

Next Meeting:

Avoiding Identity Theft

by Mary Beth Brody, financial consultant with Wachovia Securities

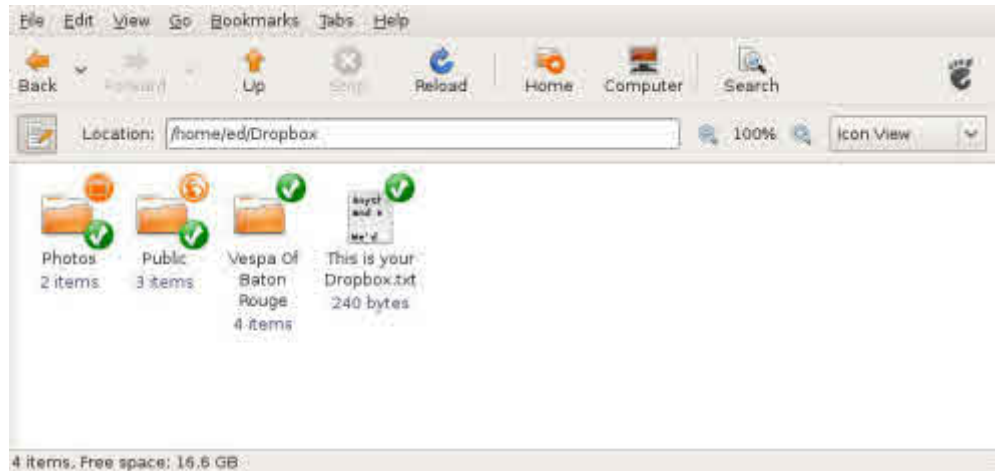
Macon Community Facilities Building
April 14th, 7 PM

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Dropbox

by Ed Richard, Leader of the Open Source SIG, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA, www.clickers.org, cccclinuxsig.pbwiki.com



So just exactly what is Dropbox, you might ask? Have you ever needed to sync files between two or more machines? Have you wanted to also have an off-site copy of those files? Have you needed to sync files between Windows, Linux and Macintosh machines?

Have you wanted to have a public photo album to share pictures with your friends and family? Have you needed a shared online file repository for collaborating with coworkers? Are you tired of carrying around a pocket full of thumb drives? Dropbox is all of these and even more. It is cross platform, so it runs on Linux, Windows and Mac computers.

After installing the Dropbox application on one machine, you create an account and link that machine to the account. Then, any file that is placed in the My Dropbox folder (which in Windows lives inside the My Documents folder, and in Linux lives in your user folder, the Linux equivalent of My Documents) gets automatically synced

with your Dropbox folder on all other linked machines. The image above shows what my Dropbox looks like on my Ubuntu Linux machine.

If you only have Dropbox installed on one machine, it becomes an off-site backup service. Dropbox uses Amazon's S3 service behind the scenes to house your data. So files placed in your Dropbox folder are automatically uploaded to the Dropbox servers. Should you delete them on your local machine or suffer data loss, they can

(see *Dropbox* on page 2)

Avoiding Identity Theft
Presented by
Mary Beth Brody,
financial consultant with
Wachovia Securities

7 PM, April 14th

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

(Dropbox—continued from page 1)

easily be retrieved from the Dropbox servers by installing Dropbox on a replacement machine, or directly from the Dropbox website.

Dropbox also supports shared folders that allow anyone you invite to the folder to have access to the files in that folder. This is a great way to collaborate and share files with coworkers. There's also a folder specifically configured to hold photos. Any images placed there are automatically turned into a photo album with a publicly accessible URL you can give out. Go here to see a photo album of pictures in my pictures folder: tinyurl.com/cafvvh.

There is also a Public folder that is accessible to anyone, and a web interface that allows you to access files on machines that don't have Dropbox installed.

You can also access previous versions of files from the web interface. So if you foul up that file and need to go back to last week's version, you can.

To learn more about Dropbox go to: tinyurl.com/5o9nc4 and watch the video.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at edslinusbox@cox.net.

Linux SIG

with Jim Swanson, Mentor

The Linux SIG meeting will meet at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28 in the large meeting room of the Macon County Public Library.

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

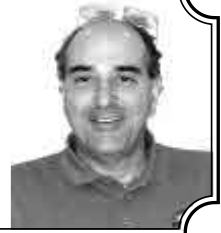
Phyllis Minnich

Balance forward.....	748.16
Income: interest, dues, 50/50.....	1096.91
Expense.....	(1386.91)
Balance*	
(including equipment fund).....	\$741.71
*Equipment Fund (50/50, auction).....	31.00
Investment Fund.....	1572.27



Google Earth (or Mars)

by Louis Vitale (aka 44RAILGUY)



I have a grandson in the roofing business in Florida. He has moved “down” the ladder in that business from laborer to estimator and salesman. I wanted to know how he had gained the skills necessary to estimate the cost of a new roof in such a short time. His answer: Google. He uses a plug-in to *Google Earth* (earth.google.com) that allows him to zoom in on the roof he needs to estimate and used the tool available to estimate its dimensions and thus its size. Being in his early 20’s, this seemed perfectly natural to him and he was surprised at my astonishment.

Like most computer users at one time or another, I had accessed *Google Maps* and tried to find my house. There it is, barely visible under the summer canopy of a North Carolina forest. I could see my driveway and many other identifying features of my property. Of course, I went on to Franklin and then the local towns before my curiosity ran out. I had barely scratched the surface. I was now determined to dig deeper into this Google world after I spoke with my grandson.

That is when I made the mistake of downloading *Google Earth 5.0*. A very quick installation and a whole list of tutorials awaited me. I spent the next 2 hours literally exploring my home planet. There was amazement at every click. I saw a night time torch light dive by divers from the Calypso in the clear waters off the Azores; a stunning evening cruise down the Seine River with the Eiffel tower in the background; a skiing run in the Alps in 3D and in real time; a photo montage of the Queen Mary where she is permanently docked; and a fly

through the Grand Canyon, where I was able to stop along the way to see uploaded photo albums taken by its many visitors.

I know I am late to this party; I had heard about the wonders of *Google Earth* before, but always thought it was just a glorified *Google Maps*. Nothing could be further from the truth; it is a true database Earth.

Like most Google applications, it is intuitive; you can just open up the interface and explore. But after a while you realize there is so much more information available hidden behind all the buttons and icons. So I would advise taking advantage of the many tutorials available. I did spend quite a bit of time trying to master the “Flight Simulator,” I must say with limited success. Perhaps if there had been a train simulator I would have done better.

With the Flight Simulator, you can pick a plane and an airport to start from and take off into Google Earth. All the basic flight controls, including a heads up display, are there. Distance measuring tools are available to calculate trip times, as well as terrain maps to determine realistic flight paths. For small plane pilots this would be an excellent way to plan a trip.

And planning trips is one of the main attractions of this program. If you are planning a vacation or a business trip to virtually any place on Earth, go here first. By turning on and off various layers of information, you can zero in on what you want to see or do. If this is a popular destination, there will be thousands of photos and YouTube videos available to show you the lay of the land before you ever set off for the airport.

There was a globe in my grade school classroom. You could tell the names of countries, major cities, and rivers, and you could pick out the continents and the oceans; that was about it. In a wired classroom today you have “database Earth” at your disposal. I checked—there are hundreds, if not thousands, of lesson plans available that utilize *Google Earth*. The lessons are not limited to geography—there is science, culture, history, and even math lessons that take advantage of the online data available through this resource. A teacher today has more information available and accessible in this one resource than was available even in the best school library just 10 years ago.

There is no way I can adequately cover the depth and variety of data and visuals available in this resource. Did I mention the thousands of web cams that are accessible, and the worldwide real-time weather that is available? There is a *Global Awareness* database that includes “Fair Trade” locations, WWF projects, UNICEF water and sanitation sites, and many more. The oceans are covered in depth, including all known shipwrecks, fisheries information, ocean monitoring stations, and Arctic sea ice information.

And just in case one planet is not enough, there is a *Google Mars*. Just like our home planet, data for Mars is available using the same interface tools. For the masterminds at Google, the sky is not the limit. There is also an astronomy database. With this tool, you can scan the known universe for images and data on objects visible in our sky.

A program that can measure the square footage of a roof in Florida and the ice caps on Mars is one hell of a program.

Microsoft Releases Internet Explorer 8

by **Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director:**
Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio Talk Show Host

Websites:

www.microsoft.com/ie
www.ieaddons.com/en

Microsoft has released the latest iteration of its ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer version 8 (IE8). This browser is for all versions of XP and Vista, and is a 16.1 MB download for XP.

I had tried one of the early beta (pre-release) builds of IE8, and was impressed by its features and speed, a substantial improvement over what I felt was a lethargic Internet Explorer 7. Now I have downloaded and installed IE8 on all of my computers, and my first impressions of it are quite positive. I have been using Firefox, IE's major competitor, almost exclusively for several years. I was not alone in using Firefox instead of IE, as Firefox has been taking market share from IE for years as it has generally offered more speed, features, and security than IE. Now with IE8, Firefox has a worthy competitor which has added features, speed and security to challenge the gains made in the marketplace by Firefox.

Within minutes of its release, I downloaded the new version of IE8 on my work computer. I went directly to Microsoft's IE website at www.microsoft.com/ie to download IE8. Microsoft identified my operating system, and proceeded to connect me to the proper variety of IE8, which I downloaded. The installation process was smooth, with several informational windows appearing with install options. One of the first windows to appear was a statement that the IE8 install utility was going to download the latest version of Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool, and

scan my computer for malware prior to the installation of IE8. My computer was free of any detected malware, and the installation continued. A reboot was required in order to complete the IE8 process, which I allowed. After the reboot, a small window appeared displaying the setup sequences of the new software. Subsequent windows offered me the opportunity to install add-ons, and select default search engines. IE8 imported my selections from IE7, and asked if I wanted to keep my IE7 defaults and use them in IE8, which I did. The final window displayed correctly identified that I had other browsers installed on my computer, including Firefox, Opera, and Safari, and asked if I wanted to import bookmarks (favorites) and feeds from them; I selected yes, and data was imported from my other browsers into IE8, making them immediately available on that platform. IE8 did indeed load faster than IE7 ever loaded, and web pages appeared to load faster, but I have no empirical data to corroborate that.

IE8 is more feature rich than IE7, and in many ways appears to emulate the finer points available in Firefox. One feature in IE8 that offers improved possibilities is "Accelerators" which provide quick access to information by simply highlighting a word, phrase, address, or other item on a webpage. If the proper accelerators are installed, then appropriate information in the form of maps, web searches, translations, email, blogs, and other relevant resources and outputs are immediately displayed.

Another interesting feature in IE8 that may be of interest to many users

is "Web Slices," where the user can automatically monitor desired information, displaying updated information as it becomes available. Web Slices can monitor auctions, sports scores, weather, stock quotes, and other dynamic content, and can directly provide that updated information, without user intervention. If a Web Slice is available on a web page, a green icon will appear in the top right corner of the page; clicking on this icon will add the "slice" to the favorites bar, enabling real-time tracking of the selection. When new information is available about the selected web slices, the relevant web slice will be highlighted. Clicking on the highlight will take the user directly to the updated information.

IE8 offers a "Smart Address Bar" which displays recommendations as a web address is typed in the address bar. The suggestions are distilled from the browsing history, favorites, and previously selected feeds, as well as Windows Live Search. If a single word is typed in the address bar, the Smart Address Bar will reach out and try to match the term against domain names, making web surfing faster and more efficient.

I frequently go online to show my L.I.T. students information on the web. Sometimes the fonts on the web pages are so small, that students in the back of the classroom can not view the displayed content. IE8 solves that problem with its enhanced zoom feature, "Improved Zoom." This feature improves the resolution and readability of a webpage, while maintaining the desired layout. Clicking on VIEW |

(see **IE8** on page 10)

The Kindle2 May Make Newspapers Obsolete

by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS, www.compukiss.com

Every now and then a revolutionary new product comes along at a time when it is most needed. So it is with the just released Kindle2 wireless reading device, fondly called an ebook reader.

Up to now, electronic book readers have been very slow in taking off. Sony has had a book reading device for several years. Last year Amazon came out with the first version of the Kindle, which was impressive and fairly popular, but had a few drawbacks.

Now, however, the time for these devices may have finally come. At 8"x5.3", the Kindle2 is about the size of a paperback. At about 1/3" thick, it thin but strong. In this second iteration, Amazon has corrected the design flaws of the original Kindle. It is now easy to use. The e-ink technology allows you to read the words on the Kindle just as you would read a book, with no eye strain or glare. You can adjust the size of the text to your liking. To turn the page you simply press a button. The reader even lets you read several books at once, always returning you to just where you left off. You can look up any word with the built-in dictionary. You can underline words and add your own notes to the pages. This Kindle will even read the text of most books to you. So if you are engrossed in a book on the Kindle and need to pick up the kids, you can take the Kindle along and have it read to you in the car.

The best part of the Kindle, however, is the reading material and how it is delivered. The Kindle2 can hold more than 1,500 books. You can choose from over 240,000 books in the Kindle's Amazon store. Most of the books are priced at \$9.99. You can

also subscribe to newspapers and magazines on the Kindle. The books, newspapers, and magazines are downloaded directly to the device over a free cellular network. I drove down a rural highway in North Carolina and downloaded a book and was reading it in less than five minutes. Better yet would be sitting on a beach and downloading a romance novel. In any case, the Kindle is ultimately useable. The biggest drawback for the Kindle right now is the price. At \$359, the Kindle is pretty expensive.

But if you are you ready to watch the ebook market explode, stick around for awhile. The Kindle2 has appeared on the horizon just as the economy is slumping. There are many hard-hit business sectors, but the newspaper and magazine industry is already showing signs of cracking. CNN reports that many major newspapers

are struggling, including the San Francisco Chronicle, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and the Miami Herald. Certainly online versions of newspapers and magazines are an alternative, but up to this point very few newspapers or magazines have been able to support themselves with online subscriptions and/or advertising.

As the print industry is looking for ways to cut costs, ebook readers may be an answer. If there were no print costs, perhaps large newspapers would be able to provide ebook readers to subscribers as part of the subscription costs or at least at a highly reduced rate. If the electronic device were done well enough, it could mimic the printed version and be filled with ads just like the print

(see *Kindle2* on page 11)



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The Deals Guy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group



Try This One On For Size

Three months ago, I purchased a digital picture frame, but when I hooked it to my desktop machine via the USB cable, “My Computer” was unable to “see” the picture frame’s memory, which had software on it to install for processing my pictures automatically and sending them to the frame’s memory. I tried repeatedly and it might finally see it briefly, but once you clicked somewhere else, then back, it was gone. Windows Explorer didn’t work with this frame’s memory any better. I tried it on my other desktop computer with the same results. Both of these computers have an Intel Pentium-4 3.06 Gigahertz motherboard. I adjusted the pictures with another program and put them on an SD flash card, inserted it in a memory slot on the picture frame, and it would run the picture slide show fine when standing alone. As I said, neither machine could see that frame’s memory, except for a brief glimpse occasionally. I returned the picture frame for a refund thinking it was defective, and the store manager agreed with me after I explained.

I bought another digital frame the other day, bigger and better. When I tried hooking it up to my desktop with the USB cable, I got the same results all over again. I was unable to “see” the digital picture frame’s memory with “My Computer” to install the software that came with it. I finally decided to download the software in question from their website and install it on my desktop. After that, I ran the software to access the pictures from the My Pictures folder, process them, then send them to the frame’s memory, but it gave me a message that it couldn’t find the memory. I couldn’t find it with

Windows Explorer either, except briefly on rare occasion, then it would disappear, however, during that brief viewing, I did notice that there were actually three pictures that got loaded before getting the error message.

After several tries using different USB plugs on the computer, different USB cables and always the same response, I gave up and tried it on my other desktop, with no better luck. I have used many USB items on my desktop machines with no problems. I decided there was a coincidence here and tried hooking it up to my laptop, which has Vista on it. Both desktop machines use XP Professional. It works fine on my laptop and I am at a loss to figure out what’s wrong on the two desktop machines that work good otherwise. A knowledgeable friend worked with me on the phone one evening, with no luck. I am out of ideas.

Get Modern, Stable and Futuristic

Do you need a modern, stable and free user interface with 3D effects for Windows Mobile? Touch Shell MobilityFlow, a modern user interface integrated with 3D effects for Windows Mobile, is now available. MobilityFlow combines a full screen customizable user interface with a cutting edge 3D effect user interface, for the most advanced and intuitive Windows Mobile user interface available today. Touch Shell Free, with its ground-breaking functions, features, and design, offers much more than other user interfaces with 3D effects. Many of them are only available on very expensive high-end devices sold direct from mobile carriers. MobilityFlow also has a Touch Shell Pro version of the application that offers additional functions and features.

I included this item because there is a free version, but according to the website, there is also a 50% discount on the right side of their web page for the Pro version, making it \$9.98. However, I don’t know how long that discounted price will last. Touch Shell website: www.touch-shell.com

Tired Of Quicken or MS Money? Try This One

Alzex announced Personal Finances 3.2, the newest version of a personal finance manager that helps track income and expenses quickly and virtually automatically. With a glance at its reports and graphs, understand your earning and spending patterns, find areas of excessive expenditure and cut down unnecessary expenses. Personal Finances also provides future planning. Project expected spending and income, and know your exact financial situation at a future date.

The budgeting task is a snap. Running the program opens a simple, uncluttered interface that puts all the financial details, tools and options that matter most to you up front. First, start budgeting by setting up accounts, categories, and subcategories. Personal Finances allows for any number of accounts, so you can set up accounts for your bank, credit card, and cash. Next, set up categories and subcategories. They will classify and sort income and expenses and help you see this important data in a meaningful and detailed way through reports and graphs.

Next, enter transactions that reflect income and expenses. Transactions can be one-time or scheduled, which

(see *Deals Guy* on page 11)

My PayPal Account's Been Hacked

by Steve Bass, a former Contributing Editor with PC World,
a 23 year veteran of PIBMUG, and a founding member of APCUG

Steve Bass is the author of PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer, O'Reilly Press. It's available on Amazon at dirt cheap prices. snipurl.com/annoy2

The email from PayPal said I'd sent \$400 to a gaming firm in Germany. It's a dopey phishing expedition, I thought, and authentic-looking, for sure, but nothing to worry about.

The trouble was that when I logged on to PayPal, I really did have a \$400 withdrawal. It was clear that someone had my password.

Quick Password Tips

Here are the three essential things you need to know about password security:

- Use a password generator, a program that will create a long, complicated password.
- Don't ever use dictionary words, even if you stick in symbols, like bill\$gate\$. They're very easy to break using simple hacker programs. (LOL—Thanks, Rod.)
- Use a different password for every important site. Using the same password on every site, especially critical ones, such as banking, is risky. Imagine using your one password on an unsavory, and possibly unscrupulous site. With that golden password, and a few guesses on your login name—stevebass, steve_bass, sbass—and they're in like Flynn.

Who's Got My Password?

I contacted PayPal (888/221-1161), supplied the details, and they opened up a case. My account is frozen and I don't doubt PayPal will credit me for the loss. (As I started editing this newsletter, PayPal reversed the charges.) PayPal is investigating, but I

don't think they'll ever find out how someone got into my account, though it was clear the person had my password. The rep said I probably fell for a well-crafted email spoof.

That's a blow to my ego. I see myself as suspicious—verging on paranoid—when it comes to phishing emails. What better prize than bragging rights to hacking a PC World guy, right? So I'm as vigilant as my dog is when I try to get her to take a pill wrapped in peanut butter. (Hey, "you can't fool me, pal," she probably thinks...)

If an email—suspicious or not—refers to any of my important accounts and provides a link to click, I ignore the offer. It's safer to manually type the URL into my browser's address field. And yes, I'll cover phishing hassles—and ways to guard against it—in a future newsletter.

Password: z24x680uBS4!44

I'm also careful with my passwords and, at least until now, thought they were super stealthy. For example, on PayPal I used four numbers, a symbol, and three letters. According to Microsoft's Password Checker, my standard password pattern—1600%wtf—is strong. But it could be better.

Microsoft says that the most effective passwords are 14 characters and have a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and a symbol or two. For example, z24x680uBS4!44 is strong enough for them to call it "best."

Test your passwords on Microsoft's site and see how well they stand up. Then browse Microsoft's excellent Strong passwords: How to create and use them. I promise you'll learn

(see *PayPal* on page 8)

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(PayPal—continued from page 7)

something: tinyurl.com/2e7tmw. Use Microsoft's Password checker to test your password's strength. You might be surprised: tinyurl.com/ypc3dc.

Generating Strong Passwords

Creating a strong password is easy, provided you don't try to think one up on your own. There are dozens of websites that'll create passwords, but I don't use any of them. The last thing I'll do is trust someone online watching me create new passwords. Instead, download Password Generator, a freebie, and crank out all sorts of 14-character passwords. tinyurl.com/4j8e8.

Keeping Track of Your Passwords

I just looked and counted roughly 220 sites I use that require a password.

Some site passwords, however, are immaterial. For instance, I use a simple-to-remember word for spots I rarely visit, places such as newspapers that force you to register and log in just to read articles, or tech sites with forum messages.

However, ever since the PayPal fiasco, I've changed every significant password on my system to a 14-digit gorilla.

Remembering all those passwords is a PITA, so you ought to consider using a password management tool. There are lots available. Many people like KeePass, a freebie; others swear by LargeSoft's \$30 Password Manager. I anticipate easily 100

emails—no make that 200—kvetching that I haven't mentioned your favorite. But as far as I'm concerned, RoboForm is the best one around, and I've used it since it was first introduced.

RoboForm, The Master at Passwords

RoboForm is a \$30 program with more features for password management, privacy, and password identification than any other program I know. You provide RoboForm with all the vitals you might need to complete a site's form—name, address, phone numbers, and even credit card numbers. When you click the Fill Forms button, the program does just that. I've created multiple identities, each with different info. For instance, I have one with MasterCard info, another with VISA accounts. I have another identify I call "anonymous" that I use to fill in forms on sites that I'll never visit again.

Click a website from the RoboForm Passcard screen, and RoboForm transports your web browser to the site, logging you in if necessary. Need an industrial-strength password? RoboForm will generate one for you. And don't worry about security: RoboForm is itself password-protected. The program will also safely send an encrypted password through email to another RoboForm user. (I was recently discussing with my wife the fact that neither of us can function without it.)

BTW, RoboForm foils keyloggers (programs that watch keystrokes)

because instead of typing, RoboForm inserts characters into form fields.

Here's a summary of RoboForm's features (www.roboform.com/features.html), a comprehensive FAQ (www.roboform.com/faq.html) with answers to your most technical RoboForm questions and a way to compare the free and Pro versions (www.roboform.com/why-pro.html).

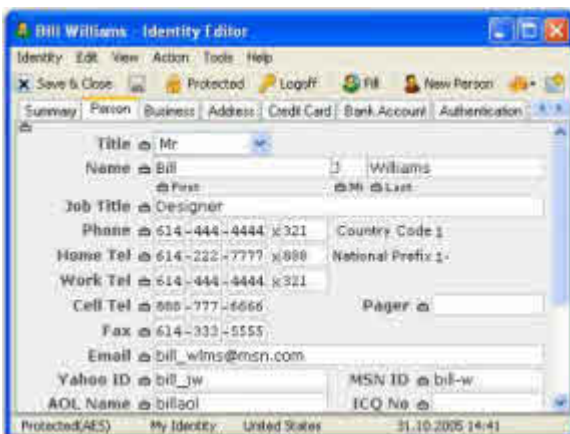
If you need portability, RoboForm2Go gives you the same protection when you carry your passwords on a flash drive and use it outside the office. Both the RoboForm program and your password files reside on a USB key, so you can take them from one computer to another. The tool costs \$40, but if you buy it at the same time you get RoboForm, the price drops to \$20. If you dig around, you'll occasionally find discounts. (Google "RoboForm discount.")

Siber Systems offers a 30-day trial of both products. They work in all versions of Windows and support IE and Firefox, but not Google Chrome, Opera, or a few other browsers. Take a look at the compatibility list: www.roboform.com/browsers.html.

There's lots more to say about password management, but I'm almost out of space. So while you're hot on the topic, read Bitmill's smart series of Password Security 101 articles. They're less basic than you might imagine: www.thebitmill.com/articles/.

This column originally appeared in Bass's TechBite newsletter. Subscribe to Bass's free weekly newsletter and read Bass's blog at www.snurl.com/techbiteblog. Contents

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DesktopZoom

Reviewed by **Bonnie Snyder**, member of **P*PCompAS**
(**Pikes Peak Computer Application Society**), CO, ppcompas.apcug.org

One evening while surfing the web, I stumbled across a free screen magnifier called DesktopZoom. I downloaded it and put it through its paces. And I was quite impressed with it. There are those freeware programs that “you get what you pay for,” and then there are those that give you a whole lot more value. DesktopZoom is definitely in the latter category.

When you first load DesktopZoom, it comes up with a settings screen, with two tab areas; in the top area, the default is Entire desktop; and in the bottom tab area, the Mouse is the default tab. You can type in a numerical size for the mouse pointer and then select a shape and color for the mouse pointer. The “Big Mouse” option is selected by default (if you unselect it, you don’t get a mouse pointer at all... not good). Other options on the Mouse tab include selecting a Crosshair, selecting a thin red Rectangle which helps you focus on the working area of your application (don’t use the Crosshair and the Rectangle together because the Rectangle won’t move if you do), and another default selection: Hide real mouse (recommended).

Moving from left to right on the tabs, the first tab is for Zoom. The Zoom selection area has two input boxes for the size of the magnification. Default is 3000/1000. You’ll have to fiddle around with the numbers to find the best for you. There are three checkboxes. The first is to hide the configuration screen when the program is running (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The second is for No screen changes when not zoomed (it is not checked, but I

would recommend that you check it). The third is Stop zoom if mouse in right bottom corner (I checked it because I find it a convenient option).

The next lower tab is for Keys. These key combinations are for increasing or decreasing the magnification on the fly. By default, the Mouse Wheel option, a radio button, With Ctrl-key, in a combo box, is checked. There are three other key combinations you can select from. If you prefer to use the arrow keys instead of the mouse, you can select the Arrows radio button with Without Key selected in the combo box (there are three other key combinations to select from in the combo box). Finally, the Alt-Keys are selected by default in a checkbox with six possible settings for on the fly changes (Zoom in and out; Zoom on or off; tracking and crosshair—each option has a character to press with the Alt-Key to accomplish its task).

The Mouse tab comes next (we’ve already covered that); then comes the Color tab. There are three checkboxes: the first is for Grey shades (it has a combo box/edit box with seven choices of shades of grey including

an option to type in a number of your preference); the second is for Invert Colors, and the third (checked by default) is for Smoothing. You can have all three boxes checked if you wish. Finally, it has an edit box for Show original screen (you can type in a numeric percentage—0 is the default). This one makes me crazy ... what it does is show the original screen as a kind of background of the magnified screen. But, it was probably included because somebody needed that feature!

Then we move on to the Tracking tab. The first Tracking option has a combo box from which you can choose three tracking items: None, Caret, Caret + Menu; the default being Caret + Menu. Next addresses specifically Track MsWord Caret (checked by default). Then you get to select the Tracking delay time by typing a number in an edit box (30 is the default). Another check box comes next for allowing display of a Thumbnail with your choice of ratio (in an edit box). The Thumbnail is similar to a histogram in an art program; it displays the entire screen in miniature in the bottom right area of the screen. Finally, there is a combo box for choosing View.

The options in this combo box include Follow the mouse, Static—changes when hitting the border and Static—Jump to mouse. The default is Static—changes when hitting the border. You’ll just have to check these out yourself to see which works best for you. For the present, I am using the default. And then, the final lower tab is for Speech. I have noticed that people with low

(see **Zoom** on page 11)



(IE8—continued from page 4)

ZOOM allows the user to zoom in or out on a webpage, from 50% (zoom out, smaller text, more information displayed) to 400% (zoom in, larger text, less information displayed).

Web surfers are often concerned about their personal privacy while browsing on the net. IE8 offers a feature, “InPrivate” that allows the user to control the protection of his personal information while online. When selected, InPrivate deletes the browsing history, temporary internet files, filled forms, cookies, usernames, and passwords when closing the browser, leaving no traces of browsing or search history on the computer.

Sometimes a website appears to crash the browser while being viewed, shutting down all of the opened tabs, and requiring a reloading of the browser. IE8 offers “Automatic Crash Recovery” where if the content in a tab

crashes, the other opened tabs are unaffected, such that other opened pages are not closed or lost unexpectedly. IE8 will attempt to recover the lost tab once it has identified and resolved the problem.

Phishing, identity theft, and web-borne malware have become endemic, and a threat to web users. IE8 includes a “SmartScreen Filter” which incorporates anti-phishing tools to protect the user from imposter websites designed to trick the user into entering his personal information. The SmartScreen Filter also incorporates sophisticated anti-malware capabilities to help prevent web-borne adware, spyware, and other dangerous software from installing itself on the users’ computer. If a dangerous website is opened and detected, the address bar and window will turn red on the page, and a prominent warning will be displayed on the red background. Other protection is provided

by a cross site scripting (XSS) filter, which can detect and protect from malicious code execution while online, providing additional protection. A cute feature, which can help protect from phishing and identity theft is “domain highlighting” which highlights the domain name in the address bar, with the remainder of the address string in gray, displaying the true identity of the website.

Internet Explorer 8 is much improved over version 7, with improved security and enhanced features. Users of earlier versions of IE should upgrade to IE8. Users of other browsers should give IE8 a try, as they may be pleasantly surprised. Even though I have been a loyal Firefox user for several years, I will be using IE8 far more than I ever used IE7.

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Soft-Wear Review

by Charles Grover of the Rochester Computer Society

When I became active on our users’ group board I heard more experienced officers emphasize how important it is that people who win soft-wear as door prizes write reviews. Recently I won an item of soft-wear; here is my review.

On the front of the soft-wear there are two logos from the www.msn.com web page. While the shape and arrangement of the “msn” logo and stylized butterfly, and even placement of the TM symbols, appear accurate, the colors are not as clear and bright, especially where the upper and lower butterfly wings are superimposed. To the left, the web site logo clearly has a blue upper wing and a yellow-green lower wing overlapping to produce a darker green color. To the right a rust-red upper wing and an earthy yellow overlap to make orange. On the soft-

wear, however, the greens are less distinguishable and the red and orange are not much different. Actually, I think it is better looking on the soft-wear—less garish, more tasteful. But it is not a faithful copy. I will say this, however. The resolution of the image on the soft-wear is much higher. Enlarge the image from the web site and the edges go all fuzzy. At the same scale, the printing on the soft-wear is sharp.

I don’t know who is responsible for this soft-wear and its features—and its bug—er—butterfly. Despite the [msn.com](http://www.msn.com) logos on the soft-wear, the label inside the neck band says “Jerzees Activewear”. The label has a different logo featuring a stylized letter “Z”, and a line stating, “heavyweight cotton”. Looks like there is some sort of subcontracting or marketing arrangement going on here.

Anyway, the soft-wear has the shortest documentation imaginable, even though it is given in Spanish and French as well as English. It all fits on another sewn in label only about 4 mm wide and less than 5 mm high. In its entirety, the English documentation reads, “Machine wash warm with like colors. Only non-chlorine bleach when needed. Tumble dry low. Do not iron or dry clean emblem.” Across the top of the documentation label is a set of cryptic symbols, what I think of as international laundry marks. There is something like a tub of water with two dots inside, a triangle with diagonal stripes, and what I take to be a drier with one dot in it. I guess the dots have to do with temperature and the striped triangle is some sort of anti-chlorine protest sign. I never have been quite sure of these funny marks that show up

(see *Soft-Wear* on page 11)

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 makes Personal Finances handy for regularly occurring expenses, such as tax payments, electricity bills, Internet, etc. Transactions can be identified in a number of ways, including categories, family members, and tags. Tags provide a way to differentiate between similar transactions that fall into the same category. Categorization by family members will show spending habits of each member of the family in reports.

Personal Finances offers a summary view of all transactions, reports by categories, family members, and tags to see how much of the budget is allocated to each category or family member, and identify areas to cut spending if the budget comes out on the negative side. Generate reports that cover any period of

time. Results can be printed out, or saved as HTML, CHM, or TXT.

With Personal Finances, have the convenience of personal finance software without carrying around a laptop. When you go out of town, install Personal Finances onto a USB flash drive and keep track of all purchases. Simply plug the USB flash drive into any computer, update transactions, and unplug it. No traces are left behind on the host machine.

Personal Finances runs on Windows 98/NT/2000/XP/Vista and comes in two editions, Professional and Free-ware. For more information about the products, visit financesoftware.com. You can download the 30-day trial version, an absolutely free version, or the paid version. For the paid version, user group members are offered a 20%

discount on the purchase of Personal Finances 3.2. The coupon code is pf43M5G. (They failed to respond when I asked when the discount will end, but right now the discount code will still recalculate the price so I hope it's still good when you read this.)

Also, be aware that the description I included above is for the paid version, so do your homework if you want the free one and look at the comparison columns on their website. Several features in the paid version aren't in the free version. Also, I'm not sure if it tracks securities, which MS Money and Quicken will do.

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.

(Soft-Wear—continued from page 10)
 on lots of soft-wear nowadays. Clear language, confusing symbols.

Here is another discovery. At the bottom of the documentation is an address in Alabama. That's a long way from Redmond, Washington. Another indication that msn or MS did not actually originate this soft-wear.

The soft-wear was not shrink-wrapped. It looked a little dusty so I didn't try it on until it had been machine washed warm and tumble dried low. Without any ironing it is wrinkled a bit—but who wants to iron such things?

I tried on the soft-wear for a while. Mostly it is soft, but it felt a little scratchy around the neck. Why does soft-wear so often seem to get you in the neck? Perhaps more machine washing warm and tumble drying low will make it a bit softer—time will tell.

I really can't make any recommendations about this soft-wear. Such soft-wear is so much a matter of personal taste and comfort. But what the heck—I can always put a free tee shirt to use.

(Kindle2—continued from page 5)
 newspapers and magazines. Normally I would expect that this type of transition would take a few years, but the economic woes may put a rush on this type of move. The Hearst Corp., one of the largest publishers, is already planning to launch its own wireless ebook reader. Most are speculating that this would be a device with a larger screen that would more closely imitate the newspaper and magazine reading experience. Hearst, who is a mega-publisher, would be in a great position to create the liaisons needed to make this type of device and its content work. Fortune reports that the Hearst device will be available sometime this year.

There is no doubt that we live in a world that is changing because of technology and this type of technology may be in your hands sooner than you think.

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(Zoom—continued from page 9)
 vision will experience visual fatigue with long documents to read. The addition of speech in DesktopZoom is an excellent option when the eyes are ready to give out (or put you to sleep). The Speech option picks up on any SAPI5.0 voices you might already have on your computer as well as any premium voices you have acquired. You can turn the speech on only when you want it and you can control volume and speed in this tab.

There is more, but I really ought to leave some of the mystery so you can enjoy setting the program up. DesktopZoom has many really good features. My biggest complaint is that it does slow down movement on the screen. Ah well, nothing is perfect. Give DesktopZoom a try if you feel the need for some screen enlargement to help you read your computer monitor. Just Google DesktopZoom and you'll be taken to a site for download.

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Macon Users Group

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March's Door Prize Winners



Roger Beattie
won the March
50-50 jackpot!