

BITS AND BYTES

April 2011

Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

<http://mcc.apcug.org/>

GENERAL CLUB MEETING 7:00 P.M.

4th Wednesday of the month at the
Midland Community Center
2001 George St., Midland, MI

This month's date:
April 27, 2011

This month's topic:
Adobe Photoshop Elements 9 -
Tools & Quick Tips - Joe Lykowski

What you missed!
March Meeting – cancelled due to inclement
weather.

Upcoming Activities:
May meeting: Facebook - Shirley Salas

Program Coordinators
Howard Lewis lewis3ha@chartermi.net
Bill Tower stressed@tir.com

Please let Howard or Bill know of topics you would
like covered at future meetings.

President Piper's Ponderings



Win a free sweeper. All you have to do is fill out a card and drop it in the bowl. Remember this pitch when you walked around the Merchant's tent at the local fair? Of course the real purpose was to get a valid contact. Your name and phone number were of value to salesmen.

I know I made the 'mistake' of returning postcards indicating I was interested in this or that financial service. Boy did I get some high power salesmen on the phone.

Now days, it is our email that people covet. The recent theft of tens of millions of emails from Epsilon, a third party marketing firm, made national news and prompted many of the affected companies to send out additional tens of millions of emails to warn their customers of the theft. By implication the theft of these emails is seen as a security threat to you.

While the details are hazy, it appears that only email addresses were stolen. No data, in the form of a name, address, social security number or account number, were taken. Should you be worried? The answer depends upon how you use email. We are told that the #1 attack mode in breaching security is the human. Sometimes called 'social engineering', the best way to get information from you is to have you voluntarily give it up. And having your email is the starting point.

While I know I am speaking to the choir, it bears repeating, as our past President frequently did in these monthly columns, that you NEVER give out valid ID information to an email or over the phone.

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President Piper's Ponderings (continued)

Notice I used the word valid. Make up an account number or password. If you are dealing with a legitimate inquiry, they will get back to you when they discover the error.

Many of us have a second or third email account on one of the free email services like AOL, Yahoo or Gmail, which we use for 'questionable' inquiries.

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

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

<http://saferproducts.gov/>

This is a new site by the Consumer Products Safety Commission to allow customers to report unsafe products. Following procedures set up by the law, CPSC will review all online Reports and have five business days to transmit qualifying Reports to the manufacturer, where practicable. Manufacturers then have 10 business days during which they may respond and provide comments and/or claims. At the end of the 10 day period, if all requirements are met, the Report and the manufacturer's comments will be posted on the website.

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Board Meeting

Next board meeting will be
 7 p.m., May 10, 2011, at
 Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church,
 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland MI

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
 1816 Bauss Ct
 Midland, MI 48642-4023

Attn: Membership Chairman

You may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

Useful, useless and strange Web Sites (continued from Page 2)

<http://www.ted.com/talks>

TED is a small nonprofit devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. It started out (in 1984) as a conference bringing together people from three worlds: Technology, Entertainment, Design. There are hundreds of free talks, each lasting about 30 minutes. You should find something enlightening on this site!

<http://locator.goodwill.org/>

This site will give you the location of the closest Goodwill store that will take old, usable clothes.

<http://tinyurl.com/4dhoddc>

How in the dickens did they get this snowman in Bahrain?

<http://tinyurl.com/lpe9px>

If you don't like walking to your sofa, here's a way that will give you plenty of exercise on the way.

Tips, Tricks & Techniques

Find Out What's On Your Computer

If you would like to know more about your computer, you can always run a third-party package (like **SIW** – System Information for Windows, or **Belarc Advisor**) or let Windows tell you. If you decide to go the Windows route, the process is very simple:

Go to *Start* (in **Windows Vista** or **7**) or *Run* (in **Windows XP**).

Type in *msinfo32* and press *Enter*.

This will open up a window that contains information on your **Hardware Resource** utilization, system **Components** and your **Software Environment**. They provide quite a bit of information on your computer (although not as much as the third-party packages).

Improving Google and Bing Searches

If you've ever done a search in **Google** or **Bing**, you will notice that you frequently find millions of hits. Fortunately, most of the relevant ones are located near the beginning of the list. Basically, there is an implied OR between the terms you type in. If you type in *John Doe*, it will pick up everything that contains the word John or Doe. That's great if that is what you are looking for, but in most cases, you want only the people whose first and last names are together. But then, is there a middle initial in the search or not?

This is where the **AROUND** command (in Google) or the "**near**" command (in Bing) is convenient. To take into consideration the possibility of a middle initial or two, you could reduce the list considerable by using **AROUND** (upper case only). For example *John AROUND(1) Doe* will return all entries that have one word or less between the two terms. If you were searching for Mexican restaurants in Google, you might try *Mexican AROUND(2) restaurant*. This will return all entries where two words or less separate Mexican and restaurant.

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Book Review—The Book of Audacity, Carla Schroder, No Starch Press

ISBN 978-1-59327-270-8

By Howard Lewis - Member of Midland Computer Club, Midland MI

Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>) is a free, open source, audio recorder, editor, and mixer which runs under Linux, Mac OS x, and Windows. The program is probably the best free, open source audio software available although there are several good commercial applications out there too. Audacity allows you to capture audio input from a variety of sources and then manipulate that capture to create superb audio output. Because of copyright restrictions, Audacity saves projects in its own format (.AUP), however several common audio formats are supported either directly or via plugins through the File/Import or File/Export function.

The Book of Audacity is a great book to help you learn and use Audacity. The first chapter (of fifteen chapters and three appendices), is titled “Audacity From Start to Finish” and covers the various aspects of the interface. Other chapters deal with setting up your own sound studio, converting legacy media, creating podcasts, customizing and configuring Audacity for your best Audio quality.

The chapter in the book that I most looked forward to reading was “Transferring Vinyl LPs (and Other Legacy Media) to CD.” Although the author has her own opinions on the merit of doing such a thing, I like being able to convert many of my old LPs to a media form that I can use to play in my car and MP3 player. She covers in detail, how to setup your system to capture these recordings and then how to clean them up to remove some of the defects which the original may contain (scratches, dust, etc.). A more detailed chapter is also dedicated to “Fix-its and Cleanups,” which covers many problems that you may encounter when you capture your source recording — be it from LP, CD or tape.

Although I was a novice at using Audacity, I now feel much more comfortable in using the interface and capturing good audio.

The print copy of the book contains 384 pages packed with good information and has a list price of \$34.95. The book is available in several Ebook formats from O’Reilly for \$27.95. However, you can get a 40% discount when ordering through O’Reilly Media (<http://oreilly.com/>) using the user group discount. Contact Howard Lewis for information on how to use this discount.

Customizing Word 2007 - Creating Your Own "Normal" Template

by Nancy DeMarte, ndemarte@verizon.net, Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

If you want to create documents with new and colorful formats, Word 2007 offers some interesting options with the Quick Styles gallery, a new feature located on the Home tab. This gallery contains sixteen templates, each available in Live Preview and able to be selected with a click. Each style template includes certain fonts and font effects, such as color, size, bold or italic, and line spacing. The first two styles, Normal and No Spacing, apply to the body text in documents; the rest apply to parts of documents, such as headings or subheadings. The default style, or the one you get if you open a new document, is Normal (normal.dotm). In 2007 the normal template contains several variations from the Word 2003 normal template, some of which started to bother me the first time I typed with Word 2007. For one thing, it uses two new fonts, Calibri for the body text and Cambria for headings. At an 11 point size, these fonts seem too small for my older eyes. The space between lines in a paragraph (1.15) is a bit larger than single space, and the space after paragraphs at 10 points seems wastefully large. The margins in the new normal template are 1" on each side. I prefer smaller margins for most documents. This new Normal style is modern and gives a sleek, open look to a document, but it's possible that many users moving from Word 2003 to Word 2007 are finding its quirks irritating.

I decided to try to change the Normal Style in Word 2007 to be more like the one I was used to in 2003. I found several possible approaches to this task, but finally settled on a process which worked for me. Below are the steps I used to change Word 2007's normal style to one that I preferred:

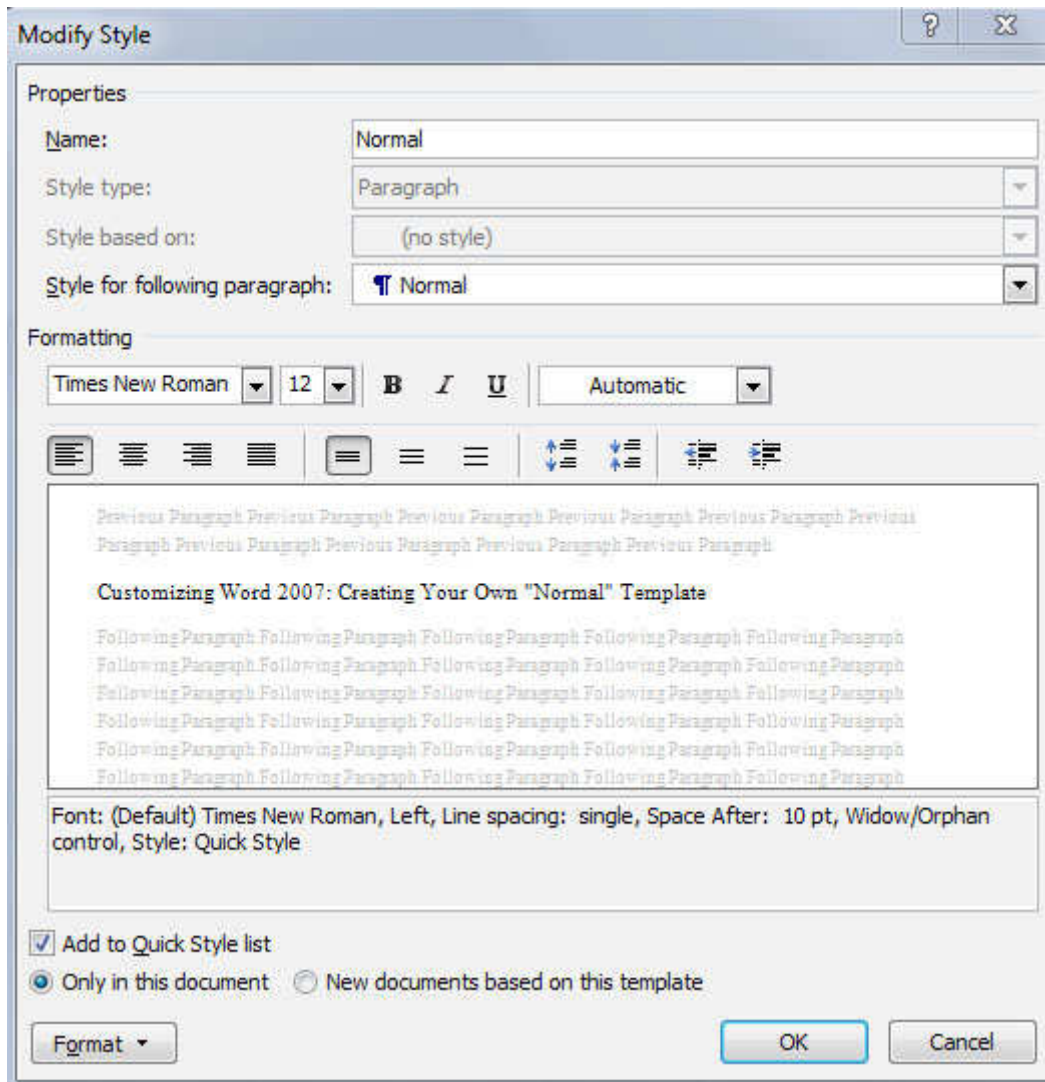
First I set myself a plan. I decided that I wanted to change only the font, the font size, the space between lines in a paragraph, the space allowed before and after paragraphs, and the margins. I thought it wise to alter only the basics, knowing I could always make changes manually for special documents or rework the normal template if I wasn't happy with it. To change any of these things, I found I needed to work in a dialog box that had a Default button which would save my changes for use in future documents. I began by opening Word 2007. On the Home tab in the Font group I clicked the dialog box launcher, a tiny arrow in the lower right corner of that group. This opened a familiar dialog box from Word 2003 containing all sorts of font-related options. I changed the font to Times New Roman, which, along with Arial, was one of the standards for Word 2003. I set the font size to 12 points. I would have set it to 10 if I had chosen Arial. These are typical sizes for average documents. Then I clicked the Default button and selected Yes when asked if I wanted this change to affect all future documents.

Then I clicked the dialog box launcher arrow in the Paragraph group and set the line spacing to Single Space and the Space before and Space after paragraphs to .6. Again, I clicked Default and answered Yes.

Next, I clicked the Page Layout Tab, and, in the Page Setup group, clicked the Margins button, which gave me a list of margin schemes, including diagrams of each. Even though I wanted the Narrow margin scheme, I knew just clicking it would not make it hold for future documents, so I clicked Custom Margins at the bottom of the list. Sure enough, up came a dialog box with a Default button. I made sure .5" replaced 1" in all four boxes, then clicked Default and Yes.

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My last step was to go back to the Home tab and right click the Normal style icon, then Modify. In the Modify Style dialog box, I clicked the radio button next to “New documents based on this template.” This dialog box is a good place to see a preview of what your next document will look like and to confirm that the changes you’ve made are listed beneath the preview window. You might be puzzled by the “widow/orphan” item in the list, but don’t eliminate it unless you have a specific reason to. The widow/orphan control keeps the last line of a paragraph (a widow) from appearing alone at the top of a page and the first line of a paragraph (orphan) from appearing alone at the bottom of a page.

When my modifications were complete, I clicked OK to close the Modify Style dialog box, pretty confident that my changes had taken effect. I decided, however, to create a new document at this point to see for myself if it would conform to my specifications. I knew if something were incorrect, I could always go back through the steps to fix it. But all was well. I now have my new Normal style and am liking Word 2007 better and better.

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Mac vs PC - How Do You Decide?

By Abby Stokes, Author, Is This Thing On?, www.abbyandme.com, abbystokes (at) yahoo.com

I'm regularly asked "Should I buy a Mac or a PC?" It's a battle not unlike the Hatfields vs the McCoys. For those of you that don't know the difference, a Mac/Apple (the name is interchangeable) is one manufacturer of both laptop and desktop computers. The inside (operating system or the brain) and the outside (hardware or what you touch) are both designed by Apple. A PC is every other manufacturer of the outside of a laptop or desktop computer (HP, Sony, Dell, etc.) with the operating system manufactured by Microsoft.

The answer to the question "Should I buy a Mac or a PC?" is a question: "Who will you call for help on Sunday afternoon when something goes wrong with your computer?" Your computer lifeline needs to understand the kind of computer you have. So, if your computer lifeline is your neighbor, your daughter, or your friend next door, purchase a PC or Mac according to what they use. You don't need to buy the exact model they have, but you'll want to buy a computer that they understand and can help you with.

Let's call a spade a spade. I've been teaching computers for 17 years and I can say with complete confidence that NO COMPUTER is "user-friendly." That is just damn good marketing. That doesn't mean you can't learn to use a computer, whether it is a PC or a Mac, but there's very little about any computer that is intuitive or friendly. Once you understand some of the techniques necessary to operate it, the computer becomes more intuitive in the same way that driving a car becomes intuitive, but it isn't any thanks to some of the design choices. Who was the genius that put the Caps Lock key so close to the Shift key? What is the logic of clicking Start to turn off the computer? I could go on... The upside is, like a car, the computer can bring you to wonderful places making it worth the effort to learn how to operate it. And, like a car, you don't need to understand the nitty gritty of how it works in order to work it.

It's true that a Mac is less vulnerable to viruses. That is a definite plus. And it can be argued that the inside of a Mac may have been or still is better, lusher, or more advanced than a PC, but you and I won't ever notice the difference. If you're a graphic designer, a Mac is probably a better idea. For us, the average user, both a Mac and a PC will equally meet our needs with e-mail, word-processing, and the Internet. If you're comfortable with whichever kind of computer you already have, there's no reason to succumb to pressure because someone you know LOVES their Mac or PC. Will they be there to help you when with a computer question or problem?

If you decide to change from PC to Mac or vice versa, you can make the transition with same patience required with a new spouse. They'll be good days and bad days and eventually you'll hit a comfort level with all the changes. A different operating system does require that you purchase all new software which can be pricey. Research the cost of whatever software you have on your existing computer before you make the change.

No matter the pressure or hard sell that comes your way, your computer choice is YOURS to make. Hold fast to what suits your needs, wallet, and comfort level. Tell them I said so!

For more on Mac vs PC visit Chapter 6 (p. 47) in "Is This Thing On?" A Computer Handbook for Late Bloomers, Technophobes, and the Kicking & Screaming.

Digital Asset Management Software

By Mike Morris, Editor, Front Range PC Users Group, CO, February 2011 issue, k-Byte™ newsletter, <http://www.frpcug.org>, [twriterext \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:twriterext@gmail.com)


What is interesting to me is that many of today's digital imaging software applications offer both image editing and what is called "Digital Asset Management" (DAM) capabilities.

In the not-so-distant past, the only image software choice was what image editor to use (Photoshop or something else). But with the "explosion" of digital camera use, keeping track of all the images (and protecting intellectual property rights) has clearly become a significant issue. While this is certainly an issue especially for professional photographers, with digital cameras, even the most casual photographer will soon find hundreds, if not thousands of photos on their computer.

Perhaps you are thinking, as you read this, that you don't need image management of any kind, because your digital camera provides all the necessary information.

Actually, that is NOT the case. The camera provides information about camera settings (including date and time of the photo). But not included in that data is information such as the event (e.g., parent's 50th wedding anniversary), or the names of the people in the photo. Yes, you may have an excellent memory, but your children and grandchildren probably won't remember or know the names of all the people in the photos of those special events (I can verify that from personal experience).

That is why image management software is so helpful—it allows you to capture that information. You have a wide range of software choices for this application:

1. DigiKam (<http://www.digikam.org/>), an image management application claimed to be designed by photographers, and is open source and therefore free. This application offers both DAM and image editing capabilities (which are significant, although not equivalent to the editing features of Photoshop or GIMP). For Windows users, you can download the Windows version from download (<http://bit.ly/hWfFrT>).
2. DigitalPro (<http://bit.ly/faHwgJ>), also claimed to be designed by photographers, and is proprietary (\$179). This application is primarily for image management (and primarily for professional or advanced amateur photographers), not image editing.
3. Bibble Labs (<http://bibblelabs.com/>) Pro (and Lite). This proprietary application (\$199.95) offers both editing and DAM features. One major claim on their website is that this application is faster than any other. For a list of editing tools this application provides, connect to features (<http://bit.ly/82JzsV>).
4. Adobe CS3 (and later) applications. The Adobe Bridge program is bundled with the CSx (the latest release is CS5) series of Adobe products. In my case, I received it when I purchased Adobe InDesign CS3. Adobe Bridge brings DAM features to the Adobe products, all of which, as I am sure you know, are very expensive applications (full retail price for Photoshop CS5 is \$699). They are, however, designed for professional/business use, originally commercial printing, but now expanded into electronic publishing as well. The Adobe products (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign among others), despite the many competitors, are still considered industry "standards." For more information on these products, connect to Adobe (<http://www.adobe.com>).
5. Adobe Lightroom. From Wikipedia (<http://bit.ly/3wnGqF>) is this description: Lightroom is an application "...designed to assist professional photographers in managing thousands of digital images and doing post production work. It is not a file browser like Adobe Bridge, but rather an image management application database which helps in viewing, editing, and managing digital photos, the same way

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- photographers used to do in the non-digital world.” Connect to Lightroom (<http://adobe.ly/6dBlz>) for a list of features. Full retail price is \$299.
6. For the casual computer user/casual photographer, there is Google Picasa (<http://picasa.google.com/>). It offers simple image organizing features and a few simple editing features. It is free, and “automatic.” After you download and install the program, it will, when you first launch it, catalog virtually all the images (with a few minor exceptions) on your computer.
 7. Most, if not all major camera makers provide some software with their cameras that include some basic image organization and image editing features.

There are many other choices, some of which you can find in the Wikipedia comparisons at: image viewers (<http://bit.ly/asWUj>), image organizers (<http://bit.ly/CNnwr>), and graphics editors (<http://bit.ly/10xtOU>).

I ended up with Adobe Bridge “by default.” Since I make no claim to being a professional photographer, or even (yet) a knowledgeable amateur, I would very probably have picked a free application (such as DigiKam) for “Digital Asset Management” if I didn’t already have Bridge.

For me, Picasa does not have enough features. However, I expect it will be sufficient for many digital camera users.

I have not tried to compare in detail either editing features or DAM capabilities of these programs. I have, however, scanned through the DigiKam manual (<http://www.digikam.org/handbooks/en/index.html>). My conclusion is that if you download and install DigiKam and GIMP, you will have a very powerful, very feature-rich set of image editing and image management tools.

Thanks to FRPCUG member Bert Broekstra for his comments on DigiKam, and for finding the DigiKam PDF manual link.

New handheld computer that also phones (SmartPhone) (Verizon Motorola Droid X – Android OS 2.2 Froyo)

*By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PCUG, Florida, January 2011 issue, Bits of Blue
www.tpcug.org, Merle (at) merlenicholson.com*

OK – this is an article about an Android phone by a guy who is three times older than the demographic that normally buys these things.

So I’m going to say “Facebook” here and now, the first and last time because I’d don’t have a Facebook account; I haven’t “friended” anyone, so I certainly don’t care where they are. And I haven’t gone hunting for dates for 47 years. Just so you know who I am.

I’ve replaced two pocket devices with one Android SmartPhone two weeks ago. I had a tiny wireless telephone that I used for, well, telephoning, and a five year old PDA – a Dell Axim x50v.

The old Dell is still functioning almost as well as it did when it was new. Its connectivity options are limited to wireless/b and Bluetooth. I used it mostly to sync with my Outlook calendar and contacts and keep family pictures to bore people with. The charging/sync connector is getting flaky, and I bought a new part to replace

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it, but the tiny soldering required put me off some and also prompted me to look elsewhere. Don't get me wrong, I can solder. NASA taught me how a lifetime ago. But this is tiny, close together and there are about twenty things to be soldered.

The phone I've had for two years has been just a telephone to me; it connects to a hands-free device I bought for the car, but it will also take pictures and do messaging, in which I had no interest. I discovered that the process to keep the camera from taking pictures of the inside of my pocket made it hard to take any kind of pictures at all and that Verizon was going to charge me to get them off my phone after I did take some. I have a good camera anyway.

Verizon is making it pretty easy to get a new phone and a data/mail plan to go along with it. But Amazon is doing it better by reducing the price of this model (Droid X) down to \$120, \$50 cheaper than buying direct from Verizon. That's after a \$30 credit accumulated at Verizon for having fulfilled my last 2-year contract. That's \$120, no tax, no shipping, no activation fee, plus, I later discovered that, because I went to Amazon through the TPCUG link, \$65 was credited to the TPCUG. I activated the phone with Verizon within a few minutes of delivery to my house but after the on-line activation failed. Apparently Amazon and Verizon work it all out because the Amazon price is reduced by Verizon's \$30, and Amazon checks while you wait online to verify the Verizon eligibility if you've told Amazon that you're an existing Verizon customer and have given the phone number you want to use.

OK, now about Android phones – or rather what I've learned so far. There seems to be a consensus that the latest version of the OS, version 2.2, is the best so far, and 2.2 apparently has some much-needed new features. Being a Google product – you guessed it – it had a lot of features imbedded in it that depend on Google. I'm not especially fond of going to one source for everything, but Google has not eliminated all your choices, and, with time, now I'm completely comfortable with it.

Email would be a good example. I'm using my own email server account for email, not my Gmail account. My mail is still managed on my home PC because I run a business and my Outlook is essential. My Outlook 2010 isn't just an email/contact list/calendar; it truly categorizes and manages that searchable client data going back several years. So the phone brings in all my incoming mail from my private server, and I can send replies or initiate new mail through my server.

The web-based Gmail/Contacts manages your contact list on your Android phone pretty much seamlessly.

I export files (calendar by broad date range and contacts one at a time) from Outlook and then log into my Google email account and import each of those files.

I really don't know if the data is on the phone or in the "cloud," but I've decided I don't care. The contacts and calendar data appear in my phone not instantly but within maybe an hour; I'm not sure.

So far no one has discovered my Gmail account and that's just fine. On the phone, I pretty much just read any incoming email that I'm especially interested in, reply if required and then just erase all the phone's email. There are programs (purchased and free) that improve the Outlook to Android transfer process, but I haven't yet seen any need to fully automate the exchange.

Here's a list of most of the functions and programs I'm actively using. Most are free and already installed. A few were free from the Android Market, and just two were purchased.

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Browser – The Internet browser is surprisingly good considering the screen size. It responds to 2-finger zoom and pan rapidly, so, with a small amount of manipulation, you can see any part of even a large page in all detail. A very large number of websites have pages optimized for mobiles. Wikipedia is one excellent example.

Navigation – Google navigation is just amazing, and it's free, unlike the optional VZNavigator, which has a \$10 monthly fee from Verizon. Type in or speak a destination, and Google looks up and presents all the possibilities; select the one you want and the route is presented with voice directions as you drive. When you reach the destination, it presents a Google Street view. This really surprised me when I stopped and it showed a photo of the front of my house.

Maps – Google maps, satellite view and Street View, just like on the PC. Nothing seems to be missing.

Car Locator – This is a small GPS program that lets you quickly set the location of your car and then find it later using a directional arrow as you walk with the distance in feet or meters. \$3.

Kindle – This is a Kindle book reader; there are versions available for many other devices including PC's. The library of digital books you own here are identical to your Kindle. If you stay connected on both, it tracks your last read page so you can switch devices and not lose your place. It's wonderfully readable. It's not a substitute for the Kindle if you own one, but it's handy, and if you happen to own a mobile phone, there's no real need to buy a Kindle if you don't want to.

Email – Well, it's email. It's the mail that I get from my mail server. I do reply to email from the phone when I feel I have to, and, since the voice-to-text feature works here as well, it's pretty easy.

Calendar – It's pretty good, completely integrated with Google Calendar.

Voicemail – Google voicemail takes your voicemail messages, translates them to text and places a message on your phone to read or play – your option.

Music player – There's a sync app that detects when you're plugged into a PC and syncs your PC music to the device. There's also a DLNA app that plays media from a network with a media server. Otherwise it's a decent MP3/WMA player that also does videos.

Camera – An 8 Megapixel camera with face detection and panorama stitching. It has two fairly bright LEDs for flash and plenty of manual settings. Very good zooming, as you'd expect with 8MPixels to work with.

Camcorder – The camera also functions as a 720p HD video recorder. The device also has a mini HDMI port for playing to an external device such as a wide screen TV. It comes with a 16GB SDHC card.

Slideshow and picture management – naturally.

Password management I use the PC version of KeePassX, and I was delighted to find they make an Android version. Free.

Swype - I saved this for last. It's an alternative screen keyboard that allows you to enter a word by sliding a finger from letter to letter. It uses error-correcting algorithms to guess the word and presents alternatives. A world record was set on a touchscreen and Swype using a Samsung Galaxy S. The world record text message consists of 26 words and was typed in 25.94 seconds, which corresponds to a speed of 60 words per minute.

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The few things I don't like It's a mystery to me that Android applications don't have an exit or close. Instead, they stay running until you either shut down each service manually or turn off the phone. I'd guess the up side to this is that everything launches very quickly. It's so fast in fact that you take it all for granted. I haven't found a disadvantage to this, although I've read complaints that it must be taking up cpu cycles and therefore must be draining the battery and contributing heat to global warming. I guess I doubt all that, but what I really don't understand is why I find apps such as Skype running when I've never used them. There are programs you can purchase to manage these, but it's also widely held that you'd live a calmer life if you just ignored it all. Finally I did read a built-in tutorial recommending that you turn the phone off once a day to clear out unused programs in memory.

Second, in spite of the claim of 220 hours of standby and 480 minutes of talk time, this thing eats battery. I'll admit I pretty much actively used it all one day for 10 hours and ran the battery down. I used it for phone calls very little. The display, when on, eats most of the battery, so a continuous charge is necessary if you're going to use it for navigation. There's an extended battery for \$50, which is way too much.

MP3 Tag - A Useful Utility

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As I have said in the past, "Utilities are usually small programs that are intended to do a specific task or a small range of tasks." And I have also directed you to the SPCUG Monitor Computer Buffet, where you can learn about various free utilities (and even find a website from where you can download the utility). However, keep in mind that when you download something from the internet, you could get something you were not expecting; so be very careful. With that said, I'd like to discuss a free utility that allows you to modify the MP3 Tag information that is used by MP3 players like Windows Media Player or iTunes.

The reason you might want to use an MP3 Tag utility is because these types of media players depend on the Tag information to organize the tunes they find in your music folders. If the Tag information is not what you expect, the tune will be put in a location that might make it difficult for you to find. It doesn't matter what the file name is, the tune will be put in a sequence depending on the Tag information, only. Is it "The Beatles", or "Beatles", "The Kingston Trio", or "Kingston Trio"? When I put all my tunes together, I found both versions of artist names. Also, sometimes the tune comes from a compilation of artists. In this case it probably goes into the "Various Artists" category, instead of the "artist's name" category.

MP3Tag is a free metadata editor that supports the MP3 audio format as well as many other formats such as AAC, FLAC, MPC, OGG, MP4, WMA, and others. It runs under Microsoft Windows XP and Vista (and probably Windows 7). MP3Tag allows the user to modify the ID3 tag data that is created along with the MP3 file when a tune is initially created, or ripped from a CD. It allows information such as the title, artist, album, track number, or other information about the audio portion of the file to be stored in the file itself. By the way, there are many MP3 Tagging utilities available, just Google MP3 Tag and you'll see all the possibilities.

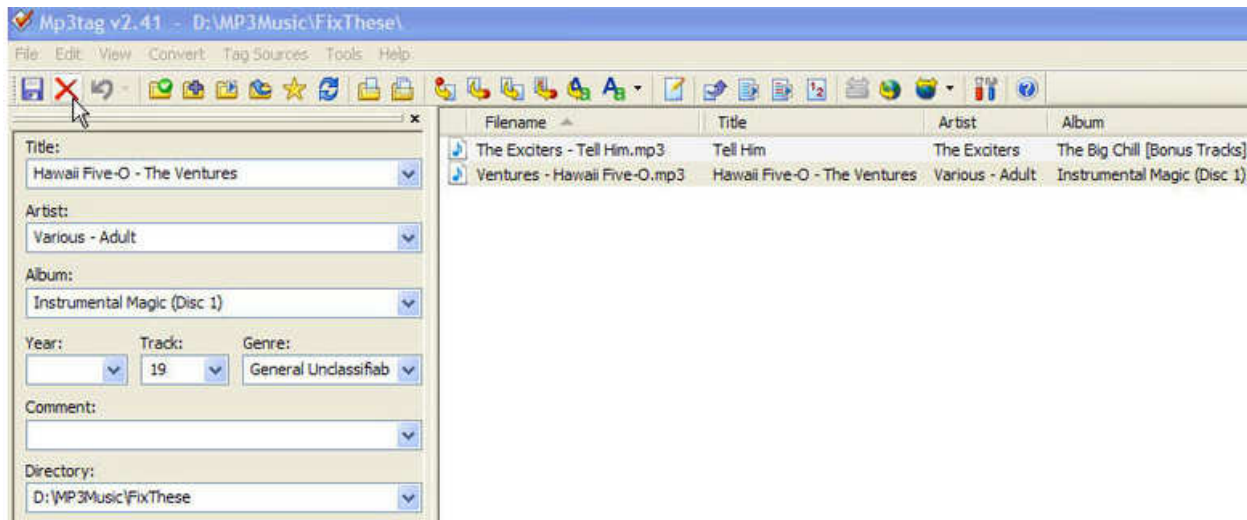
This may be too much detail, but there are two unrelated versions of ID3: ID3v1 and ID3v2. (If this is too much detail, skip this paragraph entirely.) ID3v1 was the original attempt at capturing data about the tune. ID3v2 followed shortly after and is very different from the v1 version. ID3v2 is fairly complex, but suffice it to

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say that it includes all of the pertinent information, and then some, relating to the specific tune. ID3v2 has been modified and improved over the past few years and is currently at ID3v2.4. For those of you who asked “What the heck is metadata?, here is a brief discussion that comes from Wikipedia. Metadata (or sometimes metainformation) is “data about other data”, of any sort in any media. An item of metadata may describe an individual datum, or content item, or a collection of data including multiple content items and hierarchical levels. In data processing, metadata provides information about, or documentation of, other data managed within an application or environment. This commonly defines the structure or schema of the primary data. For example, metadata would document data about data elements or attributes, (name, size, data type, etc.) and data about records or data structures (length, fields, columns, etc.) and data about data (where it is located, how it is associated, ownership, etc.). Metadata may include descriptive information about the context, quality and condition, or characteristics of the data. And there you have a description of metadata.

MP3Tag is very easy to use. First, I have created a folder called “FixThese” in my “MP3Music” folder, where I put any tunes that I think need to have their ID3 tags modified. Then I setup MP3Tag to use this folder. This way, I do my work in a specific folder so I don’t upset anything in the folders that contain all my music. Also, it is easier to work with a folder that has a handful of files rather than thousands of tune files. (The folder to be used is setup by clicking “File” and then selecting “Change Directory”, then navigating to the directory of your choice, “D:\MP3Music\FixThese” in this case.)



The MP3Tag window has two panes. The right-hand pane shows the files in the designated folder. The left-hand pane shows each of the specific ID3 data items that can be modified. (By the way, default values can be setup for each of these items, but I have left the default to “keep”, so that I preserve the values when a tune is selected. These default values can be setup in the Tools-Options-Tag Panel window.) When you select a tune in the right-hand pane, the appropriate values show up in the ID3 tag items on the left. Once the tune selection is made, the values on the left can be changed to your desired values. In the example shown above, the tune “Ventures – Hawaii Five-O.mp3” has been selected. The Title is “Hawaii Five-O – The Ventures” which is the file name. The title of the tune should be only “Hawaii Five-O”, so I would change the title to be such. The Artist: name is “Various – Adult” which I would want to change to “Ventures”, or possibly “The Ventures” if that is how you are referring to this artist. Other information such as Album, Year, and Track may be correct as indicated and will probably be left alone. Genre is an item that is not as well defined as the other tags and therefore I have found it to be less useful. Genre has some general meaning but the meanings may vary a lot from person to person. There are some fairly specific meanings for genre such as “Rock &

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Roll”, “Country”, “Classical”, but many other meanings are in the grey areas such as “Popular” and “Easy Listening”. If you want to employ this tag to any degree of usefulness, you’ll have to make your own definitions and then categorize all your tunes according to these definitions. Otherwise, you’ll get whatever the recording studio used for their definitions of genres. After you are satisfied with the changes you have made, click “File” and then select “Save tag” or just click on the icon that looks like a floppy disk, to save the tag information with the tune.

MP3Tag is a useful utility if you are accumulating a large music collection and you have some specific ideas about how you would like the tunes to be organized. MP3Tag has a lot of additional features. I have described the ones that, I feel, are basic to organizing a music collection. Music collections have a way of growing in all directions and using an MP3 Tag utility is a way of controlling that growth.

Tips, Tricks & Techniques (continued from Page 3)


Improving Google and Bing Searches (continued)

When searching for Mexican restaurants in Bing, you would type *Mexican near:2 restaurants*. Note that in Bing the “near” is in lower case and is separated from the number by a colon.

In using either one of these search engines, AROUND or “near” should make your searches more productive.

Change the Text Direction in Excel 2007 or 2010

If you have seen an Excel worksheet that contains text that does not have the standard orientation (left-to-right), you may wonder how that is done. The procedure to change the orientation in Excel 2007 or 2010 is really simple: first highlight the cell(s) which contains the text and then in the **Alignment** group of the **Home**

tab, click on the *orientation button* (designated by an angled “ab” – ) and select the direction you wish the text to take. Now the text will display in the orientation you have selected.
