June 14 — FLAG DAY

PRESIDENT'S JUNE LETTER

If you missed the last meeting, consider you missed two meetings and then some.

First, due to a error we ended up with two outstanding speakers. In order of presentation, there was Bruce Fries the author of the book "The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook" and our own guru Bill Woodall.

I had lost track of the arrangements Jim Russ made for meetings, and thinking I was need of a speaker for our Digital Photography kick off, I recruited (snared) Bill. All the time the fact that we had an outside speaker arranged blew past everyone - including Jim Russ who is excused. What is more, the speaker showed!

In any case, I am grateful for Bill adjusting to the confusion and the cut in time for his important topic which I would like to have done again later in this year or the beginning of next year.

Bruce Fries did a great job also of cutting his topic down to size but the members had many questions, plus Bruce had a raffle of several free music CDs. Then there was the Pres, yours truly, helping in the sales of Bruce's book at a special member discount while Bill set up.

Bruce presented the essential points of dealing with music on the Internet and handling it on your PC. He covered downloading and organizing along with some basic editing. I think he wet everyone's appetite on this subject.

Bill hit on the main items on image editing and some image manipulations. Hopefully Bill will be able to make the Digital Photography SIG on June 13th, 6PM at Jac Carrols home. Directions are printed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The Q&A was restricted to show and tell of Digital cameras. We had everything from the free cameras you get with a McD's burger to a $5,000+ professional camera. Almost everyone had a different make or model.

Next meeting topic is the kickoff for the Webmasters SIG. This is for those interested in making web sites on a professional level. I will do the kickoff topic - Flash presented on a general skill level. I am not sure about a Webmasters SIG meeting date.
Lon

NEEDED

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

The job task is to mail or fax monthly press releases to several newspapers.

These press releases are meeting announcements and may need to include summarization of information other members prepare for the newsletter.

Expansion of the function or maintaining the status quo noted above is entirely up to the officer.

Position reports to the club Secretary.

Speaker: Bruce Fries
Topic: Music on the Computer

Author of The MP3 and Internet TeamCom Books. ISBN: 1-928791-10-7

The book cost $25.00 and the club members were able to purchase the book at $20.00 each. I think at least a dozen members took advantage of this offer.

The first speaker at the Hunterdon Computer Club May 19th meeting was Bruce Fries author of the book "The MP3 and Internet". Bruce spoke about the availability of music on the Internet.

During the presentation some members raised the question of free music on the Internet and the issue of Copyright laws, particularly Napster was mentioned. Bruce soft stepped the issue pointing out that one time the music industry fought having music played freely over the radio. He thought in the long run, free music on the Internet would prevail, because like free music on the radio, the music industry would see more sales of their CDs. He also pointed out artists are embracing the Internet.

Bruce demonstrated software available for downloading and organizing your music. Programs such as Winamp, Real Player, and Music Match for example, are all available free either completely, or for some basic version of each.

Bruce showed how to "clean-up" music. This includes normalization. Normalization scans uncompressed audio files to determine peak or average levels. Then it proportionally increases or decreases level throughout the file to obtain the requisite volume level.

He also showed trimming and other features of sound editing software.

Resources for getting started with Down-loadable Music prepared by Bruce Fries.

Software:

1. Cool Edit 2000 record, edit and clean-up digitial audio 2. www.CoolEdit.com, Free basic ver sion and $69.00 for full version.
2. MusicMatch Jukebox create play and organize MP3 files. Makes standard audio and MP3 CDs www.MusicMatch.com. Free basic version and $29.95 ($19.95 if downloaded) for full version.
3. Real Player to listen to Internet Ra dio. www.Real.com. Basic free version and $29.70 for full version.
4. WinAmp Plays MP3 files, CD and other formats. www.Winamp.com. Free.

Hardware:

1. Plextor 32X/12X/10X internal IDE CD-R/CD-RW Burner www.buy. com for $188.95
2. Roland UA-30 USB Audio and Mixer www.Edirol.com for $248.00.
3. Rio 800 128 MB protable MP3 player www.RioHome.com $299.00 (Rio 600/64MB $219.95)
4. Rio Volt portable MP3/CD player www.RioHome.com $169.95
5. Rio Receiver for streaming high quality music from you PC to any room in your house, www.RioHome .com $299.95 ($349.95 starter kit with PNA network adapter).
6. Entertainment Anywhere to wire-lessly send sound from your com-puter to stereo with a remote control www.X10.com $69.95
7. SoundBlaster Live! MP3 sound card, www.buy.com $86.95.

WebSites:

1. CDBaby.com - great selection of CDs from independent artists, www. CDBaby.com $10 - $15 per CD.
2. EMusic.com for downloadable songs from better-known artists, www.EMusic.com 99 cents/song and $8.99 per album. Some free songs.
3. The web site for Bruce Fries book "The MP3 and Internet Audio Hand book" www.MP3Handbook.com
4. Peer to peer file sharing web sites: www.napster.com, www.napigator. com, www.musiccity.com, and www.aimster.com

Speaker Bill Woodall Demonstration: Basic Editing Features For Digital Photography

Bill showed us how to edit pictures us-ing Photo Shop. When asked if there was an easier program, Bill suggested Micrografx Picture Publisher. The ver-sion he uses is version 8. Version 9 has recently been released, however, Bill says he has no reason to upgrade.

CDW (www.cdw.com) shows version 8 at $47.61, version 9 at $62.36. Pic-ture Publisher 8 is $33.95 at msbcd. com

The most common functions I use pic-ture editors for are:

Cropping of images to correct or en-hance framing.

Color correction and exposure correc-tion. I find Picture Publisher to be eas-ier to manipulate for this purpose; it's also easier to save custom profiles and create macro functions.

Removal of unwanted image parts. This is where I use the cloning (or 'rubber stamp' as it's called in Photo-shop) to remove overhead wires, anten-nae, light posts, signs or any other parts I don't like. Again the controls for this are easier in PictPub.

Color conversions - creating faux wa-tercolor or sepia images. In conjunction with watercolor or other specialty pa-pers you can create really stunning im-ages. I'll bring along a few examples to the next meeting.

Photo compositing - or grafting two or more images together. This is the most time-consuming of the tasks.

At the May meeting, members talked about the cameras the brought:

Peter Czerwinski
Polariod 320 and 640 pixel. Purchased at Shoprite

Barbara Middleton
Polaroid 320 at $50.
She has used it in her beginner's work. Some shots are blurry.

Richard Mercier
Digital DSL Prop 640 x 480 pixels - got from Earthlink - quality not great

Bill Woodall
Epson Photo PC
He bought it in 1996 and paid $900

Paul Glattstein
Olympus D490 Has a flash, 8megs memory, 84 pictures and does 640 x 480.

Bill Emery
Fuji Film MX1200

Dr. Gerald Barad
Nikon D1
128 megabytes. 80 high quality pictures on 10 megabytes, 200-1600 film speed - able to scan pictures as though they were on a hard drive.

Don Columbo
Sony Mavieca about $400.00
Uses a floppy disk holding about 20 pic-tures each. He took this to Africa. Newer model has a backlight on viewer, his does not. Has Pan shot and can do rapid 5 shots like a video camera. 640 x 480 pixels.

Don Columbo
Intel USB $119.00
127 - 130 shots in JPG format. Medium qulity is 640 x 480 Low quality is 320 x 240.   Too easy to rock it when pressing shoot button. Can handle a video feed into computer.   Don claims it draws power from his computer when con-nected to USB and the computer shuts down.

Lynne Gonzales
*Sony Movieca-*can do video with sound.

Lon Hosford
Olympus D500L
F2.8 50mm - 150 mm 3x zoom lense. All glass aspherical lens. Through the lens optical viewfinder. 2 MB to 8 MB flash media 1024 x 768 pixel high resolu-tion. 3 on 2 MB. 640 x 480 pixel stan-dard resolution. 8 on 2 MB. 320 x 240 pixel low resolution 24 on 2 mb. Multi-mode flash: red eye reduction, fill-in flash, auto low light back light. Auto exposure white balance and focus 12 sec self timer. AC adapter or 4 AA batteries and can use Nickel Metal Hydride batter-ies.

NOTES FROM THE MAY MEETING

(Ilene Shope, contributor)

The usual Q&A session was deferred.

Lon advised the club that Jim Russ had another toe removed.

Don Franklin is a new member. He is in psychology and does web development full time. He said he joined to be with people who "don't roll their eyes when he starts to talk about computer stuff."

Lynne Gonzales, guest, said she came to the meeting with her husband who is an HCC member, as she is interested in the SIG Digital Photography startup.

Visiting today was Harvey Schram, a member who says he doesn't come too often. Harvey won the 50/50 ticket raffle.

Evelyn Stewart said that she and Eleanor Cole teach on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Hunterdon Senior Center. More teachers are needed. If anyone is interested in teaching, either at the beginners level, or on any particular program, let Evelyn know.

Bill Woodall suggested that some members might prefer earlier hours for SIG meetings so people would not have to travel in the dark. The first SIG—Digital Photography will meet at Jac Carroll's from 6-8PM on Wednesday, June 13.

Jim Russ, We miss you and wish you well. Come back soon.

Why do some e-mail message appear normal while others are full of greater-than symbols and broken sentences?

The look of an e-mail message's text is based on a number of things. The type of e-mail programs both you and the sender are using may be a factor because some programs can send and receive message containing styled, or HTML, or text, while other programs cannot and will display the text differently. If you are seeing a lot of odd line breaks and symbols in your e-mail text, it is probably because the message has been forwarded a number of times to other people before reaching you. Many e-mail programs have a specific number of characters they can fit on a line, and forwarding the text to someone may create peculiar line breaks with one or two words on a single line. The greater-than symbols are automatically inserted by many e-mail programs to show that the text next to it originally came from someone else and is being forwarded to you.

J.D. Dirsdorfer
New York Times, 5/24/01

What is Visual Basic? I sometime see errors relating to it on my Windows system and would like to know what it is supposed to do.

Visual Basic is a computer programming language that was developed by Microsoft about 11 years ago. It was developed form the old Basic programming language. Unlike its Basic predecessor, Visual Basic lets users write parts of their programs by using a graphical user interface instead of typing lines of Code by hand.

For example, someone programming in Visual Basic can drag and drop a program's control elements like alert boxes or buttons to click on, into place and then write the code that defines what these elements do. (For those interested in learning even simple lessons in how to use it, an excellent resource is the Visual Basic Explorer web page at www.vbexplorer.com).

If you are experiencing regular errors with your Windows system, you may be able to find information about what could be causing the problems in the support area of Microsoft's Web site. Try searching for your specific error message in Microsoft's Knowledge Base at search.support.microsoft.com.

J.D. Biersdorfer
The New York Times, 6/7/01

Is there a way to disable or turn off the Caps Lock key?

A misplaced hit on Caps Lock instead of the Shift key can lead to all sorts of havoc with the document's capitalization.

Having the Caps Lock key on accidentally can also lead to a frustrating series of "wrong password" alerts when trying to use a case-sensitive password for your office network or Internet provider.

To ward you of any accidental keystrokes, you can instruct the Windows computer to make an alert noise when the Caps Lock, Num Lock or Scroll Lock keys are pressed. To do that, go to the Start menu and to Settings, then to Control Panel. Double-click on Accessibility Options and click on the Keyboard tab in the box, then check Use ToggleKeys before clicking on O.K.

There have also been a number of Windows and Macintosh shareware programs that can alert you to Caps Lock activation in different ways or completely disable the key. At shareware archive sites like TuCows (www.tucows.com) and Dave Central (www.davecentral.com), type "Caps Lock" in the search box if you want to see what is available.

The sMaRT caPs 4.0 program for Windows 95, 98, Me, NT and 2000 helps prevent accidental Caps Lock activation, and Macintosh users can use Caps Off or KeyboardLock. They cost $10 each and can be found on the Web.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
SIG MEETING

Wednesday, June 13, 2001
6PM to 8PM

Jac Carroll, <jcarroll@eclipse.net> phone is in the officer's listing in this newsletter.

This is an open topic meeting to include anything including buying computer hardware and software, using editing software. Bring your cameras.

Carpool if you can.

DIRECTIONS:

From US Hwy 202
Heading towards Somerville from Flemington's 202/31 traffic circle;
Approximately 8 miles to Old York Rd. traffic light (Fleet Bank and Branchburg Police Station on corners);
Left turn onto Old York Rd.;
Straight on Old York for 1 mile and the road becomes Readington Rd.;
Past Readington Reformed Church on right;
Left turn onto Hillcrest Rd. (onto bridge);
Up hill in front on Readington Fire House;
Hillcrest makes a sharp left and a sharp right;
First house on left after the jog, 100 Hillcrest;
Continue slightly further to Sunset View Rd., for overflow parking;

From US Hwy 22
County 523 thru Whitehouse Station; 2 miles to left turn onto Readington Rd.;
Just past Readington Post Office, about 3 miles;
Right turn onto Hillcrest Rd. (onto bridge);
Up hill in front on Readington Fire House;
Hillcrest makes a sharp left and a sharp right;
First house on left after the jog, 100 Hillcrest;
Continue slightly further to Sunset View Rd for overflow parking;

Jac strongly advises against parking on Hillcrest as the road is too narrow. He has enough parking for possibly ten cars in his driveway.

COMPUTER GENESIS
(Don Columbo, contributor)

An old, bearded shepherd with a crooked staff walked up to a stone pulpit and said, "And lo, it came to pass that the trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a young wife by the name of Dot. And Dot Com was a comely woman, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she had been called Amazon Dot Com. And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why doth thou travel far, from town to town, with thy goods when thou can trade without ever leaving thy tent?" And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How, Dear?" And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale and they will reply telling you which hath the best price. And the sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had, at the top price, without ever moving from his tent. But this success did arouse envy. A man named Maccabia did secret himself inside Abraham's drum and was accused of insider trading. And the young man did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Siderites, or NERDS for short.

And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums, that no one noticed that the real riches were going to the drum maker, one Brother William of Gates, who bought up every drum company in the land. And indeed did insist on making drums that would work only if you bought Brother Gates' drumsticks. And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others." And as Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or as it came to be known "eBay," he said, "we need a name that reflects what we are," and Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators." "Whoopee!", said Abraham. "No, YAHOO!" said Dot Com.. .and that is how it all began.

LIFE WITHOUT A MOUSE
(Evelyn Stewart, contributor)

My mouse began to leave a trail across the screen. Then it refused to move sideways. A busy young man at Staples assured me the problem was in the settings and had nothing to do with the mouse itself. There is always a spare mouse around the house (live or virtual), so I tried to install it and failed. I began to explore computing without a mouse. The Windows key will open the program list, when you can't click on the Start button. Alt plus F4 will exit from almost anything. Wherever there is an underlined letter, the Alt key plus the underlined letter will execute that command. The Tab key will move the cursor from box to box. Control plus, U, I and B will format from the keyboard. You can select text holding Shift and using the direction arrows. Enter will often do the same thing as clicking on OK. But when the screen says select the URL, you need the mouse. I didn't find any way to use a graphics program from the keyboard.

So I went back to trying to connect the mouse. Careful observation showed that connectors on the dying mouse and the new one had different pin patterns, relative to the mark that indicates the top. I rotated the connector so that the top was on the side, and it went in without a struggle.

John Warsinski explained this to me. The "new" mouse was designed for a desktop box . When you tip a box on edge to become a tower, the spot that was the top becomes the left edge.

YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK
(Evelyn Stewart, contributor

Visit the NOAA page or the OSEI page and learn all about Operational Significant Event Imagery and the Environmental Applications Team (EAT) and the Satellite Services Division of NESOIS which is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Isn't it good to know you are paying somebody to administer the atmosphere? You can see the image of the day too at www. osei.noaa.gov/iod.html.

THINK YOU'RE HAVING A BAD DAY?

Next time you think you're having a bad day recall:

1. The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was $80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers. A minute later they were both eaten by a killer whale.

2. A psychology student in New York rented out her spare room to a carpenter in order to nag him constantly and study his reactions. After weeks of needling, he snapped and beat her repeatedly with an axe leaving her brain damaged.

3. In 1992, Frank Perkins of Los Angeles made an attempt on the world flagpole-sitting record. Suffering from the flu he came down eight hours short of the 400 day record, his sponsor had gone bust, his girlfriend had left him and his phone and electricity had been cut off.

4. A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen, shaking frantically with what looked like a wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current she whacked him with a handy plank of wood by the back door, breaking his arm in two places. Till that moment he had been happily listening to his Walkman.

5. Two animal rights protesters were protesting at the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn. Suddenly the pigs, all two thousand of them, escaped through a broken fence and stampeded, trampling the two hapless protesters to death.

And the capper.......

6. Iraqi terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with "return to sender" stamped on it. Forgetting it was the bomb, he opened it and was blown to bits.

Here's hoping your day is better than any of these.

I have been tracking junk email to my account. The current count for 2001 as of June 6 11:32 Am is 1,212 email pieces or 9 plus pieces per day.

Here are some stats for thought:

Selected subjects starting with:

A number = 50
Get = 35
Rates = 27
You or your = 26.
Mortgage = 26
ADV or advertise = 25
Low, lowest = 25
The = 24
Are = 15
Work = 13
Viagra = 7

Selected subjects or from addresses containing:

Email = 103
$ = 82
Home = 77
Mortgage = 44
Money = 42
Viagra = 23
Sex 19
Weight = 8
Fat = 8

Lon

President
Lon Hosford
908-996-7941
lon@hosfordusa.com

Vice-President
Joe Burger
908-996-7221

Treasurer
Jac Carroll
908-782-4325
jcarroll@eclipse.net

Program
Jim Russ
908-685-1079
jfruss@juno.com

Secretary
Membership
Don Colombo
609-397-1265
dc1944@hotmail.com

Ex Officio
Richard Williams
Immediate Past President

HCC Web Page
www.hunterdoncomputerclub.org
Paul Glattstein
pglatt@ptd.net

Computer Volunteers
ALL MEMBERS

What do I need to transfer my old cassette tapes and vinyl albums to compact disc using my computer?

There are a number of ways to copy those old cassette tapes and vinyl record albums onto a digital compact disc, and you will need to made sure that you have both the proper hardware and software for the task. On the hardware side, you should have a CD recorder, blank recordable CD's and a sound card in your computer that has a stereo line-in port or a microphone jack.

You will also need a turntable or cassette deck for playing the original recordings, an amplifier or a pre-amplifier to boost the sound from the turntable to the computer's sound card, and the cables to connect everything. (A cable that has a stereo miniplug for the sound card on one end and branches into a Y with two RCA plugs for the amplifier or pre-amplifier's left and right channels can usually be found for less than $10 at electronics stores.

On the software side, you will need a program like Easy CD Creator for Windows or Toast for Macintosh that will let you record the audio tracks and transfer them to the CD recorder. Most CD recorders come with basic software that does this, but there are also programs like Diamond Cut 32 by Tracer Technologies, specifically for cleaning up noise and enhancing audio recordings made from LP's. You can find information on many commercial CD recording programs at www. cdrecordingsoftware.com. and a huge selection of shareware for a variety of computer platforms at Shareware Music Machine, www.hitsquad.com/smm/cat/ AUDIO_RECORDING.

Although there are some programs that will let you record directly onto the CD from you turntable or cassette deck, most experts recommend that you first record the audio tracks into WAV files on your hard drive before transferring them to the CD. That allows you to edit the tracks, use the enhancement software and even save them to MP3 or another compressed audio format for use in a

portable digital music player. You will need quite a bit of room to store the WAV files because each minute generally takes up about 10 megabytes of disk space; adding an inexpensive external hard drive just for storing audio tracks can be helpful. If you store the audio files on your main computer hard drive, you should defragment the drive first for best recording results.

Once you have all the hardware and software, connect the turntable or cassette deck and pre-amplifier to your PC or Mac's sound card and read the manual that came with your CD recording software and recorder. It may take a day of fiddling to get everything working properly, but once you have it set up, the recording process is fairly straightforward.

Is there a way to copy records onto a CD if one does not have a CD recorder for their computer?

If you do not have a CD recorder for your computer, you still have some options for transferring your vinyl records to compact disc. You can get a CD recorder designed for home-audio use, like ones made by Philips or TDK, that you can integrate into your stereo system. The CDs that you record from vinyl albums will sound pretty much like the albums – including any pops, clicks and skips made by the needle.

> … most experts recommend that you first record the audio tracks into Wav files ....

Another option is to use a service that specializes in transferring older types of audio media to compact disc, and a simple Web search should call up some names. Magic Sound Restoration, part of CVC Productions in Florida, can transfer a wide variety of source materials, including 78 and 45 r.p.m. records, eight-track and reel-to-reel tapes and MiniDiscs.

Prices start at about $20 for a simple copy of an LP to a CD. You can find out more on the company's Web site (www.lp2cd.com) or by calling (800) 788-9043.

J.D.Biersdorfer
New York Times, 5/31/01

This relates to the great graphics club meeting. Copied from CoolClipArt.com email.

(Evelyn Stewart)

Before you scan, decide what is the biggest size you think you will ever want to print the scanned image at. Scan it at that size (see below), and save the file. You can always create a smaller version from the original without loosing any image quality, but trying to make it bigger doesn't work so well. Why? When you reduce the size of the scan, your "photo" or "image" program can discard the extra pixels (dots in the scanned image) that are not needed at the smaller size. But, if you make it bigger, the software has to guess what color of pixels to add and the result will be a fuzzier image.

J-LO VIRUS
(Don Colombo, Contributor

Virus dresses up as a naked J-Lo enclosed in an email that promises to display pictures of actress Jennifer Lopez naked. Can you resist? Antivirus-software maker Panda Software issued an alert Thursday after receiving about eight reports of the virus, including one from a major aviation company. Panda has given the virus its highest rating of potential risk, distribution and destruction. However, Panda competitor Symantec considers the virus less of a threat, saying it received only six reports through Wednesday, indicating that it was spreading too slowly to cause any real damage.

WEB RING

A web ring is a group of sites with similar themes. When doing research they can be a more direct route to information than using a query with a search engine, as they pretty much eliminate the chances of getting into commercial sites or the more bizarre sites.

Web Rings are created by home users who have particular interests or hobbies.

If you want to find, join or create a Web Ring, a good place to start is Yahoo's Web Ring directory at dir.webring. yahoo.com.

MASTERING COMPUTERS
Reid Goldsborough
Techdirections, May 2001

Free & Easy Computer Tools

Whatever you use your PC for, chances are you can do it more productively, whether you're a computer guru or newbie. And you can do it without spending a dime with free software programs and web services.

Nerds may not all be saints, but there's a long history in the computer world of programmers sharing their work for free.

Today you can still download freeware from the internet, These typically are small programs released by their developers to the public without charge, sometimes out of sheer generosity. Some developers have other no-less-valid motives, such as promoting their consulting business or offering a limited free version of their work in the hope that users will upgrade to a beefed-up pay version.

Typically programmers prohibit you from selling their program or altering its source code. But a growing number of "Open Source" adherents, following the example of the Linux operating system, release their program's source code to the public over the internet, without restriction, in a worldwide collaborative effort to create the best possible product. The Open Source Initiative at www. opensource.org offers further information about this phenomenon.

On the web, some e-commerce companies are moving beyond the advertising-only model and are not charging for their services in a scramble to survive the dot-com shakeout. But most web-based services remain free.

All this seems in antithesis to our market economy and to the very nature of capitalism, and it flies in the face of commonsense notions of how to profit from your labor. How well can you be doing if you're pricing your product at zilch? And, from a consumer perspective, how valuable can something be if it doesn't cost anything?

It turns out that the best of the free software programs and web services nullify the notion that there's no such thing as a free lunch. These are excellent tools. But as with anything, there is a potential downside here.

One negative with a free program is that you probably won't get the same tech support as with a pay program (though good tech support with pay programs is never a certainty). Another negative, which is true any time you tweak a PC, is the risk that something will go wrong, which in a catch-22 that can necessitate tech support.

One way to protect yourself with Windows PCs is to make back-up copies of two files that together comprise part of the inner workings of Windows called the Registry." You can do this with the help of software, though it's simple enough to do it manually.

If you're using Windows 95, 98, or Me, just copy the files system.dat and user. dat in the Windows folder to a Zip or similar removable drive, a back-up tape, or another folder on your hard disk.

In case your system does get corrupted, which is possible but highly unlikely with any given tweak, you can correct things in most cases by simply copying these Registry files back to the Windows folder.

If you're using Windors NT or 2000, use the Backup utility included to back up the Registry and, if need be, to restore. (www.j2.com)

Power Desk. With this utility, you can copy, move, or otherwise manage files on your hard disk faster than you can with Windows' own tools. PowerDesk also includes built-in tools for handling Zip-compressed files. (www.ontrack.com/powerdesk)
Jconnect Free. Formerly called Jfax, this internet-based service lets you receive faxes as attachments to email messages, which is much handier than using a fax-modem. (www.j2.com)
Tweak UI. This Microsoft util-

ity, which works with Windows 95 and all versions after it, makes it easy to tweak the Windows user interface. There are dozens of options – one lets you log on automatically at boot-up, convenient for cable and DSL modem users. (www.microsoft.com/ntworkstation/downloads/powertoys/networking/nttweakui.asp)
PC Pitstop. This web-based service scans your PC for viruses, checks you hard disk for errors and fragmentation, and diagnoses you internet connection. (www.pcpitstop.com)
Atomica. Formerly called Gurunet, this combination utility/web service is a reference gem. While connected to the internet, you hold down the Alt key when clicking on a word in any windows program. Atomica offers a dictionary definition then the option of reading a concise encyclopedia entry, translating the work into foreign languages, or searching further on the web. (www.atomica.com)

The above is just a sprinkling of what's out there. You can test out other interesting-sounding programs at such virus-free download sites as Nonags at www.nonags.com and Download.com at download.cnet.com.

(Submitted by Don Colombo)

To all,

This is advance notice that I will not attend the August meeting.

So we need to know who will conduct the meeting and the presenter.

Currently the planned topic is Geneology along with the kickoff of the Geneology SIG.

Lon

Hunterdon Computer Club

Next Meeting Saturday, June 16, 2001

The next meeting topic is Macromedia Flash - What is it?

Lon Hosford is the presenter.

It is also the kick off meeting for the Webmasters SIG.

The July meeting is the kickoff for the Basic Users SIG

The August meeting is the kickoff for the Genealogy SIG.

HCC NEWSLETTER

HUNTERDON COMPUTER CLUB

Marlyn Reuter, Editor
267 Federal Twist Road
Stockton, New Jersey 08559

FIRST CLASS MAIL
Address Correction Requested