BITS AND BYTES

The Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

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: September 24th

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: Online Medical Research presented by Howard Lewis

PROGRAM COORDINATORS
Contact :
Larry Piper   larryP56@chartermi.net

Co-Chairman-Joe Lykowski joseph@lykowski.com

What you missed!
The **August** meeting was centered around food and socialization. The club provided the hot dogs and drinks, while everyone else provided delicious food. Even with the unsettled parking situation at the Center, we all had a good time!

Upcoming Activities
This month's featured topic will be "Online Medical Research" presented by Howard Lewis. During the presentation, we will look at various online sites to help you more intelligently discuss medical issues with your family doctor. This should not replace your personal physician, but instead help you to understand what ails you (or your loved one) and to ask questions to assist in the proper diagnosis and treatment of the condition. The web has plenty of information available, but sorting out the "wheat from the chaff" is not always easy. If you have a website that you have successfully used in the past, please send them to Howard so that he may incorporate them in his presentation.

The President's Corner

 I had a rather interesting experience recently with a person who was having problems with their computer. He was experiencing a lot of pop-up problems and something was wrong with his antivirus. When I got to his place, I discovered that he had installed an antivirus that I had never heard of before. I asked him where he got that antivirus and he said that he had received an e-mail about a new antivirus that was supposed to handle all of the latest viruses and spam. He proceeded to download and install the application. When they wanted some money, he decided that maybe he would uninstall the antivirus software and go back to his previous AV package from AOL. He was having problems uninstalling the software when I showed up. After checking the Internet on the package that he had downloaded, I found all sorts of messages from people saying that this particular AV was infested with malware. During my attempt to get rid of the program, I discovered that his Add/Remove Programs showed that he had downloaded all sorts of registry cleaners, cookie removers, etc. In addition, I found plenty of evidence of other things in his registry which shouldn't have been there. Come to find out anytime he visited a web site that was advertising a "free" program or received an e-mail touting a program for making his machine run better, faster, and smoother, he would download that application. Needless to say, I reformatted his hard drive and reinstalled Windows XP. After a small lecture from me on e-mail and web safety, he has decided that maybe his mode of operation wasn't the wisest. He promised me as I left that he wouldn't be downloading anything else without giving me a call first. This is another aspect of "social engineering" that we have been hearing about. Since today's AV programs have gotten to be pretty good at thwarting unknown attacks, the "bad guys" have taken to trying to convince users that their programs are "safe." We'll have to see. The board has been discussing the possibility of presenting a program on "social engineering" in the future. Stay tuned.

What do you think?
 — Howard Lewis
(The above comments are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midland Computer Club.)

2008 MCC OFFICERS

POSITION		EMAIL:
President	Howard Lewis	lewis3ha@chartermi.net
Vice Pres.	Bill Tower	stressed@tir.com
Treasurer	Bob Miller	barloshelties@sbcglobal.net
Membership	Gary Ensing	gensing@juno.com
Editor	Jan Ensing	btiger6@juno.com

http://mcc.apcug.org/

Special Interest Groups:

CLUB PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Chairman	Larry Piper	larryP56@chartermi.net
Co-Chairman	Joe Lykowski	joseph@lylowski.com

### BOARD MEMBER

Mary Branson   molly688@chartermi.net

INTERNET SIG

Terry Brown   t_bbrown@yahoo.com

PUBLICITY

Kathy Bohl   kbohl30265@aol.com

Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be 7 p.m., **October 14th ,** 2008, at Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church, 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland.

In **October**, Joe Lykowski will talk about the various video encoding options available on your computer. As you create your videos from either pictures or video clips, it is necessary to create a CD/DVD that is readable by various CD/DVD players. This will be an opportunity to review some of the various formats and what are their strengths and weaknesses.
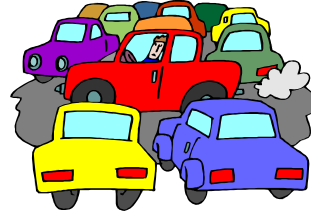
Midland Community Center Parking Lot Construction

I was to the Community Center on September 12, and the parking is returning to normal. Both sides of the lot are now open along with the parking beside the Senior Center. You may enter the parking lot from either Jefferson Ave. or from George St., whichever is most convenient for you. There are a number of handicap parking places facing the building near the Senior Center. There is still work being done on the landscaping, the Curling Club and the south end of the parking lot next to the Curling Club, but this should not interfere with our meetings. If you have any questions regarding the parking situation, please let me know or call the Midland Community Center at 989-832-7937.

Howard

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:

http://www.drawthings.com/	Draw a few items and have your personality reviewed.
http://tinyurl.com/yvq36y	How old is your brain? Find out by clicking on the numbers in the correct order. The site is in Japanese, but the site flashes a series of numbers on the screen and once the numbers are removed you need to click on the circles in sequential order.
www.gasbuddy.com www.gaspricewatch.com http://tinyurl.com/a33ac	With the continuing high gas prices, here are a couple of sites which will help you find the cheapest gas in your area.
www.fuelcostcalculator.com	If you have an upcoming road trip, this AAA site will help you determine how much it will cost to drive your car.
www.altfuelprices.com	If you really think about combating the high price of oil and are thinking about purchasing a vehicle that uses alternative fuels, this site shows where you can purchase fuel for whatever type of fuel your vehicle will use and how much it costs. It covers everything from LPG to hydrogen to electric.

Tips, Tricks & Techniques

Check Your Network Connection Status From Your Desktop (Windows Vista)

If you frequently need to check the status of your internet connection, you can create a shortcut on your desktop to quickly do this, saving you the effort of clicking through a number of windows and folders. This is particularly useful if you have problems with your network and/or use multiple wireless connections. To place the shortcut on the desktop:

Go to **Start** and select **Control Panel.**
Next click on **Network and Internet** and then **Network and Sharing Center.**
Now select **Manage network connections** and right-click on the connection you want to check the status of and select **Create Shortcut**.
Vista will now tell you that it can't place the shortcut at this location and do you want to place it on the desktop. Click OK and the shortcut will be placed on your desktop.

Now you can double-click the shortcut to take you directly to the status page of your connection.

Windows Flip 3D (Windows Vista)

If you frequently have a number of windows open at any given time, it can be difficult to determine which one is the one you wish to switch to by viewing the task bar. If you frequently find that you are having to open up several windows on the task bar before finding the correct window, you might try using a feature called Windows Flip 3D. All versions of Windows Vista, except Windows Vista Home Basic, support Flip 3D, but it is only available when running

4

using the Aero desktop. Windows Flip 3D allows you to scroll through all of your open windows with a Rolodex type view. Frequently this view provides a view of each open window in a manner which displays the contents of that window. If you have the Aero interface enabled, you can "flip" through your open windows by holding down the Start key on your keyboard and pressing the Tab key. Repeatedly tap on the Tab key and you will move from window-to-window. When you get to the window desired, release the Start key and that window will open as the active screen.

Enter Special Characters via Keyboard Shortcuts (Microsoft Word)

Microsoft Word comes with a number of "AutoCorrect" options for changing a combination of characters into a special character (i.e., (r) becomes ®, etc.). If you normally don't want those changes to happen automatically and have turned them off in the AutoCorrect feature, there are keyboard shortcuts which accomplish the same thing. Some of these keyboard shortcuts are as follows:

Character	Shortcut
Line break	Shift+Enter
Page break	Ctrl+Enter
Column break	Ctrl+Shift+Enter
Optional hyphen	Ctrl+-hyphen
Nonbreaking hyphen	Ctrl+Shift+Spacebar
Nonbreaking space	Ctrl+Shift+Spacebar
Copyright symbol ©	Alt+Ctrl+C
Registered Trademark symbol ®	Alt+Ctrl+R
Trademark symbol ™	Alt+Ctrl+T
Ellipsis	Alt+Ctrl+period
Em dash —	Alt+Ctrl+minus sign
En dash –	Ctrl+minus sign
Page number	Alt+Shift+P
Current date	Alt+Shift+D
Current time	Alt+Shift+T

Fine-Tuning Objects in Microsoft PowerPoint

If you want to make a minor adjustment to a text box in Microsoft PowerPoint, you don't have to select the borders of the box with the mouse to move the box. To adjust the box click within the area of the text box and press F2. This will select the text box. Now instead of dragging the edges of the box to adjust it, simply press the arrow keys to move it in the direction desired.

Concepts and Tools

By Elizabeth B. Wright, Member, Computer Club of Oklahoma City
www.ccokc.org
wright599new(at)sbcglobal.net

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

One day in the near future there will be no computer "beginners" at the adult level. The children born into the world as it is today are exposed to computers from conception. After they are born, many have very sophisticated hands on use of the machines from the minute they can reach out from their parent's lap and touch the keyboard. There is no mystery to them.

But while there are still older adults who want computer knowledge, someone has to be available to instruct them. And adults do not learn the same way that babies and children learn. Sometimes, when leading a group or teaching a class, it is difficult to explain to students why they need to to understand the difference between how a computer or a program works and how to make it actually do something. In my opinion, concepts are far more useful in the long run than specific techniques, especially when dealing with someone using a computer for the first time or who has gone just beyond the basics. But how do you teach a concept?

First, accept the fact that it will take more time in the beginning to teach concepts, but it will save time later on. The real trick is to make the process interesting and easy to understand

The simple fact that a computer is basically thousands of off and on switches, the same as a light switch, seems to be information that many people find irrelevant. But once a student gets some idea of the actual simplicity of the machine, much of the mystery is removed from the learning process.

Second, CONCEPTS, once understood, are usually far easier to remember than techniques. Anyone who "gets the idea" of a computer fundamental can usually find the tools later to accomplish the end result, even if the specific steps are not used often enough to remember them in sequence.

Many first session lesson plans skip computer functionality and plunge straight into using software. As an example, the concept of organizing files on a hard drive seems to be much harder for new users to comprehend than teaching them to open the file manager, aka Windows Explore or some similar program. So many teachers go through the cumbersome task of showing people how to open the file system, only to become bogged down in the steps needed to find a particular file, then later to continually have people complain they have lost a file and firmly believe it has disappeared from their machine. Most new users find it difficult to make the connection between finding a file on the computer and why understanding how to find it is important. It is the instructors job to help them make the connection. The CONCEPT of hard drive storage is not easy to absorb, so the instructor must make it easy. Also many new users find it difficult to transfer keystrokes learned on a classroom computer to their own computers at home. The reason for this is that no two computers are exactly alike, so the steps learned on one machine may or may not work on another one. But if the student comprehends the idea behind digital file storage, the actual keystrokes will begin to make sense, regardless of what computer they are using. In my opinion, rote learning is not the best way to become even moderately proficient on a computer. Real understanding of basic computing processes is vital.

Since many new users have little idea of what hardware is on their own computers, talking about C:\ drives and other drives in relation to specific files means little to them. But a well developed discussion of what basic hardware CAN be on a computer and how it works is not a waste of time, answering questions along the way. Many new users won't see the value in a technical discussion, so it is important to present hardware demonstrations using common sense terms rather than obscure technical language. It is never necessary to impress new students with what you know, but rather to make the information as easy for them to understand as possible. With practice, a teacher or presenter can develop the dialog necessary to convey essential information and still keep the listeners engaged. Students appreciate being encouraged in the idea that they may not know much to begin with, but they will leave each session armed with useful information and techniques that will build a good basic foundation for them. Biblically we were taught not to build our houses on sand. Why are the pyramids in Egypt still standing? Because underneath all that sand there are foundations built on bedrock. Good computer skills begin the same way.

Nearly all programs are far too comprehensive to be taught in detail to beginners. But if the most basic use of the program (the program's CONCEPT) can be presented in a way that is useful to students, they will get their feet wet. From there they can then be encouraged to not only attend study groups and advanced classes, but to explore their favorite programs on their own. Again, the difference is between teaching new users the fundamental use of the program itself as opposed to teaching them to use specific program "tools". Obviously some techniques need to be taught in early sessions, but teaching the use of most tools is best done in intermediate and advanced classes. My experience has been that only when people have a need for or enjoy using any computer software will they continue to explore and expand their knowledge of the program.

How long did it take you to figure out that the "d" in d:\ stands for any non-specific "drive" when dealing with program instructions (often installation procedures) and not specifically for the "d" drive on your personal computer? Admit it, there was a time when you didn't know that. Just think how confusing the term is to new users. There is a concept here if you can find it.

###################################
When to Turn Off Personal Computers

U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. A Consumer's Guide to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
www.energy.gov/forconsumers.htm

If you're wondering when you should turn off your personal computer for energy savings, here are some general guidelines to help you make that decision.

Though there is a small surge in energy when a computer starts up, this small amount of energy is still less than the energy used when a computer is running for long periods of time. For energy savings and convenience, consider turning off

• the monitor if you aren't going to use your PC for more than 20 minutes
• both the CPU and monitor if you're not going to use your PC for more than 2 hours.

Make sure your monitors, printers, and other accessories are on a power strip/surge protector. When this equipment is not in use for extended periods, turn off the switch on the power strip to prevent them from drawing power even when shut off. If you don't use a power strip, unplug extra equipment when it's not in use.

Most PCs reach the end of their "useful" life due to advances in technology long before the effects of being switched on and off multiple times have a negative impact on their
service life. The less time a PC is on, the longer it will "last." PCs also produce heat, so turning them off reduces building cooling loads. For cost effectiveness, you also need to
consider how much your time is worth. If it takes a long time to shut down the computer and then restart it later, the value of your time will probably be much greater than the value of the amount of electricity you will save by turning off the computer.

Power-Down or Sleep Mode Features

Many PCs available today come with a power-down or sleep mode feature for the CPU and monitor. ENERGY STAR® computers power down to a sleep mode that consume 15 Watts or less power, which is around 70% less electricity than a computer without power management features. ENERGY STAR monitors have the capability to power
down into two successive "sleep" modes. In the first, the monitor energy consumption is less than or equal to 15 Watts, and in the second, power consumption reduces to 8
Watts, which is less than 10% of its operating power consumption.

Make sure you have the power-down feature set up on your PC through your operating system software. This has to be done by you, otherwise the PC will not power down. If your PC and monitor do not have power-down features, and even if they do, follow the guidelines below about when to turn the CPU and monitor off.

Note: Screen savers are not energy savers. Using a screen saver may in fact use more energy than not using one and the power-down feature may not work if you have a screen saver activated. In fact, modern LCD color monitors do not need screen savers at all.

###############################

Going Green

by Jerry Grommes, Past President, Sandwich Computer Users Group, Illinois
www.scug.org
ggrommes(at)indianvalley.com

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

During our June program, there was quite a discussion about whether to leave your computer on verses shutting it off when not in use.

I, personally, like to leave my computers run so they are kept up-to-date with auto updates and backed up with scheduled backups. These tasks are done in the early AM so my computers are fully functional when I sit down to use them.

However, others asked why not just leave them on the nights that the backup runs instead of 24/7. I didn't think it was using much energy by running 24/7 but decided to check it out and run some tests using my "Kill-AWatt" meter. (Measures watts, amps, hours, kill a watt hours, ect.) I started with my newest computer (which is approx 2 years old and probably the most efficient). This machine is running Vista and I had the Power Options set to turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and put computer to sleep to "never". With these settings the computer was drawing between 110 and 140 Watts of power with a total average of 2.63 KWH (kill-a-watt hours) per day. Cost per day was $.026 ($7.87 a month) based on my most recent bill.

I then changed the Power Options to turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and put computer to sleep "after 2 hours".

The watts dropped from between 110 and 140 while I was using the computer to 6 while in the sleep mode and the total average of KWH dropped to 0.65 per day. Cost is now down to 6 cents a day ($1.94 a month).

With the current power options (turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and sleep "after 2 hours") the computer will wake up and get updates as well as run the scheduled
backups. So with a simple change to a power option, I was able to reduce power consumption by approx 76% and save $5.93 per month with out affecting my user experience.

I plan on testing my XP machine next to see what it is costing and to see if it can be reduced. Thanks go to Louise and the rest of the group for a great discussion on energy
use.
To get more info and tips on energy savings try one of Louise Dieden's favorite links: http://www.energy.gov/forconsumers.htm
Louise is a SCUG Board Member at Large.

IOGEAR Digital Scribe Review

By Rebecca Feinstein, a member of WINNERS – WINdows usERS

www.windowsusers.org

editor(at)windowsusers.org

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

I was thrilled when I first found out there was a digital scribe product at the last WINNERS meeting. As many of you recall, I was well, somewhat reluctant shall we say, to give up the raffle donation item. At the 35% discount I could not wait to get it.

The IO Mobile Digital Scribe took six days to get here from the Illinois. It comes with the pen, cable, mobile unit, two program CDs something that looks like a green tipped stylus (turned out to be the pen/refill), two small (hearing aid size) batteries and a Quick Start Guide.

Installation of the software was easy, Mobile Digital Scribe (Note Management) and My Script Notes Lite (handwriting recognition software); as was charging the mobile unit and installing the batteries into the pen. However, installing the pen was a bit puzzling as in the reference guide, IOGEAR never shows the actual size of the refill in the pictures. It also took a few e-mails to Customer Support and product management to find out where you can purchase the re-fills as well.

Okay, I got it up and working, I did a few test runs with it at home with the mobile unit attached to the computer. The note management software required a bit of a learning curve, but still was fairly easy to use. Included with the software is a .pdf users guide for the entire kit (58 pages). The handwriting recognition software was pretty impressive. With my handwriting I expected it to have a problem with my convoluted shorthand as well as my capital Is, js and my contractions. To my surprise, the software only had a problem with the Is. It even captured my signature scrawl quite well! As with a regular pen, the program doesn't erase; but recognizes crossed out information as crossed out.

With all this practice under my belt, I decided it was time to haul out the big guns, – WORK! As a technical writer, as with many other positions, I attend a lot of meetings. My expectations were high for my new tool. No more having to rewrite all my notes into electronic format for distribution. I was armed and I was ready for combat. After receiving permission to install the software on my office unit, I got set up and ready to rock. I attended three meetings that day.

On the big plus side, it was very nice to have my notes appear in e-form without having to transcribe them at all. This made putting them into agenda form a breeze.

On the problem side of using the scribe, a major drawback is the mobile unit clips are made to only grab a few pages of paper at a time. Unless you are intending to take one page's worth of notes, you have to remove the mobile unit to turn pages to take more notes. This proved to be distracting and inconvenient in one of my meetings. And I found it to be very unwieldy when I was standing to take note as the mobile unit added weight to the top of the paper pad.

The pen, which is thicker than I'm used to (standard stationary pens) felt unwieldy in my hand to begin with. The button that allows you to switch between pen mode and mouse mode is located in the lower part of the pen, towards where it writes on the paper and I kept inadvertently clicking it as I was writing. So some of my notes from the first meeting resembled a word game puzzle.

Another problem, though a lesser one, is the quick reference guide itself. The print is so small, I had to borrow a friend's magnifying glass to read some of it. Keith Renty was correct when he said at our meeting that the user information was not written well. Nowhere in the users guide, or quick reference material is a description of everything that was to come with the kit (the graphic that points to everything in the kit to make sure you know the stylus is actually the pen cartridge). There is no technical support information listed in the users guide, but contact information is listed in the back of quick start guide.

Overall, I'm pleased with the performance, and not so-pleased with the customer support.

Face Time in the 21st Century

Person to person communication was pretty simple last century. There was the letter, or as we call it today, "snail mail" and the telephone. Our address book contained the physical address of our friends and their phone numbers. It is amazing to me how much we actually got done, we won wars and went to the moon and created the greatest county on earth, and all without a single bit of digitized information.

To someone who grew up in the last 20 or so years that must seem quaint. They probably can't imagine life without a cell phone, email, IM and a dozen other ways of communicating with their fellow human beings. I am beginning to wonder myself. Someone asked me the other day if I "Twittered", I thought it was a neurological disorder. No, it was a form of micro-blogging, another way to stay in touch in the 21st century.

So just how many ways can you keep up to the minute with your "friends" today, let me count the ways. And this is by no means a complete list.

Email has been around since the beginning of the internet. By the late 80s' everyone with a computer had an email account. Now we could send a message to anyone with a computer and they could reply. This was a momentous social change. It significantly accelerated the communication between people. Plus we could "attach" stuff, like pictures of the grandkids, or an excel spread sheet to our email.

In it simplest form, a blog (web log) is an online diary or journal. Prior to the mid 90's online forums and BBS (bulletin board systems) allowed people to have running conversations on a web site with a moderator to keep order. Then some high profile personalities started to keep online diaries which allowed comments from anyone to be posted, and the blog was born.

Today bogging is a serious force to be reckoned with. Anyone can start a blog and thousands do every day. Currently there are an estimated 12 million blogs and about 57 million blog readers. These numbers are deceiving, since it appears that only about 20% of blogs are active and 60% to 80% of blogs are abandoned after one month. As one commentator put it "the average blog has the life span of a fruit fly".

Yet this kind of personal communication has again changed the social landscape. Anyone can comment on anything from personal hygiene to politics and anyone can respond with their take on the subject. Some bloggers have aspired to become journalists and others are just looking for some virtual recognition, either way we are more in touch.

Personal communication has taken another leap with the creation of social networking sites like Face Book and My Space. These sites and many others like them allow virtual conversation to take place between friends on an almost instant basis. I will confess, I don't know much about them which only proves my age. But without a doubt, and from now on a person's identity will forever be linked to their Face Book page and their list of friends.

Will someone please explain to me why someone would attempt to communicate by text using a device no bigger than a deck of cards and with a "Key Board" consisting of 12 keys? At a minimum IM (Instant Messaging) requires tiny fingers, superb eye hand coordination and a new language consisting of thousands of newly created letter combinations to represent real words. And another thing since this device is a Phone, why not just TALK to the person? LOL

The ultimate "Personal" communication for the 21st century must be in Second Life. In this enormous virtual world millions of people interact with millions of other people, one on one. The whole range of human activity can now take place in a virtual environment. You can be anyone you want and "talk" to a dragon or a real priest, free of the most basic limitation of our human form. In a sense this is probably personal communication on a level never seen before.

Twitter is the newest "form" of communication. It answers the pressing question, "What are you doing NOW?" As you go through your day, you constantly update your "Twitter" page with mini blog entries no more than 140 characters long. Now anyone who is logged o to your page can tell what you are doing, what you are feeling, who you are with and any moment in the day. Why didn't I think of that? It's obvious that I would want to know all the mundane details of all my friends' daily lives.

Face time means actual face to face talk. The words, the eyes, the body language, the context, all convey meaning. Let me know when we can do that online. Until then, don't look for my Twitter page.

I'M ASKED...

By Bill Funk, a member of the Arizona Association for Computer Information, inc. (ASCIi)

www.asciigroup.org

editor(at)asciigroup.org

I just bought a Digital SLR; with the prices as low as they are, I couldn't resist.

Since I want to take photos of my grandchildren, and the built-in flash isn't as powerful as I need, I bought a new flash. It's the same brand as my camera, and is supposed to be all automatic. But, the photos aren't right. I thought the better flash would let me take photos inside, and freeze the movement of the grandkids, but the photos are as blurry as with the camera's flash.

What's going on?

You're right, the on-board flashes on most DSLRs aren't very bright. Buying the new flash is the right idea, but it doesn't work the way many people think it does.

You're probably using the camera as a Point & Shoot: setting the camera to make the exposure decisions, and pressing the shutter button. There's nothing wrong with that, but doing things that way won't get your flash to work the way you want it to.

Instead, you should use the Manual mode for exposure (check your camera's manual for how to enter the Manual mode). While you're looking at the manual, check to find the highest shutter speed you can use with the flash, too.

Then, in Manual mode, set the shutter speed at, or maybe slightly below, that speed (I use 1/125 sec on my camera; it's fast enough to freeze most action), then set the aperture (f/number) for the desired result as far as depth of field is concerned, and set the ISO as desired. Set the flash to auto (check the manual), and fire away. This way, the camera will use the settings you chose, ignoring the amount of light in the scene. The flash will check to see what the camera is set to, and fire itself, checking the results as it fires to give the right amount of light to the scene. Neat, eh?

(Continued from page 9)

The way you're doing it will make the flash act as a "fill" flash, meaning the camera's exposure system will use the existing light in the scene to set the exposure, and the flash will intelligently fire to fill in shadows, but not be the major source of light in the scene. This is also the usual way the camera's on-board flash works, even though many cameras will set the shutter speed to take advantage of the flash's extra light to help freeze motion. The problem here, though, is that the on-board flash just isn't bright enough to light up a dark scene (such as a room) very well.

One of the really neat things about digital photography is that, regardless of the actual type of the camera, experimentation is cheap. In this case, once you get the basics of flash use down, you can experiment with different shutter speeds and aperture settings for different results. Also, off-camera flashes like yours will usually let you turn the flash head up and down, and side to side, for bounce flash. With bounce flash, you're bouncing the flash off the ceiling or wall. This tends to spread the light from the flash out to reduce that sharp look that a straight-on flash gives, and it also reduces harsh shadows (as well as changing where the shadows are); more to experiment with!

This brings up another question: if you have an older flash from your film days, can you use it with your new DSLR? The answer is a very firm: maybe. The problem is that most older, film-era flashes have a higher trigger voltage than what DSLRs can tolerate. In other words, using that old flash can cause some expensive damage to your DSLR. There are some devices that can be put between your older flash and your DSLR's flash shoe that will solve the problem. However, a new flash will also work much better with your new DSLR, and do things that old flash can't even dream of doing.

Data Transfer Rates

By Michael Hanst, Director, Lake-Sumter Computer Society, Florida
www.lscs.us
mtjhanst(at)netscape.net

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

During one of the meetings of the Lake-Sumter Computer Society, there was a discussion of Internet, Ethernet, and Wi-Fi transfer speeds. I decided to go look for specifications and found references that looked at each area, but found none that put it all in one chart. Plus, the references are often confusing because they use different criteria for the transfer rates. So, the idea for this article was born.

Disclaimer: The "expected" or "average" values are not meant to be absolute numbers, but rather to place items in their relative position of real world data transfer rates, also known as bandwidth.

Notes: (Reference)

8 bits = 1 byte

bps = bits per second

kbps = 1,000 bits per second (1)

Mbps = megabits per second

MBps = megabytes per second [(1) Approximately equal to Mbps divided by 8. The binary, K = 1,024, is ignored for this article since all estimated values are affected equally.]

(Continued from page 10)

RELATIVE DATA TRANSFER RATES

References: Relate to the (#) in the chart on the previous page.

(1) Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kbps
(2) Scot's Newsletter
http://www.scotsnewsletter.com/best_of/dtrct.htm
(3) Personal experience
a = Dial-Up connection speed experienced with both EarthLink and Florida Cable's USA2net with an internal 56K US Robotics PCI modem.
b = Download speed of 500 KBps often obtained for large files.
c = A USB Wi-Fi 802.11g adapter put in an older notebook's USB 1.1 port could "recognize" the router's Wi-Fi signal, but was unable to connect. The adapter connected fine in a USB 2.0 port. Plus, the older notebook connected fine with a PCMCIA Wi-Fi adapter.
 d = Indicates transfer of one 2 GB file between the slave and master ATA 100, 7200 RPM Hard Drives on the Primary IDE Channel.
(4) HughesNET – Download speeds. Note that satellite services often use a Dial-Up connection for uploads.
http://www.direc-way.us/scripts/Hughes-Net-Satellite-Speeds.asp
(5) Wikipedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IEEE_802.11
(6) Stanford University
http://pangea.stanford.edu/computerinfo/resources/network/architecture/ethernetfeatures.html
(7) Everything USB
http://www.everythingusb.com/usb2/faq.htm
(8) Smart Computing (So Long, USB, page 18, April 2007)
http://tinyurl.com/2getmh
(http://www.smartcomputing.com/editorial/article.asp?article=articles/2007/s1804/03ds04/03ds04.asp&articleid=38445&guid=950AF9065A2C48E190C93248A7DDB2D9)

Summary and discussion:

Wi-Fi 802.11g is much faster than any Internet broadband connection now available to the typical home user.
Ethernet 100BaseT is about 3 times faster than Wi-Fi 802.11g for transferring files between computers on a home network. This could be significant if you are routinely transferring large files.
 The standards have not yet been approved for Wi-Fi 802.11n, but the speed of available "proto-types" is above Ethernet 100BaseT and about equal to the transfer rate of commercially available hard drives. (Be aware that so-called "802.11n" products purchased now might not be compatible with products from other manufacturers and also later with those produced after the standards have been approved.)
Ethernet 1000BaseT (Gigabit) is much faster than the capability of hard drives commercially available to home users at this time.

Be more active in YOUR Computer Club….
Nominations for 2009 board positions will be made in
October, to be voted on @ November's meeting.
What do YOU have to offer your fellow club members?
Want to try your hand at the newsletter? Membership
Secretary? Program Co-Ordinator? How about President?
ALL positions are open for nomination in November. Ask
questions about what each position requires—
usually just willingness to serve!