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As Peter Cundall says

"That's Your Blooming Lot For This Month"

AGM
Wednesday
4th August
8 PM
Election Of Officers
Receipt of Reports
Financial Statements
Calling Special Meeting
Constitution Changes
See Ron's Ramblings for Quorum
Requirements

Newstream Articles

Deadline : 10 Days before Meeting

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Membership

Single \$10, Family \$15 (Includes Email edition Newstream)

Printed & Posted Newsletter \$20 extra

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General Information

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Ron's Ramblings

The Committee and other interested members have been looking at the Constitution of the Launceston Computer Group Incorporated. The Constitution was last amended in November 2000, when the Launceston Computer Group (PC Users) amalgamated with the Launceston Macintosh Users Group (LaMUG).

At that time the principle of Special Interest Groups (SIG's) was written into the Constitution as the two groups PC and Mac held separate meetings at different venues.

Because both SIG's met monthly Mac on Tuesday & Pc on Wednesday there was no problem in getting expenditure passed and money collected monthly.

However when OPEN Computing became our Seniors' Group and a SIG, the restriction of Monthly Meetings of the Committee passing all expenditure became unworkable in the main. The Constitution put all power over expenditure in the hands of the LCG Committee and SIG's had no power to conduct financial matters.

The Constitution must be revised to take in the practicality of OPEN conducting daily receipts and expenditure to cover their ongoing running costs.

To change the Constitution, we need to pass a resolution at the AGM to hold a special General Meeting to do so. Then notice must be given to members 28 days prior to the Special General Meeting, of the particulars of the changes to be made.

As we have about 170 members (LCG & OPEN) the quorum needs to be **AT LEAST 17 Members** at both the AGM and the Special Meeting otherwise everything will drag on and on.

AS Auditor, I found the situation of the accounts difficult to unravel due to the necessity of OPEN having to use receipts to cover ongoing daily expenditures.

Note: I found NO improprieties in the Accounts, merely confusion.



Launceston Computer Group

SOFTWARE LIBRARY

Dated 1st Aug 2004

DISK 1000 - Your Library on Disk

Have you received your copy of Disk 1000? The disk holds a complete listing of programs available in our PC shareware library. This disk is free of charge to all new members.

DISK COPY PRICES - CLUB MEMBERS \$1.00 per disk

Disk Prices - Box of 25 = \$12.00 Members Only

CD Prices - Box of 10 = \$10.00 Members Only

Judy Hall, Shareware Librarian

AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY

The Shareware Library is available in-between meetings from the following people. Please telephone first to arrange a suitable time.

The library is also available at the venue - Studioworks most Wednesdays 9am to 3pm. Email:

opencomputingtas@hotmail.com

LAUNCESTON

Julie Hjort Phone 6344 5686

Flat 2, 115 Penquite Road, Newstead

Email: jhjort@intas.net.au

Monthly Workshops

Graphics PSP7 - 18th Aug

Next class

PSP7 - Using Paint Shop Pro

Wednesday 18th Aug

1pm - 3.30pm

\$6.50 fee - Numbers limited to 8 please register on noticeboard or call

Judy 63947358 or 0428 947358.

Family History Online

Next Classes

Wednesday 11th Aug 1pm-3.30pm &

Tuesday 24th Aug 9pm-12pm

\$4.00 fee Numbers limited to 8 people

Please register on noticeboard

Microsoft Publisher

Next Class

Thursday 12th Aug - 3pm to 5pm

Please register on noticeboard - Fee \$4.00

Class sizes limited.

Graphics - Level 1

This new class will be held every second month and is aimed at those people who are new or know little about manipulating graphics.

Wednesday 25th Aug - 1 to 3.30pm

Please register on noticeboard

Fee \$6.50 Includes both programs.

Print Artist

Wednesday 25th Aug.

1 - 3.30pm

Making banners and signs.

VENUE TELEPHONE NUMBER

A Mobile Phone Number is now available to all those wishing to contact OPEN during working hours. The number is

0413 698 610

OPEN Session Times

All sessions are held at the venue at Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Rd, L'ton

Standard Sessions (All sessions \$4.00)

Monday	1pm - 3pm	Next Step Beginners
Tuesday	9am - 12	PC & Mac
Tuesday	1pm - 3pm	Beginners
Wednesday	9am - 12	Beginners
Wednesday	2pm - 4pm	2 nd Step
Thursday	10 am - 12	PC & Mac
Thursday	1pm - 3pm	PC & Mac

Special August Sessions

Wednesday 4 th Aug	1pm on	OPEN Meeting & Tutor Tutorial
Wednesday 4 th Aug	7pm on	LCG Monthly Meeting
Thursday 12 th Aug	3 - 5	MS Publisher
Wednesday 11 th Aug	1 - 3	Family History
Wednesday 18 th Aug	1 - 3	Graphics PSP7
Tuesday 24 th Aug	9-12	Family History
Wednesday 25 th Aug	1 - 3	Print Artist - Banners
Wednesday	1 - 3	n/a

*What's Happening at OPEN***OPEN Monthly Meetings****ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS
Open Meeting 4th Aug 2004 at 1.00**

Special meeting to elect this year's office bearers. The people elected will help run OPEN for the next year. Your help and support is needed to reduce the load on your tutors.

Please bring along a plate for lunch at 12.30.

Positions to be filled include:

Chairperson

Chair all meetings of OPEN and ensure that they run smoothly.

Secretary

Handles all incoming and outgoing communications.

Minutes Secretary

Responsible for the documentation and distribution of all meeting minutes.

Treasurer

Responsible for all monies and banking.

Assistant Treasurer

Help the Treasurer where necessary.

Publicity

Responsible for all advertising.

Newsletter Editors Assistant

Collates and produces the Open newsletter for inclusion in LCG monthly "Newstream".

NEW CLASS

To be held every second month.

Graphics – Level 1

Entry level graphics for those people new to computers or new to the field of graphics.

Next Level 1 Class

Wednesday 22nd Sept 2004

1pm – 3.30pm

eLearn Extension

Those people who have not yet completed eLearn assignments may be able to extend the completion time to July 30th. See your Tutor for more details.

Induction Packs

Now being collated are the new induction packs which will include all the information a new member requires to begin their course.

Induction Packs are to be handed out to each new member once they have paid their membership.

Waiting Lists

A waiting list has been drawn up in the back of the daybook. Please enter the names and preferred sessions and contact numbers in the list.

Northern Tas. Camera Club

Will now be meeting at the OPEN Rooms once a month with the first meeting.

Saturday Aug 14th

If you are interested in modifying your photographs this may be of interest to you. You will need to join the club.

Free Copy of Newsletter

Don't forget to submit your email address if you wish to receive the LCG/OPEN newsletter via email. If you have not yet received the newsletter via email tell your tutor.

Special Monthly Meetings

Annual General Meeting

Launceston Computer Group Inc.

1st Wednesday of the month

Wednesday 4th Aug 2004

Evening 7.30pm – 10pm

Shareware

Disk# >>> 3745 <<<Category>>>UT for WIN/W98<<<

Johnny Castaway Screen Antics

A great little screensaver. Follow the adventures of Johnny who is stranded on a island in the middle of the ocean. The program was originally written for Windows 3.1 but has been given a setup.exe file to install on Windows 95, 98, ME or 2000. We have not yet worked out how to get it working on XP.

A brief history of computing...

"Can machines think?"

Alan Turing

Peter Carter



Alan Turing,
1912-1954

We tend to think that

mathematics just is; something settled, its axioms established, with nothing fundamental to be discovered. But that is far from the case, even today.

Between 1910 and 1913 Russell and Whitehead published the three volumes of their *Principia Mathematica* in which they set out to establish a universal set of logic, with rules for every situation. But mathematicians soon found difficulties, David Hilbert posing three questions:

- is logic complete — in other words, can every statement from $1 + 1 = 2$ onwards be proved or disproved?
- is logic consistent — does $1 + 1$ always equal 2?
- is logic decidable — is there a method to prove the truth or falsity of every statement?

Hilbert believed that algorithms would be discovered that would prove decidability, the *Entscheidungsproblem*.

It turns out that there are indeed unsolvable logical statements, the mathematical equivalents of paradoxes such as 'I am lying.' In 1931 the Czech mathematician

Kurt Gödel presented a theorem which can be paraphrased as 'All consistent axiomatic formulations of number theory include undecidable propositions', showing that logic was indeed incomplete

and inconsistent. Alonzo Church, at Princeton University in the US, in 1936 published a paper describing a formal method called 'lambda-calculus'. Church showed that there were problems the lambda-calculus could not solve, and that therefore unsolvable, undecidable, problems existed*. Hilbert was answered.

The Turing machine

Alan Turing had been born in 1912, showed talent for mathematics and science, and gained a PhD in mathematics at Cambridge. As a post-graduate student he was aware of Hilbert's *Entscheidungsproblem*, and it set him thinking... of machines.

Turing's paper 'On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the *Entscheidungsproblem*' was published shortly after Church's, in 1936. Both answered the same question, but Turing's solution was the stronger and less abstract.

At the heart of Turing's argument was a hypothetical machine, the Turing machine. It had a long strip of paper, on which symbols (1, 0) could be written or erased, a device to scan, write and erase symbols, and a set of rules governing its behaviour, its internal states. (Think of the two states of a typewriter: shift key up it prints lower case letters, shift key down it prints capitals.) To Turing, a computable number was one that could be calculated by a step by step mechanical process. If no process, no algorithm, no machine, could be devised to give a definitive result, the problem was undecidable.

Turing had no intention of building such a machine at that stage, but the Turing machine embodied all the features of a modern computer: a memory (the tape), a processing unit (the scanner/writing device), and a program (the set of rules). Turing had devised the logical foundations for computing as we know it.

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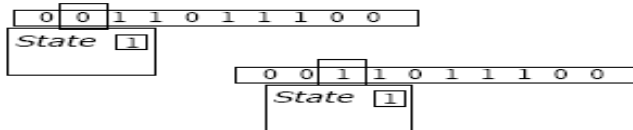
Few of the early pioneers of computing read Turing's paper, but one who did was John von Neumann, who had met Turing at Cambridge, and while Turing visited Princeton. There will be more of von Neumann in a later article.

A sample machine

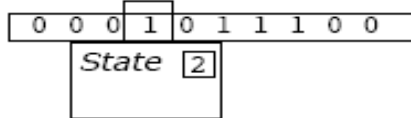
This simple (simplistic) Turing machine adds two numbers, 2 and 3, represented on its tape by 11 and 111. The rules (program) of the machine are:

State	Symbol	Print	New state	Move tape
1	0	0	1	L
1	1	0	2	L
2	0	1	3	L
2	1	1	2	L
3	0	Stop		
3	1	Stop		

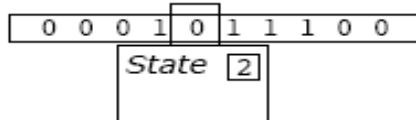
We'll start the machine at a 0 on the left and in State 1. It reads the 0, leaves it as 0, and, still in State 1, moves the tape left.



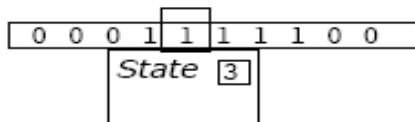
When it reads the first 1 it prints a 0, changes to State 2 and moves.



In State 2, it ignores the 1 and moves.



Finding the 0, it prints 1, changes to State 3 and stops: the answer is 1111 (5).



Enigma

The WW 2 German military enciphered communications by machine, the Enigma machine. It had a keyboard like a typewriter and a number of rotors (three in most, with two spares) which moved rather like the number wheels in an odometer: when the first rotor completed a revolution the second moved one letter, and so on. Within the rotors were electrical connections. When a key was pressed a circuit was completed through the machine and a lamp lit: if A was pressed for instance, it may have been enciphered as M. To the end of the war the Germans believed their communications were secure. A flaw in the design meant that letters could not be enciphered as themselves, and with the aid of a captured machine, Polish mathematicians managed to break Enigma, and developed a mechanical device to aid the work. When Poland was occupied they moved to France, and eventually to Britain.

Turing was the key person at the Code and Cipher School at Bletchley Park, and improved on the Polish methods, developing machines known as 'bombes.' These were essentially Enigma machines in reverse, but with many rotors, stepping through intercepted German military transmissions until the sense was found.



German signal staff with their Enigma machine. The three rotors can be seen. Between them and the keyboard are the letter windows with lamps beneath

Without doubt, the British ability to read much of the German traffic contributed to the

(Continued from page 6)

Allied victory.

The Germans also developed a modified teleprinter, the *Geheimschreiber*, with 10 encoding rotors. To break its more complex cipher (named 'Fish' by the British) more power was needed, and that was supplied by Colossus, an all-electronic machine with some 1600 valves and photoelectric tape reading devices. Colossus was designed by MHA Newman and TH Flowers, and the first of 10 was operating in December 1943. Contrary to what some books may suggest, Turing was not directly involved, and the machine was not used on Enigma intercepts.

At the end of the war the bombes and Colossus were all dismantled, and remained secret until the mid-1970s.

Post-war

As we shall see later, the immediate post-war period was a time of great activity in the then new field of computer science. Turing joined the National Physical Laboratory and began work on the Automatic Computing Engine, ACE. (The 'engine' part of the name was in tribute to Babbage.)

ACE was to have a memory of 204 800 bits and a speed of 1 MHz. Turing devoted a lot of his time to preparing programs, the first real computer programs. However bureaucratic indecision and misunderstanding led Turing to leave the project, and a scaled down version, Pilot ACE, was completed in 1950.

Turing had gone to Manchester University, where Newman was at work on the Manchester Mark 1, which in 1948 (before Turing arrived) had become the first all-electronic stored-program computer. More on that machine in a later article.

One of the many things that interested Turing (along with biological morphogenesis, long distance running, chess, violin playing...) was artificial intelligence (AI), which he expected would make rapid

progress. With David Champerdowne, Turing wrote the first chess program, 'Turochamp'.

But Turing was homosexual in an age when that was criminal, and that is apparently what led to his presumed suicide by poison in 1954.

The Turing test

'I propose to consider the question "Can machines think?"' is how Turing began a 1950 paper, published in *Mind*. In it, he suggested an imitation game played by three people. One player, by asking questions, attempts to determine which of the other two, hidden and communicating by typing, is male and which female.

Could a machine take the part of one of the hidden people? Could a machine converse intelligently, sufficiently well to confuse a human? Turing explored the question, and answered nine possible objections.

Turing's own view was:

'...I believe that in about fifty years' time it will be possible to program computers, with a storage capacity of about 10^9 , to make them play the imitation game so well that an average interrogator will not have more than 70 percent chance of making the right identification after five minutes of questioning...'

He was optimistic: present day machines have nowhere near that ability. But every modern computer is a universal Turing machine.

Further reading

Turing, Turing machines and the Turing test are described in virtually all computing science and artificial intelligence texts. The best biography is by Alan Hodges: *Alan Turing: the enigma of intelligence* (Hutchinson, 1983). Hodges also runs a Web site: <www.turing.org.uk>. Another book exploring undecidability and AI is *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, by Douglas Hofstadter (Penguin, 1980)

Newbie Club Tutorials**Tutorial ... "How To Avoid Being Ripped Off Online"**

It's difficult enough trying to take advantage of the huge benefits the Internet offers, without being taken to the cleaners by the shysters and scam artists who's sole intention is to take our money and run.

I'm not just talking about the out-and-crooks and shucksters here. I'm referring to the so called businesses who offer ebooks and software for sale, but just don't deliver the quality product they promised. Or their customer support emails go unanswered, or they refuse to acknowledge your refund request, or ask for payment to replace a lost download etc. etc. etc.

One way to reduce your risk of getting sucked into these businesses is to refer to the DeskTop Directory of The International Council of Online Professionals (I-Cop) before buying anything from anyone online.

It's completely free, is updated every 3 months, and sits on your desktop for easy and instantaneous reference at any time.

Want to hire a Web Designer? Check the I-Cop Directory first.

Looking for Home Business Advice? Check the Directory first.

Want to buy a PC? Check the Directory first.

You see, iCop's Desktop Directory lists over 750 iCop Members who can probably supply what you need. So What? Well I can assure you that EVERY iCop Member has to comply with VERY stringent conditions to prove their professionalism and integrity, before being allowed to display their iCop Seal of Approval.

So if it's a toss up between buying your gizmo from unknown 'Best Deals' website or from a bona fide Member of The International Council Of Online Professionals, who will you choose?

OK, I have an interest to declare here, because I'm a Founding Member of The Council and I advertise it whenever I can. Why?

Because I'm proud to be a Member, and proud to be associated with an organization with so many honest business people involved. The iCop Seal has become a widely recognized badge of credibility and iCop is setting high standards of honesty and professionalism designed to protect - NOT the Members themselves - but YOU, the every day Internet user and occasional buyer.

Tutorial ... "Use HTML Email With Care"

I get hundreds of emails every day - including that stupid crappy stuff - and a lot of it is in HTML format.

You know what? Some of it is soooo cool I can't read the text!

Here's a few examples ...

Colored background with colored font.

Cool background with a fancy font.

Wiggly, squiggly animations that distract me from reading the message.

Cartoons of a funny little gnome waving at me.

Beautifully designed pictures of butterflies or flowers on a green background.

And so on.

Look, when I send a business letter by snail mail, I do not use scented note paper.

Or a pink envelope. Or include a picture of a delicate fairy with gossamer wings.

Nor do I use an illegible airy-fairy font!

If you use a fancy font that's on your PC, it can't be read by the recipient if he/she doesn't have the same fancy font on *their* PC. Their PC will show what it thinks is the nearest it has, and displays your message in that font. And the result can be a complete mess.

And using a colored background makes it difficult for most people to make out the text. They may be color blind. They could be getting on a bit with tired eyes.

There are a hundred different reasons why they may have difficulty in reading your email comfortably. So they may just not bother reading it at all.

So why try to re-invent the wheel? For decades, newspapers have used black text on a white background. So use Arial or Verdana font (not the default Times Roman - it's curly bits are difficult to read on a PC screen) and write it on a white background.

Email is for communicating your message. Not your ego!

Sorry if that hurts a bit. But if you want to lose friends - or have your emails trashed as unread - use a fancy blue font on a blue background with a cute green gnome waving his hand at the reader. And throw in a beautiful multi-colored butterfly as well.

Or maybe don't send it at all:-)

In fact, if you use plain text email the problem doesn't arise. And everyone can read it.

Tutorial ... "Email Gobbledygook Translated"

The e-mail system uses post offices. They aren't something you can touch, but the post office is big part of e-mail's success. In fact, next time you set up a new e-

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mail address, you'll be prompted for something called a "POP3" account. That's a shortcut for saying "Post Office Protocol Version 3" -- which is a mouth full.

A protocol is a way to get things done without running into stuff. That's a homely way of saying it, but if you apply what you know about the world you live in, you'll see that the electronic world is similar. E-mail has to follow certain protocols in its route around the globe. If it didn't, you'd never get it.

POP3 accounts are always for incoming mail.

The computer hosting your POP3 server does one thing, and does it well. It receives your e-mail, placing it in a special place on a hard drive located on your host's server ("server" is just a fancy name for a computer that does nothing but serve up pages in answer to your request for information). When you check your mail, your e-mail client (Outlook, Outlook Express, AOL, Netscape, etc.) sends a request to the server, checking for mail.

If you've got mail, it's downloaded to your computer. Then you can read it without having to be online.

SMTP accounts are always for outgoing mail.

SMTP stands for Simple Mail Transport Protocol. It's the part of the Internet that sends mail. A protocol is followed to ensure safe delivery to the recipient's mailbox, and not some other box.

Web-based e-mail isn't the same as client-based e-mail. OK, the message is the same, but the way you get your mail is different. Web based mail depends on your browser to read mail. You have to log into an account before you can receive, send or read it.

Use web-based e-mail if you plan to travel a lot, and don't have local access numbers. Then you can get your mail from any computer anywhere in the world.

All you need is an Internet connection and a browser. Hotmail.com, and Yahoo.com are common examples of web-based e-mail services.

You can have as many email addresses as you can think of. There's no limit to the number of accounts you can set up, though a practical limit will be reached depending your creativity or need for various accounts.

Use aliases to receive email at any name you can place in front of the "@" symbol. Your web host should be able to set this up for you. In fact, it is standard stuff on the Net. All you do is ask your provider about email aliases. If they are a good people, they will explain this to you, or send you resource information. Ever noticed the following addresses: webmaster@domain.com or sales@domain.com

or info@domain.com?

Tutorial; "How To Protect Your Files From Accidents"

To prevent accidental deletion of data files, or alteration by another user of your computer do this ... Right Click Start ...

Open Windows Explorer

Navigate to the file you wish to protect

Right click on the file, which opens a new window.

Left click on Properties then General

Click on 'Read Only'

Click Apply or OK

Now you can still open and close the file but if you make changes you must 'Save As' in another name. In other words your existing file cannot be altered.

And if anyone attempts to delete the file it has to be confirmed first.

Tutorial ... "Net Jargon Translated"

Here's a translation of some of the Internet Jargon you come across and perhaps don't understand ... Attachment... A file hooked to an e-mail message that gets sent to a recipient.

Bandwidth ... A measure of the amount of stuff that can get shoved through a limited transmission medium such as a cable or a phone line.

Blind courtesy (or carbon) copy (bcc) ... A copy of e-mail that gets sent to a recipient without the primary recipient's knowledge.

Bounce ... The error message you read when your mail gets returned as undeliverable. Also, what happens to email that can't be delivered, causing the "undeliverable" message that's sent to you by the postmaster.

Filter ... A part of your e-mail program that scans incoming messages for predefined character strings (also known as words or sentences). You can set up a filter to automatically delete e-mail from a particular address.

Flame ... An insulting, caustic, or otherwise unpleasant response.

Forward (FW) .. To pass along a message to another e-mail address. Just don't forward already forwarded messages. They're no fun to receive or read.

Mail Bomb ... To send a huge message or groups of messages to an e-mail address, causing an explosive reaction from the recipient.

Mailbox ... The place on a mail serving computer where your e-mail is stored. You may create individual mailboxes in your email client to distribute your mail to as well.

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Postmaster ... The person who gets to troubleshoot the mail server, and make sure everything is running smoothly.

Sig quote or sig file ... A quotation or closer message added to the end of an e-mail message. Often used to promote a cause or business. Short for signature quote or signature file.

Tutorial ... "Adding Shortcuts to Your Start Menu"

When using your computer, you'll often have some open windows on screen. Without closing them, the Start Menu provides access to lots of programs. But let's say you're lazy, and want a quick click solution... create a shortcut that appears on the Start Menu... so you don't have to chase down the program on the Programs Menu!

Using the left mouse button, click on an icon and drag it from the Desktop (your main screen) and hold it over the Start button for a couple of seconds. You'll see the Start Menu open up.

Keep holding the left mouse button down, and move the icon up to the area above the "Programs" time. You'll see a dark "bar" appear. Slide the icon up and down, and the bar moves up and down. Release the mouse button, and the icon that was on the Desktop is now on the Start Menu.

If you want the icon to be in both places, Desktop *and* Start Menu, use the RIGHT mouse button when dragging the icon. When you release the button, you'll have options... choose the option to "copy here".

If your computer is like mine, something will freeze up. My Start Menu got stuck and wouldn't close. What a drag. I had to reboot the computer to fix it.

Why these things happen is unknown to human beings, but they happen. If cars were built the same way, we'd have stop and go traffic all the time.



Take "Command" (All Versions Of Windows)

Hi Fred, I've been a Plus subscriber for a year and a half now and have learned a lot from your newsletter, but where do *you* learn it from?

For example, I have learned about the DOS/Run commands for Win XP such as msconfig, chkdsk, tskill, winipcfg, nslookup, fixmbr, etc - all from your newsletters, but where does one find a list of these commands?

Is it somewhere in Win XP Help? Thanks again for a great newsletter. John Coldwell (Austria)

Well, in my specific case, I've been playing with PCs for 25 years; I was bound to pick up a few tidbits along the way. 8-)

But more generally, yes, the Help files are a good place to start. And when they fail, Google can pick up the slack.

For example, in any version of Windows. you can go to Start/Run, type the word "command" (without the quotes), hit enter or click OK, and a "command window" (a.k.a. DOS box) will open. In WinMe and earlier, it's a window to true DOS. In NT/2K/XP, it's not really DOS (there is no true DOS in those OSes) but rather a command interpreter that acts in a DOS- like way.

Oddly, in the older Windows with true DOS, you may not have general DOS help available. Some versions of DOS did ship with a general Help command for DOS; many did not. You can try: In the DOS box, type the word "help" without the quotes and then hit enter. You'll probably just get an error message, but if you're lucky, you'll get a basic text-based help file.

The newer Windows, despite not having true DOS, do have abundant DOS-like help built in: In the command window, type the word "help" without the quotes and then hit enter, and you'll see a list of all the valid commands that are available to you.

In all Windows, once you know the name of a specific command that you want to know more about, you can type the command followed by a " /?" (without the quotes) for specific help on that command.

For example, to learn about the ATTRIB command in any version of Windows, you'd open a command window and type attrib /?

and then hit enter. You'll then see basic textual info on the Attrib command and how to use it. Again, " /?" works for any valid command. You also can explore the Windows help file itself, searching on any specific command you want to know more about. In particular, the XP help file is very, very good--- by far the best built-in help Windows has ever had.

But if the above doesn't help, try: <http://www.google.com/search?q=dos+commands> or search using the actual command you're interested in (eg "attrib") as the search term. *From LangaList 28/6/2004*

Why Am I Getting All This Spam? *Center for Democracy & Technology Unsolicited Commercial E-mail*

Research, Six Month Report, March 2003 Summary Every day, millions of people receive dozens of unsolicited commercial e-mails (UCE), known popularly as "spam". Some users see spam as a minor annoyance, while others are so overwhelmed with spam that they are forced to switch e-mail addresses. This has led many Internet users to wonder: How did these people get my e-mail address?

In the summer of 2002, CDT embarked on a project to attempt to determine the source of spam. To do so, we set up hundreds of different e-mail addresses, used them for a single purpose, and then waited six months to see what kind of mail those addresses were receiving. It should come as no surprise to most e-mail users that many of the addresses CDT created for this study attracted spam, but it is very interesting to see the different ways that e-mail addresses attracted spam -- and the different volumes -- depending on where the e-mail addresses were used.

The results offer Internet users insights about what online behaviour results in the most spam. The results also debunk some of the myths about spam.

Major Findings • Our analysis indicated that e-mail addresses posted on Web sites or in newsgroups attract the most spam.

Web Sites – CDT received the most e-mails when an address was placed visibly on a public Web site. Spammers use software harvesting programs such as robots or spiders to record e-mail addresses listed on Web sites, including both personal Web pages and institutional (corporate or non-profit) Web pages. CDT tested two methods of obstructing address harvesting: •

Replacing characters in an e-mail address with human-readable equivalents, e.g.

"example@domain.com" was written "example at domain dot com;" and •

Replacing characters in an e-mail address with HTML equivalents. E-mail addresses posted to Web sites using these conventions did not receive any spam.

USENET newsgroups -- Newsgroups can expose to spammers the email address of every person who posts to the newsgroup. Newsgroup postings, on average, generated less spam than posting an e-mail address on a high-traffic web site. In our study, we discovered that most newsgroup-related spam is sent to the address in the message header, even if other e-mail addresses are included in the text of the posting. •

For the most part, companies that offered users a choice about receiving commercial e-mails respected that choice. Most of the major Web sites to which we provided e-mail addresses respected the privacy choices we made -- when a choice was made available to us. •

Some spam is generated through attacks on mail servers, methods that don't rely on the collection of e-mail addresses at all. In "brute force" attacks and "dictionary" attacks, spam programs send spam to every possible combination of letters at a domain, or to common names and words. While these attacks can be blocked, some spam is likely to get through. In many cases, spam generated by these attacks will be directed to shorter e-mail address (like bob@domain.com) before it is directed to longer addresses (like bobwilliams@domain.com).

Tips for Avoiding Spam Currently there is no foolproof way to prevent spam. Based on our research, we recommend that Internet users try the following methods to prevent spam: •

Disguise e-mail addresses posted in a public electronic place. CDT received the most spam just by placing an e-mail address at the bottom of a webpage. Spammers "harvest" these addresses with computer programs that collect and process addresses and add them to spam mailing lists. If a user must post his/her e-mail address in a public place, it is useful to disguise the address through simple means such as replacing

"example@domain.com" with "example at domain dot com" or other variations such as the HTML numeric equivalent, in which "example@domain.com" could be written "example@domain.com," Opt out of member directories that may place your e-mail address online. If your employer places your e-mail address online, ask the Webmaster to make sure it is disguised in some way. •

Read carefully when filling out online forms requesting your e-mail address, and exercise your choice. If you don't want to receive e-mail from a Web site operator, don't give them your e-mail address unless they offer the option of declining to receive e-mail and you exercise that option. If you are asked for your e-mail address in an online setting such as a form, make sure you pay attention to any options discussing how the address will be used. Pay attention to check boxes that request the right to send you e-mails or share your e-mail address with partners. Read the privacy policies of Web sites. If you suspect that a Web site has violated its privacy policy, you can report it to your state attorney general or the Federal Trade Commission. •

Use multiple e-mail addresses. When using an unfamiliar Web site or posting to a newsgroup, establish an e-mail address for that specific purpose. Alternatively, instead of just using one or two e-mail addresses, you can use "disposable e-mail addresses," which consolidate e-mail in a single location but allow you to immediately shut off any address that is attracting spam. By recording which disposable address was used at which web site, one can track what sites are causing spam. Many Web sites are now providing free e-mail accounts. A search in Google Directory for "disposable e-mail addresses" provides a list of e-mail providers designed for one-time use e-mails. •

Use a filter. Many ISPs and free e-mail services now provide spam filtering. While filters are not perfect, they can cut down tremendously the amount of spam a user receives.

• Short e-mail addresses are easy to guess, and may receive more spam. At least one spammer tried to guess the e-mail addresses used in this study by sending mail to short and common addresses. E-mail addresses composed of short names and initials like bob@ or tse@, or basic combinations like smithj@ or toms@ will probably receive more spam. E-mail addresses need not be incomprehensible, but a user with a common or short name may want to modify or add to it in some way in his or her e-mail address.

For further information, please contact Ari Schwartz at the Center for Democracy & Technology, ari@cdt.org.

Right And Wrong Ways To De-Dust A PC

Our coverage on getting dust out of a laptop (<http://langa.com/newsletters/2004/2004-06-28.htm#1>) generated some interesting mail, including this unusual note on the general topic of getting dust out of *any* PC--- not just laptops:

...Vacuuming dust from air intakes shouldn't pose any problems but perhaps you should warn against vacuuming out the inside of a computer. Vacuums can create a good deal of static electricity that could kill a system. The insides should always be blown clean not sucked clean.

Having dogs and cats around has forcibly made me proficient at cleaning computer systems. I try to do each of mine at least every month or two. I've also solved many computer problems for friends just by blowing the crud out of them. One had enough fuzz in it to make a whole 'nuther dog. Here are some things I've picked up over the years. There are several ways to clean the insides of a computer. Many would first reach for one of those cans of compressed air. IMHO they are garbage. They're expensive, you can't get them into areas you need to and they're not nearly powerful enough. But, they are better than nothing.

Better yet is a vacuum in "blow" mode like you can do with many shopvacs and some uprights. A crevice tool will let you direct the air quite well and puts out a good stream of air but not enough to do harm. Just keep it a few inches away from touching anything. [A plastic nozzle or crevice tool also will help reduce the chances of electrical damage.] My personal favorite is an air compressor with an adjustable pencil type blower nozzle that lets me adjust the pressure. 10 to 20 psi is enough to eradicate dust bunnies and dirt from the tightest corners. I've also used a blower end made by jamming an old Chevy pushrod into a male air hose connector. The small hole in the pushrod limits the pressure and gives pinpoint control. The important point is to control the pressure.

When blowing out a system, pay special attention to the areas between the fins of heatsinks. Fan blades should be held from spinning [from the compressed air you're blowing through them] with your finger, a pen or something similar lest you over-rev them and they self destruct. The tough dirt on the leading edge of CPU, case and graphics card fans can be loosened with a toothbrush or small paintbrush and then blown clean.

With power supplies and fans all you can do is shove a wooden pencil in the fan blades and blow away from all directions. I usually crank the pressure up a bit when blowing out power supplies.

Do I need to add that this should best be done outside? [The blown-out dust can make a mess.]

While you're in there, socketed chips (getting rare these days) should be [gently] pressed back into their sockets... Check all cable connections by pressing on them firmly. And if you really want to be thorough you can reseat cards or pull and clean the contacts with a pencil eraser before reinstalling them. Be sure to brush off all the little eraser bits and put the cards back in the original slots or Windows will go nuts finding new devices on your

next boot up.

Well, what started out as a comment about vacuums turned into a little more. ---Steve Gonnella

Thanks, Steve!

I've also heard that "vacuum cleaners cause static" warning for years, but have yet to see a full explanation of why or how. I can see how rubbing a vacuum cleaner's nozzle over a carpet in dry weather might generate a static charge, same as when you shuffle your feet on a rug; but this mechanism doesn't come into play when cleaning a PC. I suppose that the dust and fiber particles colliding and rubbing together in the intake air stream could create a static charge, especially in very dry conditions or with very large quantities of debris, but this seems a low- probability event inside a PC. Still, the probability isn't zero, so I guess I'd have to agree that blowing--- dispersing the dust and fiber rather than concentrating it--- is the safer (albeit messier) option. Using plastic nozzles and tools also can help reduce the risk of any electrical problems.

I also agree with Steve that compressed air in cans is ridiculously expensive, but it can be good for reaching inside very small crevices or in places where you want maximum control. I keep a can or two handy for just that, and the cans last a very long time because I hardly ever use them.

But to tell you the truth, my #1 tool for blowing out PC cases is a pair of high-mileage, one-owner, original-equipment human lungs: A huff and a puff or two, and it's done, especially if you do it more or less routinely, before things get really fuzzy inside your PC. 8-) In any case, lung-power is far simpler than hauling out the vacuum or doing anything as elaborate as rigging an air compressor.

Finally, like Steve, I have also successfully used pencil erasers to clean plug-in card contacts, usually as part of an annual system cleaning. It works fine, but you have to be careful not to rub too hard or you may abrade not just the dirt, but the gold or copper of the contacts as well. If your PC card contacts are *very* dirty or somehow need frequent cleaning, then it's probably a safer bet to use a cleaning solution specifically designed for electrical contacts. Your local computer supply or audio/video specialty store may have such cleaners in stock, or you can try these highly specialized products:

<http://www.stabilant.com/> <http://www.google.com/search?q=kontak+cleaner>

From LangaList 1/7/2004

Windows XP Service Pack 2 Part I

What's happening with the much-heralded Windows XP Service Pack 2? Currently it's available in a "Technical Preview Program", which is essentially late-stage beta testing. Its official release has been delayed and delayed again -- and that's very good news for all of us.

Major updates to operating systems are not always occasions of unalloyed joy, as experienced readers of WWW know full well. Service packs often introduce almost as many new wrinkles (to put it kindly) as fixes.

Service Pack 2, more than any of its predecessors, is a seriously risky patch job. That's because Microsoft's almost exclusive focus in SP2 is security. Security first. Ahead of backwards compatibility.

In this and the next issue of WWW we'll give you an overview of what to expect in Windows XP SP2. There's major changes though many are not obvious and we feel you should be ready for SP2's contents because the changeover may not be as smooth as Microsoft is hoping.

What does that mean?

It means I can almost guarantee you that some of your existing applications are going to break when you install the service pack. Some may break just a little and will be easily fixed; others will break hard. Even some of your hardware may not work correctly once you install SP2..

The delays we've seen so far are partly to give Microsoft time to respond to feedback by beta testers, and partly to ensure that third-party software makers test SP2 thoroughly and ensure it works with their software.

Those delays are good for you and me, as the extra testing and tweaking will hopefully minimize problems when SP2 hits the real world. Don't think it's going to eliminate the problems -- it won't -- but Microsoft is doing the right thing by taking its time over releasing SP2.

Even so you should ensure that any major programs you have are certified by the makers as compatible with Windows XP SP2. Especially any anti-virus, diagnostic, firewall or networking programs. Microsoft's own programs are not necessarily certain to be SP2 compliant in the first instance.

What's in SP2?

This edition, I want to introduce you to the major new features and fixes in SP2. Next edition, we'll deal with the crucial issues of should you install it, when you should do so, and how to go about installing it with the minimum amount of disruption and heartache.

In the meantime, don't try the Technical Preview version unless you have a spare machine sitting there with Windows XP and nothing of importance on it; a machine which you're happy to trash and then reformat if necessary. As it stands, the Technical Preview is not ready for real-world PCs.

Security central

The first change you'll notice when you install SP2 is a new Security Center icon in the notification area of the taskbar. Right-click it and choose Open Security Center to check out the new operational headquarters for XP's enhanced security features.

The Security Center owes a lot in looks to anti-virus and system utility software such as Norton Internet Security and PC-cillin. The central control panel tells you at a glance whether your firewall is on or off, whether Automatic Updates are enabled, and the status of your virus protection.

>From the Center you can also access security settings for your system and for Internet Explorer.

SP2 is cluey about almost two dozen anti-virus programs, so the status displayed in the Security Center reflects how up-to-date your existing anti-virus software is. Or, so the theory goes. In practice, it figured out I was using Norton AntiVirus, but couldn't work out its status (for example, whether I'd performed a full system scan recently). Hopefully that will be fixed in the release version of SP2.

The Security Center is truly clueless about non-Microsoft firewalls. Who knows whether that will change in the release version, but right now, if you're using a program such as ZoneAlarm, the Security Center's firewall status is of no use. I guess Microsoft is so keen on its newly revamped

(Continued on page 14)

firewall (see below) it can't get its mind off it.

The revamped firewall

"Shields up!" is the catch phrase for SP2. The default settings for many of the new security features is on, not off, something you need to be aware of if you already have alternative security measures in place. If you do, you're likely to need to make adjustments to ensure everything works smoothly.

The new Windows Firewall, formerly known as Internet Connection Firewall (ICF) is switched on when you install SP2. This is a protect-the-new-chums setting, designed to maximize protection for the masses, but likely to cause it's own problems. Things to watch out for include clashes with any alternative firewalls you have installed and disappearing hardware, such as print servers or network storage devices, on a network.

ICF was not much of a firewall, although it did a good job of stealthing ports to render PCs invisible from outside. But it had almost no options and little flexibility. Windows Firewall is much more configurable and has the added advantage of springing into action during Windows boot up, protecting your system right from the start.

The firewall monitors *incoming* traffic and stops any which is either unsolicited or is not on an exception list. 'Unsolicited' traffic is anything which is not in response to a request from a program on your computer, such as your browser requesting a remote Web page. The exceptions list is entirely configurable, or you can ramp up security by allowing no exceptions whatsoever.

If you have multiple connections on your PC -- both a local area network and a modem, for example -- you can make global settings which will affect all connections or adjust settings on a connection-by-connection basis. I ran Windows Firewall, in its default configuration, through Steve Gibson's Shields Up! and Probe My Ports security tests <https://grc.com/x/ne.dll?bh0bkyd2> and it came up with a perfect score.

A (somewhat) better browser

Microsoft has let Internet Explorer languish for years. The company man-

aged to trounce its opposition through a combination of marketing muscle, a deep pocketbook (so it could afford to give IE away) and some pretty good features, features which had IE leading the browser pack for a while. Well, once the browser wars were won and most of the opposition was off licking its wounds, Microsoft promptly abandoned development of its browser.

The result is that almost every other browser on the market leaves IE for dead. IE lacks basic elements such as tabbed browsing, pop-up blocking and password management that most decent modern browsers wouldn't be seen dead without.

SP2 fixes some of that. At last, Internet Explorer gets a pop-up blocker. It handles the job nicely, too. IE automatically blocks pop-up windows, but alerts you by sound and by a subtle but easily accessible Information Bar at the top of the displayed page. Click the Information Bar to see options which include: Show Blocked Pop-up, Allow Pop-ups From This Site, Turn Off The Pop-up Blocker, Turn Off Information Bar For Blocked Pop-ups and Pop-up Blocker Settings.

IE not only blocks pop-ups, it also blocks "software." That means things like ActiveX components and other scripts. This should put a major hurdle in the way of those sites which try to take over your browser or download spyware onto your computer. Script blocking will also prevent Web authors from positioning IE windows off-screen or creating windows without address or status bars.

Other subtler improvements include the reinforcement of browser zones, to ensure only truly safe sites operate at the lowest security settings, and a new Add-On Manager to give you control over programs which change or expand IE's behavior.

No tabs, though; no password manager. IE still has some catching up to do.

Automatic Updates

Despite SP2's focus on security, you and I both know that more security "vulnerabilities" are likely to appear in Windows in the not-too-distant fu-

ture. Microsoft knows that, too. That's why during installation SP2 prompts you to switch Automatic Updates on. I'll talk about whether you should switch this setting on in the next edition. Having it on will ensure you receive the latest patches and fixes as soon as they're released. With Automatic Updates on, you'll also find that when you go to switch your computer off, XP will offer to install any updates it has already downloaded before it closes down.

More...

There are plenty of other fixes and features in SP2. Some of the more notable include:

- An overhaul of wireless networking. It's now much easier to use and includes its own Wireless Network Setup Wizard, which smoothes the process of setting up a wireless network. An icon in the taskbar indicates wireless network status and the Wireless Connection window shows the security status of all available wireless networks.
- A more secure code base, with much of the code recompiled to help deflect the infamous buffers overruns which have been responsible for many security vulnerabilities in the past.
- Outlook Express and Windows Messenger have been updated to block unsafe attachments. I understand the impulse that makes Microsoft do this, but I'd much rather have a simple tool for controlling permissible/blockable attachments, than a blanket block. I hate it in Outlook and I can't see myself liking it anywhere else. Woody's Watch gets more complaints about this 'feature' than almost anything else.
- Windows hot fixes and Office updates no longer appear in the Add/Remove programs list by default. This step is designed to prevent inexperienced users from removing these updates by accident, and it also keeps the Add/Remove list from becoming a kilometre long. You can still see the patches in the list: Simply check an option box and -- nice touch, this -- all the patches appear neatly grouped beneath the relevant program
- *From Woody's Windows Watch 7.08*

Another Unnecessary Virus Warning

Hay Nonny Mouse

I hope these virus warnings will alert those who are unaware of their cause and effects

The Senior Citizen Virus: will constantly flash warning: "Insufficient Memory", although older files will be recalled with ease. Will communicate only in arcane language, such as Windows 3.1. Activity Manager may become permanently disabled.

The Teenage Boy Virus: once affected, your computer will no longer accept commands. In some cases, it will do the opposite of each command given. Will also suddenly disconnect while in the middle of communicating. Miraculously, it will probably "come good" eight years later.

The New Age Virus: computer will no longer format disks as "they should be allowed to be any format they want to be".

The Viagra Virus: computer will turn itself on at inappropriate times. Users report difficulty over turning the damn thing off.

The Bureaucrat Virus: constantly reorganises all the files on your computer's desktop then finds itself unable to actually open any of them.

The Heritage Campaigner Virus: saves everything, even your ghastly mistakes. May even try to save Cameron Offices.

The Fashion Designer Virus: returns you constantly to an earlier version, then claims it is fresh work.

The Sydney Ferry Virus: will render all navigation impossible. Computer will crash suddenly and often.

The Australian Banker Virus: computer will let you "save" but pay you very little interest.

The Bastard Boss Virus: computer will keep asking "Are you sure you want to quit now?" even though you never said you wanted to quit in the first place.

The Chief Executive Virus: clears desktop of all files, except for a couple of executive games.

From ACT APPLE August 2004



KIDS IN CHURCH

3-year-old, Reese:

"Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name.
Amen."

A little boy was overheard praying:

"Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a
real good time like I am."

A. Sunday school class was studying the Ten Commandments. They were
ready to discuss the last one. The teacher asked if anyone
could tell her what it was. Susie raised her hand, stood tall, and quoted,
"Thou shall not take the covers off the neighbour's wife."

After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the
way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times
what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied,
"That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I
wanted to stay with you guys."

I had been teaching my three-year old daughter, Caitlin, the Lord's Prayer
for several evenings at bedtime, she would repeat after me the lines from
the prayer.

Finally, she decided to go solo.

I listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word right up to the
end of the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver
us some E-mail.

Amen."

and one particular four-year-old prayed, "And forgive us our trash baskets
as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."

A Sunday school teacher asked her children, as they were on the way to

church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"
One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

Six-year-old Angie and her four-year-old brother Joel were sitting together
in church. Joel giggled, sang, and talked out loud.

Finally, his big sister had had enough. You're not supposed to talk out loud
in church." "Why? Who's going to stop me?" Joel asked.

Angie pointed to the back of the church and said, "See those two men
standing by the door?

They're hushers."

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, Ryan 3. The boys
began to argue over who would get the first pancake.

Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting
here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'"

Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

A father was at the beach with his children when the four- year-old son ran
up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay
dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked.

"He died and went to Heaven," the Dad replied.

The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back
down?"

A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-
year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mommy say," the wife answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all
these people to dinner?"

*This was too cute to not share

Another Submission from Don Hevey THAT cousin of mine