



MUG Monitor

Macon Users Group—Serving Southwestern North Carolina and Northeastern Georgia

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February 2009

Next Meeting:

New Products from the 2009 Consumer Electronics Show

by Club President Louis Vitale

Macon Community Facilities Building
February 10th, 7 PM

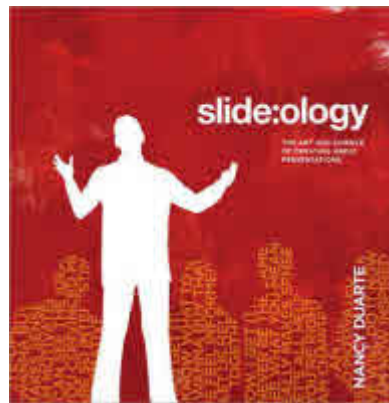
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Slide:ology—Presentations Taken Apart

Reviewed by Gregory West, Editor for the Sarnia Computer Users' Group [SCUG], www.scug.ca

Slide:ology, The Art And Science Of Creating Great Presentations by Nancy Duarte, Published by O'Reilly Media, ISBN-13: 978-0-596-52234-6, US/CAN \$34.99, oreilly.com/catalog/9780596522346/.



There is nothing worse than a bad presentation.

We all, at one time or another, have been forced to sit and watch a slide show presentation, praying it will improve with time. Unfortunately, the odds are against us.

Sadly, these are professionals giving these presentations; so it must get better, right? Unfortunately, all-too-often these professional presentations go sour and chase instead of attract potential interests. What goes wrong? The answers are on each of the 274 pages of this book.

The introduction clearly points out that this book is not a manual for PowerPoint; it is a "reference book" and it teaches the "why." The format is a coffee-table design, laying flat for easy reference, with large vivid color pictures and designs throughout. The book begins giving you a brief history of presentations and why presentations are an important part of companies who "spend millions of dollars on advertising, marketing, and PR to attract and retain customers" and they have a need to create effective presentations to

get their message out to prospective clients.

You will find several interesting Case Studies that Duarte has created to show how some companies create "World Class Presentations" in simple terms, and quite frankly very easy to create. For example, one Case Study shows how

Mark Templeton used communication and storytelling "and his innate ability to think visually" in order to make it pay off.

There is a lot of behind-the-scenes psychology in creating presentations, and Duarte is ubiquitous in providing ongoing information. From the concept of "Creating Ideas, Not Slides," to "Thinking Like a Designer," Duarte shows how simple it really is to create professional presentations that promote interest using "Visual Elements" and "Creating Movement." There are amazing sections on color psychology and

(see *Slide:ology* on page 2)

New Consumer Electronics

Presented by Louis Vitale

7 PM, February 10th

Macon Users Group Franklin, NC

Please see the printed edition
for contact information

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Monthly Meetings

MUG meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7 P.M. in the Macon County Community Facilities Building on Georgia Road (US 441 South).

MUG Monitor Staff

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Website

www.maconusersgroup.org

Volunteers Available

The following club members have thoughtfully volunteered to be on call for other members having problems or needing a little extra help. If you would like to add your services, please email the newsletter editor.

Lee Alexander
Jerry Ray
John Rymer

(Slide:ology—continued from page 1)

text typesetting styles that go well beyond slide presentations that you may even read twice as I did. I love the “Dissecting a Font” section where you learn the “personality” of various fonts and why they are used in various forms of presentations to make a point or grab your attention without you realizing it.

As you travel through this book, you will look at a presentation with a new sense of vision. And if you have to do a presentation, you will not make the mistakes that all-too-many professionals do each and every day throughout the world.

This book is a good read from cover to cover. It can be opened at any chapter where I guarantee you won’t be able to put it back down. It is a great reference book to give you the insight and boost you may need to make your presentation work for you and your audience. I highly recommend this book to not only presenters but also viewers who just may become the best critics out there.

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Linux SIG

with Jim Swanson, Mentor

Notwithstanding the fact that the Linux SIG meeting was cancelled in January, we *are* scheduled to meet at 7 p.m. on February 24 in the large meeting room of the Macon County Public Library. If any program topics surface between now and February 10th, I will announce them at the MUG meeting.

Anyone interested in exploring the Linux operating system is welcome and encouraged to attend. We are all learners, and we help each other up the learning curve.

Treasurer’s Report

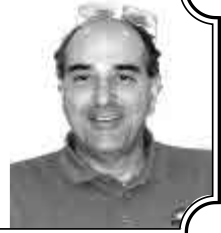
Phyllis Minnich

Balance forward.....	748.71
Income: interest, dues, 50/50.....	72.00
Expense.....	(79.00)
Balance*	
(including equipment fund).....	\$741.71
*Equipment Fund (50/50, auction).....	16.00
Investment Fund.....	1572.27

The Death of Privacy

*Best of
Lou's Views!*

by Louis Vitale (aka 44RAILGUY)



On February 19, 2002, Hasan Elahi arrives in the US from Europe and is detained as a terrorist at Detroit airport. Someone had falsely accused him of being a threat. It took him 6 months and many terrifying interviews with the guys in the black suits to prove he was an artist and not a terrorist. He essentially had to prove his whereabouts day by day for the previous 6 months. To this day, he is concerned that someone did not get the memo that he is not a terrorist. As an artist, how could he prevent this from happening to him every time he boarded a plane?

His solution is a now very popular website called **trackingtransience.net**. Since its creation in 2002, his every movement, meal, phone call, bathroom break, and much more is listed on his site. With the use of Google maps, a GPS-equipped cell phone, and his cell phone camera, you can see a picture and a map of his location in real time.

As I write this article, I logged on to the site. He is in Los Angeles and heading north on Glendale Blvd. about three blocks from Interstate 5. I can tell what he had for breakfast, and what phone call he just made. You can email him from the web page, and he can track you by backtracking any logon to his page. So he if he wanted to, he could locate me in Franklin, NC. This is scary stuff.

This kind of personal tracking is easily accomplished today with off-the-shelf cell phones and access to Google maps and other Internet-

based services. As a result of the events of September 11, 2001, e911 or enhanced 911 was required on all cell phones by 2005. So any cell phone today already knows exactly where it is. You may not be able to access that information, but by law it is available to your network. As long as you want to be tracked, it is no problem.

We have all heard of services to track children or the elderly or the family dog. All are easily accomplished. Just type in "GPS dog tracking" in Google and you will get thousands of hits. No matter where Fido goes, he can't hide anymore. iPhone just released an application that tracks the phone and reports its location every hour to a Twitter account. If your phone is stolen or lost, just log on to the password-protected twitter account and see where it is.

Many of these services can provide a "Virtual Fence" so any targeted cell phone that passes an invisible line you set up will trigger an alarm on your phone or computer. So when Billy asks to borrow the car to see his friend down the block, your alarm will go off when he heads across town.

Then there is the panic button. It is small, self-contained device that can be in your pocket or worn as a pendant. When it is activated, your location will be sent to a predetermined list of people who will come to your aid. Very useful for traveling dignitaries, security guards, and to throw in the bag of money the bank robber just ran out of the bank with. Of course the

robber did not give his permission to be tracked, but I think he just waived his right to privacy.

Infidelity has just gotten even more dangerous. New, inexpensive tracking devices are on the market. Just buy one, sign up for the service, and hide the 1"x2" device in her (or his) car and log on. You know the rest of the story.

Even more insidious is "Flexispy," currently available software that lets you eavesdrop on certain kinds of cell phones. Of course you must have access to the target phone to install the software, but once it is in place, you basically own the phone. You can call it anytime—it does not ring—then use it as a remote microphone, a GPS tracking device, or listen in on any call.

In the immediate future, one blogger suggests that the FCC is pushing technology that would allow a caller to automatically determine the location of the cell phone he is calling, even if the call is not answered. Remember, this is what we publicly know today; there may be much more out there we don't know about.

So where are we going with all this? Will most people 20 years from now be tracked like Hasan Elahi and not give it a second thought? Will we have to opt out of normal society in order to maintain any kind of privacy? And will that powerful tiny personal tracking implant finally be required by some future government? I would not bet against it.

Build a “Green” PC on a Budget

by Rob Limbaugh, President, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT. www.dacs.org



I need more computer equipment like I need another hole in my head. What I always seem to lack are good motherboards to match up with the spare DVD drive here and spare hard drive there. On a recent trip to the dump, I hit pay dirt! Someone had dropped off a bunch of computer equipment, and I got there early enough in the

day to have relatively fresh dibs!

Weeding Out Junk

Knowing that “garbage” tends to be at dumps, I look for specific traits when considering a rescue of any would-be junk. Last thing I want to do is throw it away when I get home, and you can’t exactly test things at a transfer station. This is a good exercise in knowing your hardware, as you can just take home the good stuff and leave everything else there. As luck would have it, I found a gutted case with a motherboard stripped of everything but the CPU and heat sink. Even the BIOS battery was gone! They did leave the power supply, though.

Back to the Bench

So far my out-of-pocket expense is \$0.00, and I’d like to keep it that way! I take the guts home and blow them out with an air-compressor. The minimum needed to successfully power on a motherboard are a power supply, motherboard, CPU, fan, and memory. Unfortunately I didn’t have any memory on hand for this motherboard, so now it’s time to do some leg work and see if I should consider spending the money when I don’t even know if the board works.

The motherboard, in this case, can be identified by a silkscreen of “PTGD1-LA” between the PCI slots. This cross-references to a board used in HP Pavilion Ax00 systems. This gives me access to motherboard details so I know what the connecting pins are, memory requirements, and other details necessary to do troubleshooting. Yippee, memory for this board is on sale right now—1GB for \$27!

Good, Bad, or Ugly?

In this situation, I presume the components are good until proven faulty. Having all the dust blown off, I sniff around the motherboard. That’s right... using my nose, I sniff around the motherboard. The power supply, too. Fried components have a burnt smell. All smells good.

Powering on a working system with the memory removed should yield “memory error” beep codes from the motherboard. I power everything on and get beep codes indicating bad memory. During this time, I listen for fan noise out of the power supply and the CPU fan. Nothing that sounds like skateboard wheels on pavement. Things are looking good!

Many motherboards take CR2023 batteries for memory, including this one. I picked up a two-pack along with a 1GB stick of PC-3200 memory. So far I’m out about \$30 and still don’t know if this will fire up completely—but odds are in my favor. Besides, if I needed PC-3200 and PC batteries today, I’d need them in the future for another find later.

Hot Dog!

With the memory seated and a battery added, I fired up the

(see *Green PC* on page 10)

We’re constantly bombarded by the subject of energy conservation—“green” this and “green” that. I think that much of our problem is our “disposable society”. On top of that, it seems that most people tend to be “green” only if it fits into their budget and lifestyle. It is a little difficult to rationalize spending \$25,000 on a solar array for a house that will take a decade to “pay for itself.”

But, if you happen to be looking for another computer and you’re willing to spend some spare time and effort, you can rescue good parts from a premature demise and save money at the same time. How? Read on!

Timing Is Everything

Around here we have “transfer stations” to which local residents take their refuse and recyclables if they don’t have curbside pickup or another service. The transfer station is somewhat of a presorting point before everything goes to a larger dump site.

What amazes me is that people seem to be willing to pay a few bucks to throw away things that could be recycled or disposed of for no cost—just a bit more effort. No matter. That works out well for me—I can shop!

Roxio Creator 2009 Review

by John Roy, President, TPCUG (The PC Users Group of CT), CT, www.fpcug-ct.org

Roxio, a division and brand of Sonic Solutions, continues as the premiere must-have CD/DVD burning suite. This product is a collection of key applications bundled into an attractive launching interface. Key applications provided are CD/DVD burning tools, Audio, Photo and Video tools, and more. The Roxio suite provides support applications necessary to effectively use your computer just like Microsoft Office suite provides key office software.



When I reviewed Easy Media Creator Version 10 earlier this year, I was impressed with how clean the interface was for the multitude of applications within the suite. The latest version further simplifies the application selection process with the use of pleasing colors and descriptive icons. It also provides a direct link to online tutorials and other information. The only distraction from the clean interface is the "Learn More" window that connects to the Roxio website to promote the sale of additional products.

The application interface Home Page presents the core tasks for most users. The tasks include burning and labeling discs, ripping audio, copy and converting DVD video, and backing up files. Selecting one of the primary applications will quickly open the application and you are ready to start. There was some initial confusion of

how to return to the previous page, because the new page did not have a cancel button. If you closed the page with the standard "x" selection, it would close the whole product. After a short examination I realized that the left set of icons were still available to select and return to home or

another application. Although further review disclosed inconsistencies in returning to the home page depending upon which application you opened. So some applications you must close using the "x" and others if you use the "x" you will close everything down and have

to reopen the whole product. This area needs better consistency.

When you select an application group using the left icons (Data-copy, Video-Movies, Music-Audio, Photo, and Online) a clean screen opens up with subgrouping to further home in on your desired application. The Data-Copy screen provides three groupings of Create, Copy and Backup. Each grouping contains subtasks to further refine your application selection. There are nine defined tasks associated with Data-Copy. The long-time favorite Roxio Creator Classic is now disguised as "Burn Data Disc-Advanced," but it still opens the original application and still reflects the original name. It appears that this popular tool is still the same with a different entry skin. The application was always sound, so

(see Roxio on page 11)



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The Deals Guy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group



The Said It Couldn't Be Done

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes when a company sheds one of its holdings? When the separation between Daimler's and Chrysler's financial systems needed to happen, many said that would not be achieved for years, but one guy decided the experts were wrong and accomplished wonders. Read this fascinating story at tinyurl.com/dbo875.

Here's an article about what some schools are doing to gather data that would help improve the students' chances for getting the most out of school. It's lengthy, but is at tinyurl.com/bzr8bp. Some 'letters to the editor' printed later were also interesting from folks that said that teachers also should share the responsibility for a good education for students.

Just a reminder about the special offer for Diskeeper that is still good at tinyurl.com/yooayx. Also, I have not tried any of the products below except TeamViewer.

Reminder

I have been using TaxAct to do my income tax for a few years now and I'm happy with it, although I do use the pay version because it brings data forward from last year to edit and the free version doesn't; you must type in all the data again. The free version also does one free E-file for you, and if there's a refund, you'll get it back in ten days. Visit www.taxact.com.

DVD Converter At No Cost

With DVDVideoSoft Ltd.'s Free Video to Flash Converter, it is very easy to enrich a corporate web site or a personal blog with a good looking video. The program offers

over 80 different themes for the flash player. Free Video to Flash Converter converts video files, one by one, or several files at once, to flash (SWF and FLV). Do the whole movie or just a portion in order to make a required video.

The updated Free Video to Flash Converter has a completely new player that meets all up-to-date standards and has all necessary features. Among them are: full screen mode, volume control, autoload enable/disable feature, autoplay enable/disable feature, loop playback, big play button on the video, play list, subtitles support, and hot keys support.

Free Video to Flash Converter's design is somewhat strict, but the colors of all player elements are customizable. Now everyone can find the matching one for their particular site. The application runs under both XP and Vista; very convenient for the majority of users.

Free Video to Flash Converter is available at tinyurl.com/36nw7b for immediate free download. The program contains no spyware or adware, and no activation or registration is required.

Now For A New Task Manager

AnVir Software has released AnVir Task Manager Pro 5.4, a complete application that lets you control everything that's going on while using your computer. AnVir Task Manager manages startup programs and active processes and removes spyware while offering a great variety of Windows enhancements. No need to install dozens of system utilities. You need only one program instead: AnVir Task Manager.

This Task Manager replacement analyzes everything that's currently active on your system and displays it on a tabbed interface. It displays programs that are scheduled to run upon Windows start, as well as all active processes and services. It shows full information about each process, including command line, DLLs in use, inbound and outbound traffic, disk load, tray icon, performance graph, and Internet connections.

AnVir Task Manager monitors the system's workload, dropping icons in the system tray that indicate CPU usage (including a breakdown by application), hard drive temperature, free space, disk activity (again with per-application info), laptop battery, memory, and network inbound and outbound traffic. You always know exactly what's loading your PC's processing power.

AnVir Task Manager automatically provides a security risk rating for each active process, service and startup program. The security risk rating indicates the likelihood of a program being potential spyware, malware or a Trojan. The rating is based on behavior, code analysis, and integrated database with information about 70,000+ startup programs, Internet Explorer toolbars and services. When any program tries to add itself to startup, AnVir Task Manager shows a notification and enables you to cancel each new startup program you consider useless or harmful. Right click on any suspicious process or file and check it on virustotal.com with 30 antivirus products.

AnVir Task Manager makes using XP or Vista much handier. With it, you

(see *Deals Guy* on page 10)

Performing Better Searches

by Sharon Housley, VP.
 NotePage managing Marketing for FeedForAll, www.feedforall.com

Performing and perfecting search engine results can save web surfers lots of time and energy. Understanding the nuances of searching allows researchers to immediately drill down and locate the information they are seeking, without having to wade through a myriad of irrelevant search results in the process. The increasing complexity of search engines has made understanding search engines a necessity for those who spend any amount of time online. The following search tips are standards that will work in most of the major search engines.

How To Find

What You Are Looking For

As the popularity of the Internet grows, more and more results are returned for even the most obscure search phrases. In order to save time, web surfers need to increase their search relevancy. It is advisable to use multiple search terms to produce better search results. Searchers should use specific words and phrases to find what they're are looking for, while filtering out irrelevant and unwanted results.

In searching, more usually means less. Using more keywords in a search will help qualify the search and make it more specific to what you are looking for. It is all about striking a balance; more search terms will reduce the number of search results, but those results will be more accurate. Remember that you can always refine the search further if there are too many results returned in the initial search.

Capitalization Is Irrelevant

The major search engines ignore capitalization. Upper case and lower case search phrases will deliver the same results.

Order Matters

Keep in mind that the order in which the terms are entered into the search box will affect the search results. The most important terms should appear first in the list of search words.

Word Stemming

Major search engines will provide results that use word stemming. Word stemming includes variants of the terms that were searched for. For example, searching on the term fish in a major search engine will generate organic search results that also contain the terms fishing, fishes, and fisher.

Exact

Using quotations around a search phrase will generate search results that contain only that specific search phrase, exactly as it was entered. For example, searching on the exact phrase "rocking horse" in a major

search engine will only generate search results that contain the phrase *rocking horse*. The results will not include any results that contain "horse rocking"—even though both terms appear, they do not appear in the proper order for an exact match.

Do Not Include

Adding a (-) negative/minus sign before a search term will filter the results so that they contain the first term but not the negated word. For example, entering the search phrase horses -rocking into a major search engine will return search results about horses but not about rocking horses.

Must Include

If you want search results that only include a specific word, just type a (+) plus sign in front of a search

(see *Search* on page 8)

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(*Search—continued from page 7*)

term. The results produced will always contain that term. For example, conducting a search horse + carousel will result in all search results that contain carousel, and may include horse as well.

Similar Words

Adding a (~) tilde character in front of a search word will generate search results that not only include the specified search term, but will also include all words considered to be related to the original search term. For example, using the search term ~soda will result in organic search engine results that not only include soda, but also include pepsi, pop, cola, coke, bottle, and soft drink.

Either Or

Adding an OR parameter between two search terms will result in search listings that include either the first or the second word in the search results. For example, searching on the terms soda OR bottle will generate search results that may contain both terms *soda bottle* or it will produce results that contain either soda or bottle but not both in the same search listings.

Advanced Searches and Segmented Searches

Many search engines allow you to specify the type of content you wish to search in. For example, you can often search just news articles, just blogs, or just images. If you are looking for a specific type of media, segmenting your search can be helpful. Searches can be conducted to locate webpages that contain a specific language, or a specific file type (i.e., pdf, rss, etc). Simply use the search engine's advanced search option and select the content, language, file type, etc to filter your search results.

Search Meta Words

Meta keyword searches give search engines special instructions. When

the meta search words are used, a specific type of search is conducted. Here are some of the most common meta search terms...

define: When define: is used at the beginning of a search word or phrase, the search engine results will be a definition of the word or phrase.

site: When site: is entered in the search box, followed by a domain, the search engine locates all documents within a specific domain and all of its subdomains. This is an easy way to get a rough idea of the number of pages indexed on a domain.

link: When link: is used and followed by a URL, the search results will include all the web pages that are indexed by the search engine which contain links to the specified URL.

inurl: When inurl: is used, followed by a keyword or phrase, the search results will include links to web pages that contain the specific keyword or phrase in the URLs themselves.

intitle: When intitle: is searched on in conjunction with a keyword or phrase, the search engine locates search results that contain the specified keyword or phrase in the web page title.

Web surfers can save large amounts of time and energy by optimizing their search techniques with these helpful tips.

Sharon Housley manages marketing for FeedForAll www.feedforall.com software for creating, editing, publishing RSS feeds and podcasts. In addition, Sharon manages marketing for RecordForAll www.recordforall.com audio recording and editing software.

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Cloud Computing

**by Sister Dorothy Robinson,
Editor, OMUG News, The
Olympia Microcomputer User
Group, WA. www.oly mug.org**

When did you first hear or see the term "cloud computing"? I'm usually the last to know anything, it seems, so I've only recently started noticing this term on the Internet. I did some research, and some say it's the greatest thing since sliced bread—but others think it isn't such a hot idea. In very simple terms, cloud computing is this: rather than having programs and files on your computer, you would store files online and also access applications (programs) online (think Google Docs or MS Office Live; think Flickr or Buzzword). Your computer really wouldn't need to have much on it, and you'd have to have an Internet connection in order to run applications or access your files. Not only individuals, but also companies would be doing this (and in fact, are doing it now). One of the major benefits is that a company (or an individual, for that matter) has the use of combined server resources they might not otherwise be able to afford "in house."

The ever-vigilant Richard Stallman warns against the use of cloud computing: "Somebody is saying this is inevitable—and whenever you hear somebody saying that, it's very likely to be a set of businesses campaigning to make it true... One reason you should not use web applications to do your computing is that you lose control," he said. "It's just as bad as using a proprietary program. Do your own computing on your own computer with your copy of a freedom-respecting program. If you use a proprietary program or somebody else's web server, you're defenseless. You're putty in the hands of whoever developed that software." Food for thought.

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Music Tagging with ID3

by Mike Moore, Editor, Bowling Green Computer Users Group, KY, www.bgamug.org

MP3 is a compressed music format that can be used to fit a track of music that would normally occupy hundreds of megabytes on a Compact Disc into four or five megabytes. While some of the data is lost in this compression, it is data that cannot normally be heard in the rendering of the music file. In compressing music files this way, we can fit more music onto our music appliances, such as iPods and other MP3 players.

While the process of compressing music files is interesting for techies, it is not something we normally have to concern ourselves with, because often the music files are already in MP3 format when we acquire them. Double-click on the MP3 file and *presto*, the song plays.

What is interesting and really required of digital music collectors is that we must keep our music organized. Since there are obviously many ways in which one can name a file of music, this is really not a very good way to keep a library organized, unless you have complete control over how a song is named.

Think of a given song. There are some obvious metrics on which the song could be organized. For starters, we have the name of the piece, the recording artist and label, the name of the band or orchestra, the genre of music, and so forth. There are dozens of less obvious metrics, such as the length of the song, when it was recorded—even who borrowed it from you and when!

These little pieces of information about a given track are known as “metadata” or “meta-information.”

This set of information is literally, data about data, because the music file itself is a kind of digital data.

The music industry has adopted a standard, known as ID3, that provides for meta-information to be included with an MP3 file. You might think of ID3 as the *wrapper* that an MP3 file comes surrounded in.

To view and edit this information, Windows supports ID3 by allowing you to right-click on an MP3 file, and see and change all of the meta-information. You can also see a limited set of the metadata about a song by simply hovering your mouse over a music file. Here I have right-clicked on a piano piece called *Impromptu in B Flat*, written by Franz Schubert. Remember when you right-click to get a context menu, it's a *single* right-click, not a double click. [in XP, right-click and choose Properties, Summary tab, and Advanced to view and edit the ID3.]

That gives me the size in megabytes of the file, its name and where and when it was stored. If I click on the Details tab, I get all of the rest of the metadata, including the artist and composer:

There are various versions of ID3 that have little relationship to each other. For more detailed information about ID3, read this article in Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ID3.

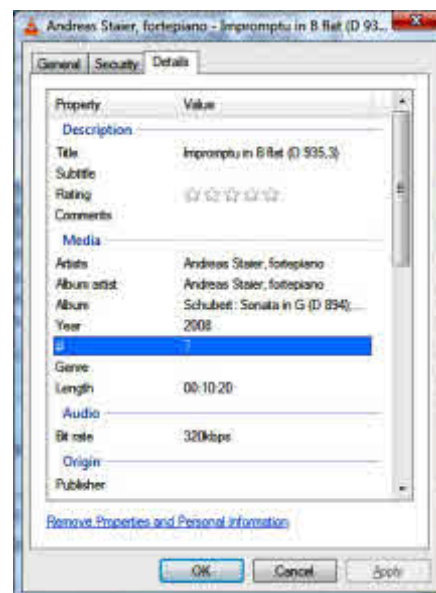
The good news is that most modern MP3 players, when encountering ID3, simply ignore it when playing back the music. So we have music data inside of an MP3 file that we hear, and ID3 data that we can see when we right-click on the file.

So, here we have a way in which you can see the metadata about one particular song. But suppose I wanted to organize and manipulate a large number of songs—even to the extent of pulling this information out of the metadata fields that we see and using it to construct a meaningful file name? After all, file names are the basis for how Windows stores files, so it would make sense that we might want our music files named in a very particular way. One of the standards I use is to organize music in folders that are named corresponding to the artist that recorded the song.

It turns out that there are many ID3 capturing and editing utility programs out on the internet (many of which actually cost money), and I'm going to mention just one of them: TagScanner.

In tech circles, the ID3 metadata information that is imbedded at the end of a music file is known commonly as a “tag.”

Who would enjoy sitting at their computer typing in album and artist



(see *Music* on page 11)

(Green PC—continued from page 4)

machine and the screen came up! Woo-Hoo! Looking really good now! And it's a P4!



I gathered up a spare SATA hard drive and DVD drive and connected them to the system. BIOS reported the devices. Turns out this is an Intel P4 3.0GHz CPU with hyper-threading.



Wrapping It Up

Sure, this isn't a screaming-fast brand new machine, but it has much potential and is still quite useful. Someday, the parts will wind up being recycled through the transfer station for good—but not today. For now, it has a new life. This board has integrated video, audio, and four SATA ports. It has IDE, USB, PCI Express, and legacy connections. It is also very quiet. This is not bad find at all! I will probably use this as the start of my network storage system.

Now if only I could get my hands on some DVD-RW drives that don't work....

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(Deals Guy—continued from page 6)

can minimize selected application windows to the system tray to save taskbar space. You can make windows semi-transparent, or pin them "always on top" just by right-clicking on the title of any running application. Also, you get the list of recently used folders in Open/Save dialogs. On Windows XP it shows the drive's free space with a colored horizontal bar in Windows "My Computer."

AnVir Task Manager offers a very useful Tweaker that gives you direct access to many Windows settings, enabling you to make your operating system behave the way you want. Tweaker also includes many settings that cannot be accessed in Windows at all without directly editing the registry. AnVir Task Manager dramatically accelerates your PC or Windows boot process. The Startup tab shows all programs that run on Windows start. It includes name, file path, company, and description. You can disable or delete programs that you don't need and your PC will run much faster.

With its "Delayed Startup" feature, you can set up any startup program to load one or more minutes later after Windows startup. This allows you to begin using the computer without waiting for Windows to load all startup applications. Also, you can run startup programs as minimized to system tray, or as floating icons.

AnVir Task Manager runs on Windows XP/Vista/2003/2008 and is available in Pro version for \$59.95, standard version for \$39.95, and a free version, which still has a lot of functions. Users Group members get a 15% discount from the retail price using the coupon code "user group." You won't see that on their website. 20-days evaluation trial is available free from www.anvir.com.

Take Control Remotely

Having someone talk you through fixing a problem on your computer doesn't always accomplish the task

very well, besides taking a lot of time. Perhaps a better solution would be for the other person to take control of your machine and physically do the job before your very eyes, which sometimes happens when you call a company's tech support. This could also be a better system for a helper to teach you how to use your software to accomplish a special task. www.Teamviewer.com might be the answer for this, and the product is free.

Hewie Poplock (www.hewie.net) of Central Florida Computer Society told me he tried this and it works well. Both parties need the product on their computer, but only one actually needs it installed for a session. The other can simply run it without actually installing it. Check their website for more information. In fact, he set up a session with my machine, although on the first try, I accidentally had control of his machine, so we had to start over, but the connection was easy. According to their website, we could have exchanged control, but we didn't realize that. He checked some settings on my machine and then I asked him to actually transfer a file from my floppy drive to his machine. While I could watch him moving the cursor around to check my settings, I was surprised that I couldn't see it when he did the file transfer and he didn't know a way to make it show up for me, but he also transferred a jpeg of a document to my machine. If your file is too large for an email, this method would do the file transfer quickly and easily.

Hewie also suggested another remote control product, but has not fully tried it out. It's called CrossLoop, and Don Singleton has an article about it in his APCUG Reports, just released. Visit reports.apcug.org/2009q1.htm to get that publication.

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my website (most not offering a discount). www.dealsguy.com. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, bobclick@bellsouth.net. Editor's note: This column has been edited for space and content considerations.

(Roxio—continued from page 5)

the fact that it is still there in its original attire is not a problem other than the interface name.

The Video-Movies group, Music-Audio group, and Photo group each contain four subgroups (Import, Edit, Create, Enjoy) with eleven to sixteen subtasks each. The names are very generic, which in my opinion keeps concepts familiar. Executing a generic name launches a familiar Roxio application.

In addition to the icon selections, there are three pull-down windows: File, Tools and Help. The file and help selections are pretty standard. The Tools pull-down provides a couple of ease-of-access clicks like ejecting and closing the drive tray, getting disc information and some alternate ways to jump to a few selected applications. There is an

extensive Options choice to configure user defaults.

The latest Roxio Creator 2009 version does provide some new tools like the ability to capture High Definition (HD) video and burn it onto standard DVDs. There is now an Audiobook Creator that makes it easy to convert and enjoy books on iTunes, iPod, iPhone or other portable players. There is an audio beatmatching tool to produce studio-like fades and mixes. I found the new SyncIt desktop gadget tool cool but short on instructions. It converts and sends digital media directly to your portable device. Since I don't own a portable device, I couldn't appreciate its value. You can now share photos and slideshows online including uploading directly to YouTube.

I tested this version of Roxio on my new Vista 64-bit system with an

AMD Quad-Core processor and 5 GB of memory. I didn't experience any installation problems, but it was disconcerting that some applications did not load crisp and fast as expected, even though my system is clean and devoid of startup programs.

Okay, what is the bottom line on this latest version? If you don't already own a Roxio suite, then I highly recommend you give serious consideration to purchasing this since it will serve as a primary computer application suite. If you presently own Easy Media Creator version 9 or 10 and it meets your immediate requirements, then you can afford to wait if the new features and enhancements are not important to you.

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(Music—continued from page 9)

information for each track? With the free TagScanner, you don't have to. This efficient and powerful tag editor lets you edit and collect metadata automatically as well as by hand, both for individual files and file batches.

The automatic tagging feature is most impressive. Although it can hook up to online databases such as FreeDB, Gracenote, and Amazon like many other auto-tagging applications, it can also generate tags from file and folder names—something many others can't. It works in the opposite direction, too, generating filenames from tags. This is very important, because many files come to us virtually unusable from a sorting point of view, because their file names begin with, say, a catalog number that means nothing to our sorting scheme.

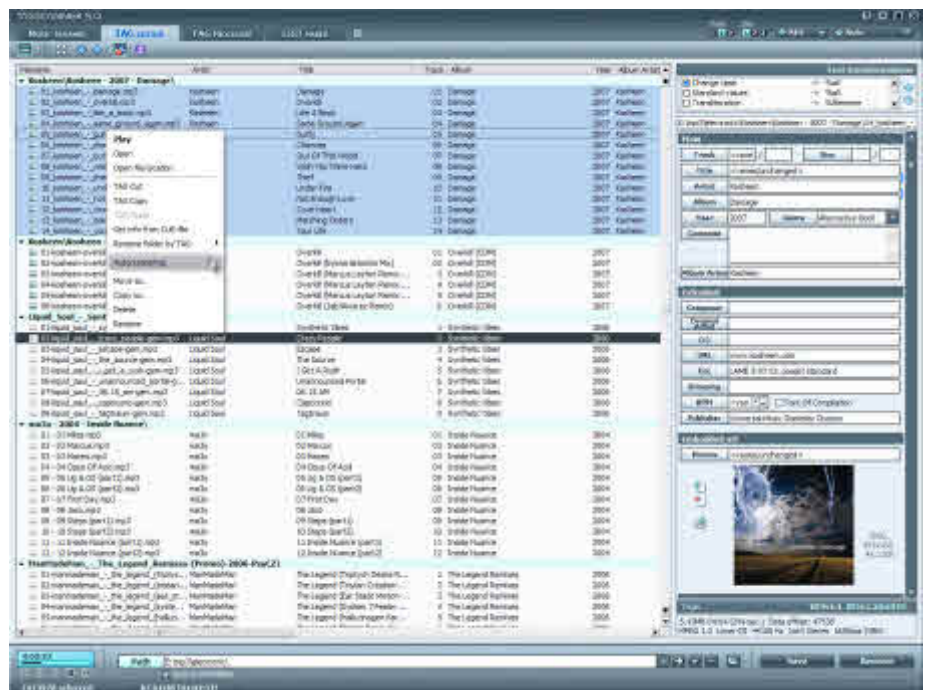
TagScanner has an elegant and orderly interface, and lets you preview filenames before applying changes. The only catch is that you'll need to spend

some time learning the program's file- and tag-naming language. However, if you have thousands of music tracks crying out for organization, that's a small price to pay.

Get TagScanner (free) at: www.xdlab.ru/en/.

The main TagScanner window is shown below.

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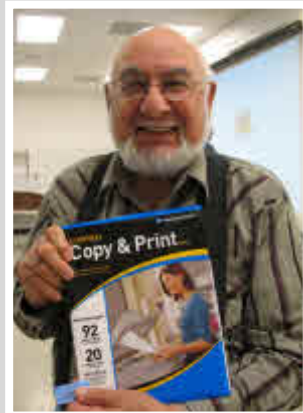
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January's Door Prize Winners



If you have an idea for a program or are willing to give one, contact any member of the Board. Your input and help are always appreciated.

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