picture file in a program such as Windows “Picture and Fax Viewer,” or the free FastStone Viewer offered on their site. Then adjust the size of the displayed image on the screen to what you'd like the size to be in your email. Then capture the image. When inserted into your email it will be exactly the size that you captured, since it captures pixels, and monitors all have very similar pixels/inch.

3. You're on a web page, and there is something interesting that you want to save, but you don't want to print out the whole page. Just select the desired area using FastStone Capture, and save/print that area only.

4. You're watching a video on your TV, and there was an image of someone/something you wanted to capture. Just pause the video, and select the area you want in FastStone Capture. Your image is captured. Remember, screen captures are just pixels. The capture process doesn't care what created those pixels.

Remember, this capture method saves things as an “image” (I use the jpg choice). It will not save text in editable form. If you want to do that, you must copy and paste into a text editor, such as Notepad. But, if you have a program such as “Omnipage” which is generally included when you buy a flatbed scanner, you can use it to convert a jpg image of text to an editable page of text.

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is left behind. These sites use anonymous proxies that a hacker can use to access computers and servers without leaving his IP address on any log. Remailers strip the header off a message and replace it with a meaningless header that can't be traced.

Command.com—When this command is typed into a server, it will basically give you administrative rights. You can then see all the folders and files. It's also very easy for the hacker to create a new administrative account that he can re-use in the future.

Password Crackers—These programs try random passwords at lightening speeds. They are usually very successful.

Key Loggers—Hackers frequently install these on computers, especially public PCs. The programs actually record every stroke that you make. Hence, when you type in a username and password, it has been captured.

Port Knocking—This is a method of externally opening ports on a firewall by mimicking the process you normally use to add a port to your firewall.

Wireshark—This popular program captures and analyzes the data on a network. It's used by hackers to find information they want and it's also used by network administrators to manage networks.

Aircrack—This program is used to crack wireless WEP and WPA passwords.

Metasploit Framework—This is a tool that can be used by hackers to search the Internet for sites that have dubious code. These are the sites that are the easiest to hack—especially when this program does the searching for you.

Networks identifying the types of data and the internal addresses of

this data—It's a valuable tool for administrators, but can save a great deal of time for a hacker.

NMAP—This is a port scanner. Since a hacker knows that he needs to use a port to access your computer or network, he can use this program to see which ports you have open.

NetStumbler—This program finds any wireless networks that are in range. Wardrivers drive through residential neighborhoods using NetStumbler to search for available wireless networks.

Kismet—This program takes NetStumbler one step farther. It searches for wireless networks that are not broadcasting their SSID.

NSLookup—If you type a domain name into this program, it will give you the company's IP address

Traceroute—This is a very valuable troubleshooting tool for technicians. It will trace a packet on its route through the Internet. It shows every IP address it visits along the way.

Snort—This is an open-source intrusion detection system. It shows traffic analysis and packet logging on networks.

TCPdump—This is the most widely used network sniffer/analyzer for UNIX networks.

Net Cat—This has been called the Swiss Army program for hackers. It performs many sniffing and cracking tasks.

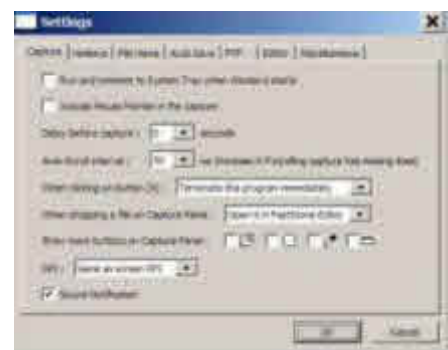
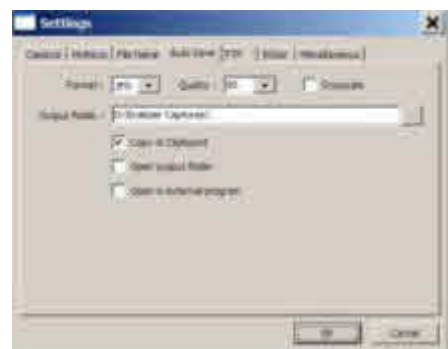
This was really just some of the basics. But, if we know why security is so important, we may remember to take the right precautions. Hope your web surfing stays secure.

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(FastStone—continued from page 3)

The images below are several of the screens and drop-down menus from FastStone. The choices available to the user are well thought out and very useful. Note all the various options for what can be chosen to get saved, and the hot keys for these choices.

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Hewie's Views and Reviews

by Hewie Poplock, Windows SIG Chair, Vice Pres, Past President,
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Welcome to this issue of Hewie's Views & Reviews. Be sure to visit Hewie's Favorites at www.hewie.net.

My iPhone Choice

Recently the new iPhone 3G was released. Since I have one of the original units, I watched with anticipation for news about the new units and services. With the release, the faster web speeds was enticing, but spending more for the same service just didn't pass the justification test.

I have decided to keep using my iPhone 2G. (I don't know if that is an accurate description.) There are several reasons for my decision. With the new phones, came an updated operating system, which is a free upgrade for my unit. Even though there were some Apple system-wide down times, I was able to upgrade my unit from version 1.1.4 to 2.0.0 on the release day. I did get some errors and had to try a second time, but it upgraded successfully.

With the upgrade, I have much of the same functionality of the new 3G phones. I can download and install any of the third party programs that are now available. The new 3G is not needed to use them. I will discuss some of those programs in a future column.

I don't have the increased connection speed of the 3G network, but much of Florida is not covered anyway. The I-4 corridor from Daytona to Tampa has 3G coverage, but if I get a few miles off of the Interstate, I will not be able to take advantage of the new speed.

The older unit cannot do GPS, but does access Google maps and I have a separate GPS unit, anyway. Other than it being newer, the iPhone 3G holds no advantages for me to pay an extra \$10 for the same service. If I want to keep the 200 per month text messages there is an additional \$5, plus the \$199 or \$299 for the phone. I will keep using my original iPhone.

When a Special isn't and really is, or My Homer Simpson Moment

Last month I talked about the 2 Logitech USB optical mice that I bought from 1saleaday for about \$5 each plus \$5 each for shipping. One of the mice worked great and the other was DOA (dead on arrival). When I emailed the seller, they offered to credit my account if I returned the bad one. That's nice of them, except the shipping would equal the refund, so I kept the useless unit.

At a tech meeting that I attended (The Tech SIG of CFCS), I talked about the situation and mentioned that the good mouse didn't have a battery and wondered how it worked. Everyone said that it must have a battery. I searched Google for the model to see if I could find a manual. The mice were shipped in plastic zip-locked bags with no documentation or product information.

I not only couldn't find any info, but found that the model was a Canadian unit, and not available in the US. When the good mouse died, I decided to open one of them. I pushed and pulled all of the buttons and cracks and a cover came off. Inside, there was a battery. I replaced the battery and the mouse again was working.

I then retrieved the other mouse from the throw-away box and opened it up. There was no battery inside and I inserted the one AA needed. When I connected it to my laptop, the DOA mouse worked! "Duh" was my reaction.

I want to publicly apologize to 1saleaday.com (www.1saleaday.com). They were generous in offering me a refund and I was being a Homer Simpson by not realizing there should be a battery inside and to check it. I guess that's why tech support always asks if the computer is plugged in before trying to solve a problem.

New additions to Hewie's Favorites
There are more new sites this issue, because we skipped a month.

USA.gov, www.usa.gov—U.S. Government's Official Web Portal for all government transactions, services, and information. It provides direct online access to federal, state, local and tribal governments.

HP Smart Web Printing, h20247.www2.hp.com/hho/cache/482779-0-0-225-121.html—Software to print usable web pages without cut off edges and blank pages

by-expression, by-expression.com/content/resources.aspx—Expression Web forum and tutorials

Spam Return, www.spamreturn.com—Protect your privacy and avoid spam. Use Spam Return where no registration is required, no sign-up.

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Elance, www.elance.com/p/landing/buyer.html—Outsourcing to freelance programmers, web & logo designers, copywriters, illustrators and consultants

timeanddate.com,
timeanddate.com—Info that is time and date related, such as yearly and monthly calendars, countdown counters and world clock which shows current time in cities all over the world.

jooce.com, www.jooce.com—Private online desktop with public sharing capabilities. View listen or share files photos music & video.

Zamzar, www.zamzar.com—Convert files. Zamzar supports conversion between a wide variety of different file formats.

Wordle, wordle.net—Generate “word clouds” from text that you provide to use however you like.

PlanningWiz Online Room Planner, v3.planningwiz.com—Software for Furniture Retailers and Manufacturers, Building Contractors, Realtors and more.

Bobble yourself,
www.xmbaseball.com—Create a bobble head of you.

Volition®, www.volition.com/index.html—Oldest Free Stuff site on the Internet. Includes Coupons & mystery shopping info.

Password Chart,
www.passwordchart.com—Convert an easy to remember password. It works anywhere on any computer or offline & done in your browser.

JOLT, Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, jolt.merlot.org—JOLT is a peer reviewed online journal that addresses the scholarly use of multimedia resources in education.

Audiko, audiko.net—audiko is a simple service which helps you to make a ringtone of your favorite song.

JotForm, jotform.com—Web Based WYSIWYG Form Builder. Create and publish web forms using your browser.

Mygazines, www.mygazines.com—Free to browse, share, archive and customize unlimited magazine articles uploaded by the Mygazines community.

Florida Computer Crime Center,
www.fdle.state.fl.us/Fc3/—Florida Department of Law Enforcement Computer Crime Center.

Picnik, www.picnik.com—Edit photos the easy way, online in your browser.

Starting in Second Life,
www.thinkerer.org/SLintChan/SLintoch.htm—What you need to know to get started in Second Life. Lots of good help.

Buzzillions,
www.buzzillions.com—Product reviews from Verified Buyers about Digital Cameras, Sporting Goods, Appliances, Mens and Womens Shoes, Toys and Video Games, and more.

ZabaSearch,
www.zabasearch.com—Free People Search and Public Information Search Engine, Telephone Numbers and Addresses Revealed Free. No Registration Required.

YouMail, www.youmail.com/home/index.do—YouMail is a free online voicemail replacement with personal greetings.

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Outlook & Xobni, a Good Match

by **Vinny La Bash, Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida, www.spcug.org**

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Xobni is Inbox spelled backwards, but there is nothing backward about this free plug-in module from www.xobni.com. The more email you receive, the more you will like and appreciate Xobni. The program works as a data mining machine for your stored emails. Without Xobni, the best you can do with Outlook is to organize your email by folders, messages, and dates. With Xobni, you can organize your email by people, email histories, and personal, social or business relationships.

You need Outlook 2003 or 2007 to use Xobni. Either XP or Vista will work fine with the program. The folks at Xobni are also working on versions for other email programs such as Gmail and Yahoo Mail. How long this will take is unknown. Downloading and installation is quick, easy and seamless. The program requires some time to synchronize itself with Outlook. The amount of time will be determined by the size of the email database you have accumulated. I had slightly over two thousand emails in eighteen different folders, and that took about ten minutes.

If you keep a lot of information on your contacts, it's difficult to extract

that information in a way that can be useful with Outlook. All that changes once Xobni is installed. Changes begin with an attractive panel that sits on the right side of your Outlook screen and doesn't infringe or interfere with any of Outlook's standard functions. The panel interface slides open when you need it, and discretely closes when you don't.

You get two options within this panel. The first brings up a blank email which is nice. For you organizational types, the second option lets you send meeting requests. A real time saver is the simultaneous display of open time slots that Xobni drags from your Outlook calendar.

Your contact profiles display at the top of the Xobni panel with pictures if one is in the profile. That's followed by the phone number and a thread of any conversations you've had along with files you've exchanged. Specifics topics are quickly found with Xobni's search tool, and there is a handy slider that exposes or hides lines of email text. While it appears you could be getting bogged down in details, the material is organized so that navigating through the information is an

easy, pleasant journey filled with discovery.

Skype's VoIP service integrates with PC, Xobni quite well. A mouse click on a phone number within a Xobni profile generates a SkypeOut call.

You can use Xobni for simple searches within Outlook, and Xobni searching is lightning fast in comparison. That's probably because it's integrated within Outlook rather than running on top of it like most third-party applications. Xobni gives you more than express searching. It organizes social information logically with additional functions that Outlook simply can't match. How often have you given up searching with Outlook because the program lacks even the simplest logic for intelligent searching?

Instead of treating mail conversations, contacts and calendars as separate entities, Xobni weaves them together in a responsive, intuitive interface. It's hard to go wrong with this tool. Go to www.Xobni.com and get started.

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Chicago Computer Society Makes History!

by Irene Ganas, Digital Imagery SIG's Meeting for June 2008

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History was made by the Chicago Computer Society, as its Digital Imagery SIG, hosted by Sanford Kolinek, gave its first main presentation at our local meeting by its presenter from two thousand miles away.

As one of the largest member turn-outs this year assembled in their seats in Lisle, Sanford passed the popcorn for all to enjoy and Jack Jackson, a long-time member of the Chicago Computer Society who now lives in Utah, presented his slide-show of gorgeous photographs of Goblin Valley and Arches National Park with his live narrative from his home in Utah. Assisting Jack at the meeting were Alvin Reisbeck and Jerry Sass.

Here is how this unique program came about and was done. Jack had mailed me a DVD of his photographs that I took to the February Digital Imagery Meeting for Show-and-Tell. We had a beautiful show, but no tell, and our members discussed how nice it would have been had we been able to learn more about how to make such wonderful images by being able

to ask Jack about his camera, the settings he chose and why, what post-processing he did, etc.

That led to the idea of using Skype at our meeting. Jack mailed several more DVDs to Alvin and Jerry. Jack downloaded the latest Skype from www.skype.com and then Sanford, Jerry and Jack worked out and practiced the details ahead of time which made the evening's presentation run perfectly.

The DVD was run from Jerry's notebook PC on site at the meeting. A small "eyeball" video camera connecting to Jerry's notebook allowed "Utah Jack" to see Jerry and a video cam on Utah Jack's computer allowed Jerry to see Jack. When Jerry's notebook was connected to the projector and sound system at our meeting, all of us at the meeting could see and hear Utah Jack.

Here's the fun part: when the video cam "eyeball" was turned around and passed around, Utah Jack was able to see all the members at the meeting to "Howdy" us, each by name because he could see each of us.

The video cam eyeball was then positioned to "look at" the screen so that Utah Jack could look at the same show that all of us at the meeting were seeing. It was this setup that enabled Jack to present his live running commentary on the slide show. During the show, people asked Jack questions about everything from the technical aspects of his photographs, the music he chose for the show, commented on "his house" and laughed together about it because it was a photograph of an historic log cabin at a park in Utah.

This historic technical event and the hot popcorn compliments of Sanford made the evening one of the most enjoyable meetings of the year. We anticipate another great meeting next month at Brookfield Zoo, the site of this year's Digital Imagery SIG's Annual Summer Outdoor Event. Hope all will join us. See you there.

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