

Midland
CComputer
Club

BITS AND BYTES

The Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

October 2007

GENERAL CLUB MEETING 7:00 P.M.

Meets 4th Wednesday of the month at the
Midland Community Center
2001 George St., Midland, MI
<http://mcc.apcug.org/>

This month's date: October 24th

**THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: New Technology
Updates—Create Your Holiday Wish List!**

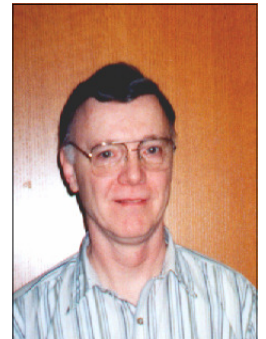
PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Contact :

Frank Koenig frankkoenig@charter.net
Co-Chairman-Larry Piper larryP56@chartermi.net

The President's Corner

As we were discussing future program topics at the last board meeting, it was mentioned that we have been getting some mixed feedback on our programs. Some people would like more depth in the technical aspects of some of the topics, whereas some people feel that the programs are too deep and technical. With the mixed membership we have, the board tries to walk a line between being too elementary and being too technical. Some of our more technical programs are intended to just scratch the surface and to give you an idea of what can be done with your computers and should not be viewed as "how to" sessions.



With that discussion in mind the board then proceeded to discuss ways to address the needs of those who need assistance in some of the basics as well as those who need more advanced information. Several training options already exist

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What you missed!

In **September** Joe Lykowski gave a very informative presentation on virtual operating systems and how we can use them to run multiple operating systems. Using a virtual operating system you can test out a new operating system without wiping out your current system. Virtual operating systems can also be used to keep an old operating system available on your current computer so that you can run that old application that you dearly love.

Upcoming Activities

In **October** Frank Koenig will update us on some of the new things going on in the technology arena. In using this information you can provide those who love you with a list of ideas of things you would like for the holidays.

October is also the time of year that our hearts turn to.....Computer Club Board nominations! Give this some thought, club members. New board members keep our monthly programs interesting and helpful for everyone, even the novice computer user. We all learn, when new ideas and techniques are shared by a variety of presenters. No question is "too dumb" to be asked; if you don't understand something, someone else may have had the same issue and will gladly help answer it, or find an answer for you.

Our computer club board meets the second Tuesday of (almost) every month, except July, @ 7 pm.

Please consider serving on our board and nominate yourself for the position you would like to fill. All

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POSITION

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in the community for basic computer education. I know the Community Center offers 4-8 week classes on Windows, Word and Excel. The library also periodically offers basic computer classes (I think these are free to library members). North Midland Family Center and West Midland Family Center also offer basic training (free again as far as I know). Then also ETC and Delta offer classes at a variety of levels.

Next the board started to discuss what we could do to assist those who need personalized help. Larry Piper mentioned that the local Apple computer club periodically offers something called "Boot Camp." These are one-on-one sessions to assist people with various problems. The discussion then migrated to can we offer something like this to our members (and potentially the public). It would require several of our members to be available to assist and the facilities to be able to work with those individuals. These sessions would not be weekly or even monthly, but held at various times throughout the year. This is still in the discussion stages, but we would like your input on the idea. Also any other ideas that you may have on this topic or programs or anything in general, please let us know.

BTW, October is the month of our annual nominations for the board for next year. New heads bring new ideas, so don't be afraid to offer your services to make the club better!

— Howard Lewis

(The above comments are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midland Computer Club.)

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positions are open for nomination. If you have a question about what duties are required for a specific position, see page two of this newsletter for the current officers and their e-mail address.

Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be 7 p.m., November 13, 2007, at Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church, 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland. The meeting will finalize the topics for the first part of 2008.

Membership Enrollment form

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

ZIP _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Membership dues FAMILY (\$20) STUDENT (\$15) NEW Member ____ renewal ____

Please fill out the above form and mail it along with payment of check or money order to :

MIDLAND COMPUTER CLUB Attn: membership chairman
P.O. box 132
Midland, MI 48640-0132

you may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

Useful, useless and strange (in no particular order) Web Sites:

<p>http:// www.oldversion.com/ http://www.oldapps.com/ http://old-versions.net/</p>	<p>With new programs getting ever larger and more bloated and containing many features that you will never have any use for, these sites may contain an answer for you. Some of these programs were released as freeware, some as shareware and some were commercial offerings. However, if you still hold a valid license and have lost a disk or CD, you should be on solid legal ground. A SERIOUS WARNING: An undeniably good thing that comes with new versions of software is the fixes you get for security holes, sometimes very serious ones. So if you choose to run old versions of programs, you are taking a calculated risk. Make sure your other defenses are as strong as you can make them, and be extra careful about what you click.</p>
<p>http://www.crayola.com/</p>	<p>We all used Crayola® crayons when we were small, but if you still enjoy coloring pictures and playing games, Crayola® has developed this site to satisfy that urge. You can also print off the pages to give to your children or grandchildren for them to color. At the Crayola site, you'll find numerous ideas for holiday cards, birthday cards, and even school days cards. You can keep your kids busy, and going through boxes of Crayolas, for a long time.</p>
<p>http://www.crucial.com/</p>	<p>For those looking to increase the memory in their computers, Crucial offers a scanning system which will detect what memory your system can use and the computer's maximum capacity. If you are running a Windows XP system with less than 256 MB of memory, you will notice a significant speed increase by bumping up your memory to at least 256 MB. Crucial will show their offerings along with prices. However, if you have another supplier that you prefer, you at least know what type of memory your system requires. (If you are using either Mozilla Firefox or Windows Vista, you will be required to download a small program to perform the scan. If you are using IE in Windows XP, the scan will only require ActiveX permission to run.)</p>

Tips, Tricks & Techniques

Is Your Computer Slow (Part 1)?

Many people use photographs for their background on their desktop. It is usually nice to see a picture of a grandchild or some pretty scenery instead of a bland plain screen. However, pictures will slow down even a fast computer (especially large, high-quality pictures). Animations and sounds will slow down the PC even more. If your computer is starting to show its age and is starting to slow down, you might want to tweak the settings on your computer so that it will display these pictures faster and have less of an impact on the performance of your computer. To accomplish this, right click on *My Computer* and select *Properties*. Go to the *Advanced Tab*, and select *Settings* next to *Performance*. Finally select *Adjust for best performance*. Click *OK* twice. You should now see some improvement in the performance of your machine.

Is Your Computer Slow (Part 2)?

Sounds can also cause speed problems, so removing them is another way to improve performance. This includes the startup and shutdown sounds as well as the other sounds that is used by default in Windows. To remove sounds in Windows XP go to *Control Panel* and double click on *Sounds and Audio Devices*, if you are using

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Classic View. Next click on *Sounds* and click on the drop-down arrow below *Sound scheme* select *No Sounds* and click on *OK*. If you are using *Category View* in *Control Panel*, double click on *Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices* and select *Change the sound scheme*. Again under *Sound scheme* click on the drop-down arrow and select *No Sounds* and click on *OK*.

With Windows Vista it is a little different. Again, open *Control Panel* and click on *Hardware and Sounds*. Next click on *Change system sounds* under *Sounds*. Then under *Sound scheme* click on the drop-down arrow and select *No Sounds* and click on *OK*.

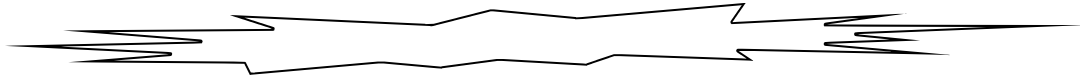
Again, this should show a slight improvement in the performance of your computer.

Enter Current Date and/or Time into Microsoft Excel

When entering the current date and time into a cell in Microsoft Excel, you don't need to type it into the cell. To insert today's date as a static date simply select the cell and press *CTRL+;* (hold down the *CTRL* key and press the semicolon *(;)*). To enter the current time, press *CTRL+SHIFT+;*. If you want to enter the date and time both into the current cell, press *CTRL+;* followed by a *space* and then *CTRL+SHIFT+;*.

Using Shortcuts in Windows Applications

Once you become more fluid on the keyboard to your computer, you may find it a nuisance to keep taking your hands off of the keyboard to reach for the mouse to use your applications menus. However, there are a number of shortcuts that are invaluable to speed up your use of the computer. Some of the standard shortcuts that almost all applications use are:



Microsoft Encarta 2007 Premium
Microsoft Corporation
Review by Howard Lewis

When you want to research something (if you are anything like me) you immediately turn to the Internet and start up your favorite search engine. In the process you may end up with 1 million+ entries to review. Now you have to sort out the "wheat from the chafe" to determine what is true, what is fiction and what is someone else's definition of truth. If you don't have to time to adequately filter the information yourself, consider using an encyclopedia. The Microsoft Encarta series has always been an excellent source for information and continues to get better each year. The Premium edition not only includes the standard "encyclopedia" entries, speaking dictionary, and maps, but it also includes Encarta Kids which is a great tool for those ages 7 to 12. Parental controls can also be added to ensure that kids cannot be subjected to some of the "unsavory" content that they may be subjected to on the web. The interface has been completely redesigned to make it easier than ever to find the specific information that you are looking for. Monthly updates keep the encyclopedia current by adding current events and discoveries as they are found.

The package itself comes on either 5 CDs or 1 DVD and pretty much requires a standard system — 1 GHz processor, 256 MB of memory (512 MB recommended) and Windows XP SP2. My install (complete — running under Vista Ultimate) required about 1.5 GB of hard disk space. Obviously the monthly updates require an Internet connection and speakers are required for the audio portion of the encyclopedia. The install went smoothly without a hitch.

Microsoft Encarta is an encyclopedia that I can recommend to assist you (or your children or grandchildren) to safely research any topic. The recommended price is \$49.99, although I've seen online prices for less than \$40.

Windows Vista: The Missing Manual

David Pogue
 O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.
 ISBN 0-596-52827-2
A Book Review by Howard Lewis

When I was getting ready to build my new computer earlier this year, I decided that it was going to be ready to run Microsoft Vista. However, as with most new software (applications and operating systems), there is a certain feeling of uncertainty over any upgrade. I was pleased when I saw the O'Reilly & Associates was releasing another book in there "Missing Manual" series on Windows Vista. I immediately ordered a copy to assist in my endeavor to install and learn a new operating system.

I must say that this book has proven to be an excellent investment as it covers all of the new features and idiosyncrasies of the new version of Windows. The book covers the new Welcome Center, Desktop, Start Menu, Search and Gadgets. If/when you upgrade to Windows Vista, I would strongly recommend this book to help you through some of the trying times that everyone encounters as they learn new software.

The book has a suggested price of \$34.99; however, you can get a 35% discount when ordered through O'Reilly with the user group discount.



The New, the Best, and the Worst - September 2007

Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.
 Swipcug(at)gmail.com
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E-mail Reliability Woes

Banks, mutual funds, credit card companies, utilities, they all want to send me my monthly statements in electronic form over the Internet, "for my convenience," and incidentally to save on the cost of mailing them out the traditional way. Do I go along with that? No way, José! Just think of all the things that can go wrong.

Security. I already receive regular emails, mostly delegated to spam folders, from fake financial organizations such as PayPal, E-Bay, and banks all over the world. How am I going to distinguish the fishes from the phishes? I do have online access to some of my financial accounts, but I use them strictly one-way: I access them directly by typing in the URL. Some financial institutions have expanded security beyond the usual user name and password check, to let me verify that I'm dealing with the genuine institution. Before I present my user name and password, I am shown a prearranged word and an image to make sure that I am dealing with the genuine Web site, not some phisher in Nigeria. Such two-way passwords are a good idea, and using an image instead of a word adds additional security.

More security. I still have to worry about key grabber viruses that record what I type. An up-to-date reliable anti-virus program may prevent that, or not. Making payments online can also be hazardous, especially if I can't be absolutely certain I'm not addressing a phisher. I have a Citibank credit card account that will provide me online with a one-time credit card number to be used for a single transaction. That minimizes the risk of fraud. But how am I going to archive online statements securely for years to come unless I print them out first? If necessary, does my own printout provide the same level of proof as an original bank statement?

Reliability. Because spam now makes up the largest part of email crossing the Internet, Internet Service Providers increasingly install spam filters to remove the chaff from the wheat. The problem arises when the spam filter removes legitimate messages without notifying the sender, or even worse, the recipient. It

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seems to happen all the time and not only because it is easy to misspell an address. Recently I used my local provider, Sigecom.net, to respond to an email from a niece who uses myway.com. Fortunately I was notified by "blackhole.myway.com," that the response bounced, with an error message indicating that there was a mismatch between sender addresses somewhere along the way. Since Sigecom forwards email via another email provider (Mira-something-or-other), that could have been the problem. I sent the response again, using Google email that time, and all was well.*

A week later I sent a SWIPCUG e-mail message to 49 addressees using my Google e-mail account. Two of the mailings, both addressed to members @att.com, were blocked because "it was sent by a system that we have reason to think has sent high levels of spam to our customers in the past." Maybe other members did not receive the message either but I wasn't notified. Again using Google Mail, I resent the message without trouble to just the two blocked recipients. Maybe att.com balked at the fairly long list (49) of addressees?

One of our members, associate director at the local Public Library that hosts our meetings, was unwittingly deprived of messages sent to him and about 10 other members who informally constitute our planning committee. The Library has its own email system, guarded by a properly-named "barracuda" to swallow anything smelling of spam. The system administrator managed to retrieve the messages, belatedly, once he was aware of the problem, and loosened the rules to get our member back in the loop. It goes to show that even if you are not personally plagued by spam woes, your email communications are still affected. Its security and reliability must be paramount if we are to trust it to replace snail mail in delivering important notices. At the least the sender should be notified, and blocked email should be made available to the recipient in a special folder to allow quick verification of its status. Yahoo and Google mail deposit at least some suspected spam in a separate folder. It takes only seconds to check that folder and remove all the spam while being able to save a genuine message.

More Reliability Issues. When an email address is changed, it is difficult to let all the correspondents know, and chances are that some of them will forget to change all their email address folders. Contrary to good old snail mail, there is no friendly post office that forwards email. Also, the slightest typo will make email undeliverable. Add to that the times that the Internet is inaccessible because of hardware, software or network problems and it is clear that email can not be counted on for the timely and secure delivery of financial and billing statements.

Once Upon A Time...

in a far away land, when I was still a young lad, clocks sat on mantel pieces and had to be wound every so often. They didn't keep very accurate time, and we kept them running at least five minutes fast so we wouldn't miss the train. You see, trains left the station on the exact second in the schedule and the best place in town to find the accurate time was from the big clock at the railroad station.

Now we have clocks and watches that listen at night to the shortwave radio and adjust their time to the nearest second by synchronizing with an atomic clock in Colorado. As a good nerd, I regularly compare the time shown by the atomic clock on the wall with my atomic watch to make sure they agree to the second. And now we travel by planes that sometimes manage to leave the gate within an hour of the scheduled departure time. Or not at all, as the case may be. Progress...

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Windows Calendar

by Lynn Page, Editor, Crystal River Users Group, Florida

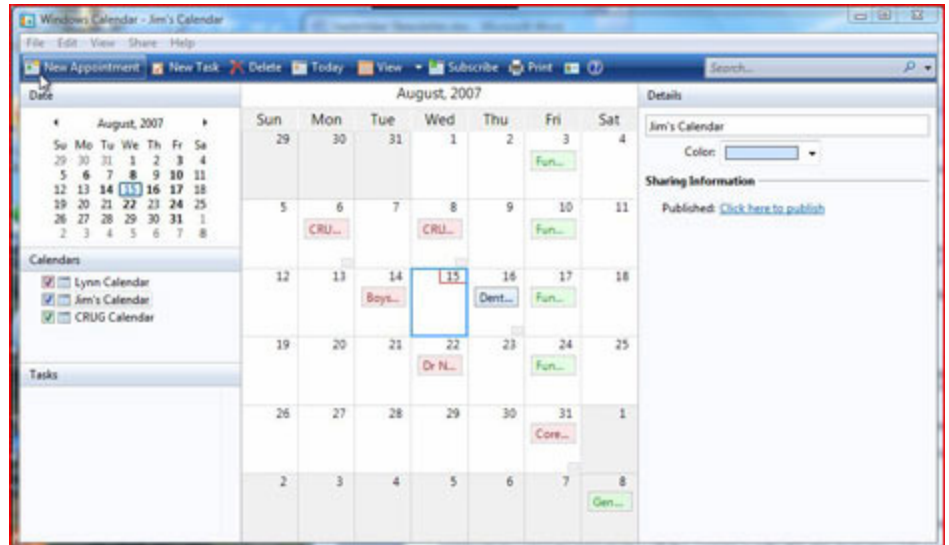
www.crug.com

newsletter(at)crug.com

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Windows Calendar, built into Windows Vista, helps you plan your activities and coordinate your plans with those of others. With Windows calendar you can set up multiple calendars and view a single or multiple calendars at a time. This makes it easy to compare the calendars and look for conflicts in scheduling.

I personally use the calendar in Outlook for my scheduling but if you don't have Office the Windows Calendar is a great planning tool. It is especially useful if you need to handle a variety of different schedules. Set up a calendar for everyone in the family or group. Then use Windows Calendar to integrate them to compare daily activities. I quickly set up the three calendars for display in this combined view.



Appointments

With Windows Calendar, you can create appointments and set up an alert to remind you when the appointment is approaching. Set Windows Calendar to alert you minutes, hours, or days ahead of time. I set my reminders in Outlook for 2 days notice.

If you attend regular meetings, like the CRUG membership meeting, set up recurring appointments. In Windows Calendar create one appointment and then have the calendar set up a series of similar appointments at the selected intervals.

Tasks

Windows Calendar includes a personal task list. For each task, describe what is required, set a completion deadline, choose a priority ranking, and then track of your progress right in the calendar. You can set reminders like those for appointments. As a task is completed, simply check it off the list.

Sharing Calendars

With Windows Calendar, you can set up individual calendars for multiple people. This makes it easy for people using the same computer to coordinate their personal schedules. They can quickly compare information from any or all of the calendars, side-by-side in a single view. Each person can manage their own schedule and view the others' calendars, selectively or all at once.

Set Up a Calendar

To set up a calendar in Windows Vista click Start and type Calendar in the Start Search box. In the results, click Windows Calendar under Programs to select it. A calendar opens with the name assigned to the computer. You can generate this calendar or in the File drop down menu select New Calendar and start fresh.

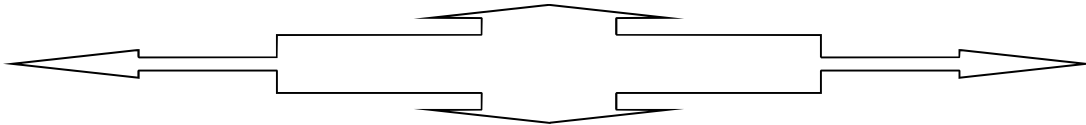
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In the new calendar type in a name in the Calendars task pane and click Enter. This calendar and any others appear in the Calendars task pane. Clicking to add checks in the boxes next to the calendar lets you see those selected together. In the Details pane, select a color to help identify each calendar.

Add Appointments and Tasks

Once the calendars are set up you can add appointments and tasks. Click New Appointment or New Task on the toolbar and add the information.

You can even publish your calendar to your web site and send invitations and appointments by email.



This and That

By Elizabeth B. Wright, a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

Have you accessed the WindowsXP “Restore” option to reset your computer to an earlier time? We often need to do this when things go haywire after installing some new software. Fiddling around with old programs or offbeat wares can sometimes land you in hot water operating wise. I found myself in just such a mess not long ago. Fortunately I had made a restore point prior to installing the renegade software, so I was able to use it to get things back to normal. Well, almost.

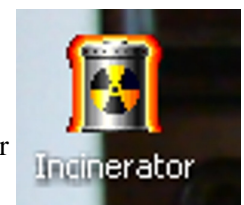
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT:

One of my oldest and most valued programs is CorelPaint. Suddenly, after going through the restore procedure, I began getting an error message plus having the program refuse to open when I double clicked on the desktop shortcut icon. This applied to CorelDraw as well. The error message said something about trying to install the program, then it would go through some strange digital machinations before rolling everything back and giving up. Strangely enough though, if I double clicked on a .jpg or .tif file in Explorer, the files would open the program with no difficulty. Several days were spent opening graphic files in this manner when it suddenly dawned on me that perhaps the programs might open from the executable files directly. Sure enough, when I went to them, again in Explorer, they both opened like clockwork. So why did it take me several more days to figure out that the icons on my desktop had some way become corrupted? I don't want to know the answer to that one.

Anyway, after deleting the icons, new ones were put in place by right clicking on the executable files in Explorer and double clicking the “Send to desktop” option from the menu. Usually the names given icons made in this way are not the best, so they usually get changed to something more useful on my computer. Often part of the name is “shortcut”. Who needs that? It's fairly simple to change the name. Just click once on the icon, wait long enough so that the computer doesn't interpret the next click as a double click, then the icon text will be in “Edit” mode. You may have to experiment with the timing for this since not all “mice” are set for the same response time. The two clicks need to be fairly close together, but not close enough for a double click. Once in “Edit” mode you can type in whatever name that makes better sense to you.



We should all know by now that if there is a curved arrow in the lower left corner of the icon then the icon is a shortcut to the executable file, not the program or file itself. Be very careful. Sometimes there actually are icons for executable programs placed on your desktop when the programs are in-

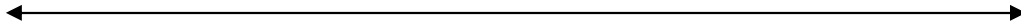


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stalled. Those icons will not have the curved arrow. Don't delete them unless you want to get rid of the program itself. This applies also to other things you might have placed on the desktop yourself, such as graphic or document files. It might be wise to leave those names in their original form. It might also be a good idea to examine the icons on your computer to see how many, if any, DO NOT have the curved arrow. Chances are there won't be many, possibly none. It is helpful to know if there are any that reflect actual programs or files, just to keep yourself informed about your own computer system.

It always pays to figure out what your computer is up to. Since it lives a life separate from yours it is often not possible to tell just what it has been doing in your absence. With the new powerful operating systems, many, many things go on in the background when the machine is powered on, whether you are there or not. Supernerds probably have eliminated many of the automatic actions, but most of us just muddle on, thankful that the computer runs at all.



Open Source Software – Mostly Free to Use and Modify

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; radio and TV show host
lwilsker(at)apcug.net

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WEBSITES:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open-source_software

<http://mashable.com/2007/09/23/open-source>

<http://openoffice.org>

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird>

Wikipedia defines Open Source Software as, "... computer software which source code is available under a license (or arrangement such as the public domain) that meets the Open source definition. This permits users to use, change, and improve the software, and to redistribute it in modified or unmodified form. It is often developed in a public, collaborative manner." Open Source software has been around in its current context since 1998, and hundreds of titles are available for almost any computing need. As a general rule, Open Source software is free to use, modify, and redistribute as the user sees fit. For this reason it has evolved from products that only a geek could love to software that it widely used in corporate, academic, and home environments. Some Open Source software, such as the comprehensive and free office suite, Open Office, has in some places taken a substantial market share from its pricey commercial competitors with hundreds of millions of users. Much of the Open Source software is now in the mainstream, and is no longer in the exclusive realm of nerds.

Open Source software should be seriously considered as an alternative to commercial software. One website that lists almost 500 categorized Open Source products is online at mashable.com/2007/09/23/open-source. This website contains a wealth of resources that are mostly free for the taking. All businesses, and many households, need some type of accounting software, and Open Source is a viable choice. Some of the accounting programs listed provide budgeting help, personal finance assistance, point of sale (POS) applications that work with barcode readers, inventory control, and other fiscal functions.

Many businesses are now dependant on "Customer Relationship Management" software, known in the industry as CRM. About 20 CRM titles are listed on the mashable.com site listed above. Generally, these titles allow for the recording and utilizing of customer data. One product intended for charitable or religious use, is listed as "CiviCRM - The world's first downloadable constituent relationship management system; fund raising software that allows users to manage information about donors, volunteers, etc." CRM software generally allows for the creation and maintenance of mailing lists, client tracking, project management, and other customer related information.

Many of us would like the opportunity to customize what we see on our Windows desktops, and not be forced to utilize what Bill Gates provides us. Open Source obliges by providing about a dozen "Desktop

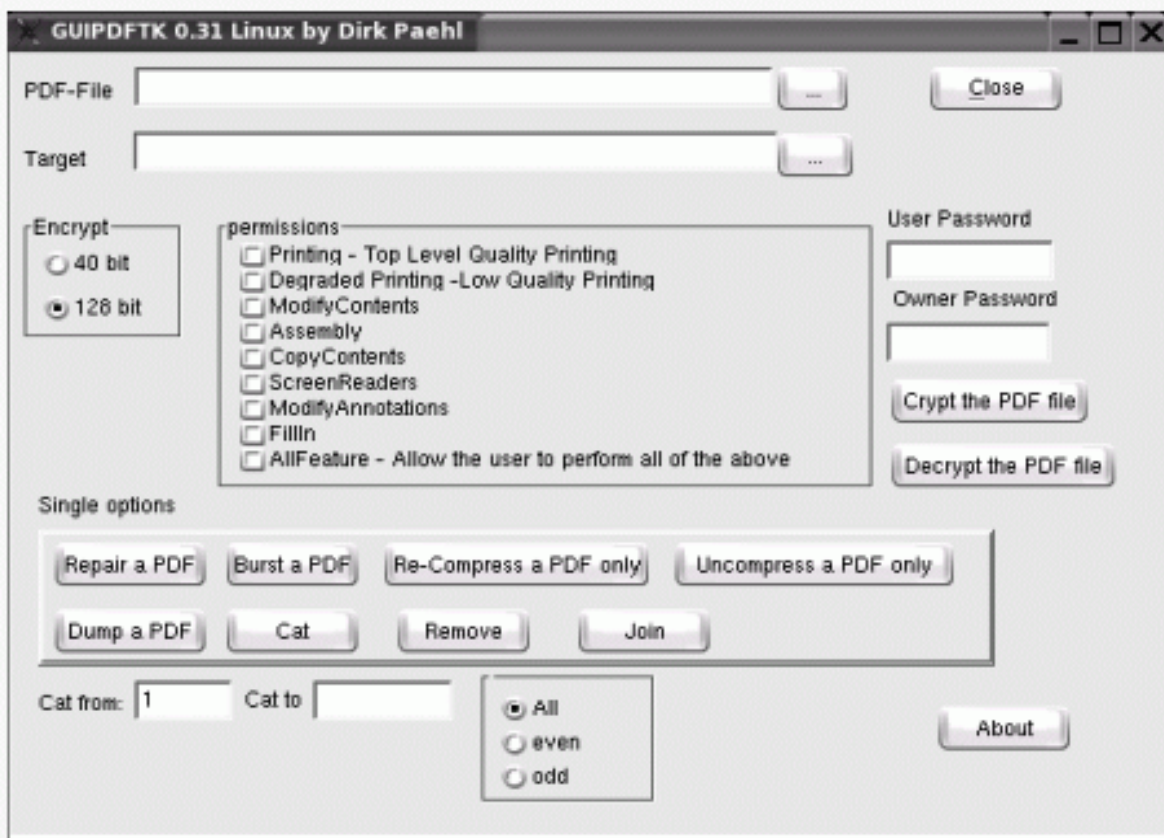
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Environments and Shell Replacements". Some of the functionality added to Windows by these programs includes enhancements like minimizing windows to floating icons, freeing the taskbar, controlling wallpaper and icons, real-time wallpaper effects, and other customizable functions. For those who like to tinker with Windows, these desktop environments and shell replacements can be a lot of fun to play with.

One computing function that almost all of us deal with on a daily basis is email. While the industry leader, Microsoft's Outlook Express is free (bundled with Internet Explorer), and its commercial big brother Outlook is commonly bundled with Microsoft Office, there are some excellent alternatives in Open Source software. One of the most popular Open Source email clients is Mozilla's Thunderbird, which is a very full featured email client with millions of users. Thunderbird can be downloaded (free) from www.mozilla.com/en-US/thunderbird. Thunderbird has much of the look and feel of Outlook, but pro-

PDF drivers & Tools



[CC PDF Converter](#) - Enables users to convert Word, Excel, IE and any other file formats to PDF.

[Evince](#) - Evince is a document viewer with support for multiple document formats including PDF.

[Jarnal](#) - Jarnal is an open-source application enabling annotation of a document.

[okular](#) - A universal document viewer based on KPDF for KDE.

[PDFCreator](#) - Create PDF files from just about any Windows utility.

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vides many advanced features not available in Outlook. Thunderbird is compatible with almost all email services, and is easy and quick to configure. Thunderbird generally provides better security than Outlook, and includes some protection from phishing (identity theft) scams. Spam email is the bane of email, and Thunderbird offers active spam filtering which routes suspicious email to a junk mail folder for quick review and deletion, if desired. It is also a universal email client in that it can run on Windows, Mac OS-X, and Linux, and is currently available in over 30 languages. Thunderbird would be a great alternative for those who want to get away from Microsoft products. Thunderbird, as popular as it is, is not the only Open Source email client listed; there are about a dozen email clients listed. The selection is good, and the price can not be beat.

Another computing function that many of us partake in is ripping music, and converting it to formats that can be utilized by our portable music players. Some of us edit videos, such as the ones we take with our camcorders. The Open Source website at mashable.com/2007/09/23/open-source lists over three dozen ripping, music editing, and video editing utilities. Formats supported by some of these Open Source utilities include MP3, MPEG, MPEG1, MPEG2, DivX, WAV and several other formats. Some of the software will edit and repair damaged audio and video files, while others allow for the conversion of DVDs to other video formats. There is an impressive selection of audio and video utilities available as Open Source, and they are worthy of consideration. Once media is available in digital formats, some means of playing it may be necessary, and this website lists several dozen media players.

Another popular computing task is file sharing and “FTP” (File Transfer Protocol), and there are about three dozen free utilities listed. While some are for traditional file swapping, others allow for the remote access and synchronization of computers.

Many of us are artistic and graphically inclined, but the major commercial graphics design programs are often expensive. Open Source can come to the rescue with about 40 titles to choose from, allowing for an excellent selection. Some Open Source graphics utilities are simple photo editors, while others include 2D and 3D animation. Other Open Source utilities provide sophisticated webpage authoring tools where a novice can produce a professional appearing webpage.

Adobe’s PDF (Portable Document Format) has become the de-facto standard for saving and distributing documents in “What you see is what you get” (WYSIWYG) format. While Adobe Acrobat (writer) is an expensive utility, there are about a dozen Open Source programs that can perform a similar task for free.

A lot of busy individuals need a “PIM” (Personal Information Manager) to keep track of their personal information, appointments, calendars, address books, to-do lists, and other daily mundane tasks. About a dozen “Personal Information and Task Managers” are available as Open Source, which may provide some help in controlling our often hectic lives.

There are several other categories of Open Source software listed, including project managers, reporting tools, RSS (news) feeds, system utilities, office suites, office programs, and web browsers such as Firefox. Open Source is here to stay and may be a key player in the future of software. It is definitely worthy of a serious look and consideration.



**Don't forget to
nominate yourself for a
board position at
October's Club Meeting!**



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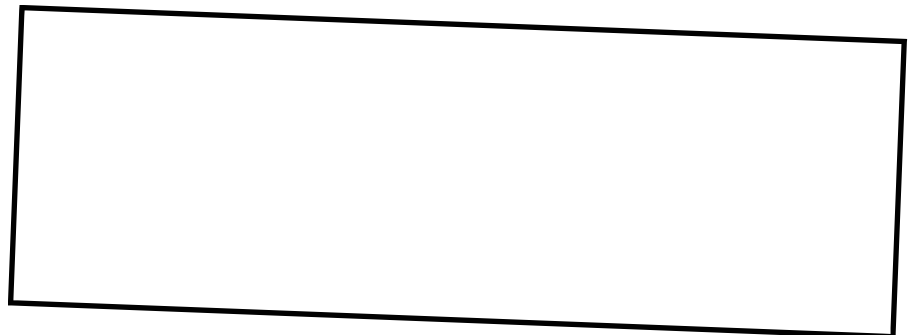
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