



Brevard Users Group



November 2002



AN FACUG PRIZE WINNING NEWSLETTER

Pres Sez !

By George Rymer

Greetings Members, I trust this will find all of you well and in good spirits. The stock market seem to be rallying, so that should be good news for a lot of you. Hopefully all of you survived the Halloween tricks and passed out some treats to the Hobgoblins.

November is the time for Thanksgiving, to give thanks for the privilege of living in this great country of ours and to give thanks for all the freedoms we enjoy. The freedoms that very few other countries can even come close to matching.

November is also the time to start thinking about who you want to be the Officers to guide the BUG Club during the calendar year of 2003. The nominating committee members are Rex Cummings (242-9601), Bill Ranck (676-7908) and C. M. Corley. (253-3050). If you have anyone you would like to nominate, or you would personally like to fill an office within the club, call one of the members of the committee and give them the information. (Nominees must consent to serve in the position they are nominated for.) The Ballot will be finalized at the December meeting and the election will be held at the January meeting.

We plan to have a short business meeting at the December 18th meeting and then have a Christmas party. The plan is to have cookies, cake, punch, coffee and soft drinks. If anyone has any ideas they would like to put forth in addition to the proposed list, please feel free to contact me and we will consider it. In conjunction with this proposed party, we need volunteers to cook/bake cookies & cake. We also need people that might have an "In" with businesses who might be willing to furnish promotional items to give away as gifts at the party.

Then there is always the need for manpower to setup and cleanup. Any help/donations will be greatly appreciated.

CALL ME !!! (724-6715)

We are having a contest to see who can design a new business card to represent the BUG Club. Get creative and give it your best shot. A copy of the present card is displayed here in the newsletter. The club logo is available for download from the web site (www.bugclub.org) A group of three judges who have not submitted entries will decide the winner and the prize will be a one years membership in the club. Come on you designers, lets get going !!!

CHECK OUR WEB SITE FOR ALL THE LATEST INFORMATION

HAPPY THANKSGIVING



George Wins at SRUG Meeting!

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The BUG Newsletter is created on a AMD K-2 450 mhz computer using PageMaker 6.01.

Articles, Reports, and new Advertisements should reach the Managing Editor or Desk Top Publishing SIG by 5:00 p.m the Friday before the third Wednesday (Monthly Bug Meeting) of the month. Items received after the deadline will be held for the following month's issue

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Questions involving advertising should be directed to **Advertising** at the address below.

Articles or items of interest for inclusion in the newsletter should be sent to **The Editor** at:

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***THE NEXT MEETING
OF THE
BREVARD USERS GROUP
WILL BE ON
November 20, 2002
AT 7:00 pm
IN
Melbourne Library
on Fee Avenue
Visitors welcome!***

**Visit the BUG CLUB web site
for the latest schedule
and speaker information at
<http://bugclub.org>
There will be a drawing
for Door Prizes!
You must be a member
and present to win!**

Nominations for Officers

Anyone interested in nominating a member for office should get in touch with the following people by phone or e-mail. We will need the name and office of the candidate along with the name of the member nominating that person. Nominations will also be open at the December meeting. The nominations will then be closed and a ballot prepared for any contested offices, the ballot will be published in the January newsletter. The voting will take place at the January 2000 meeting. Elected officers will assume their duties at the February meeting.

Nominating Committee:

Rex Cummings 242-9601
Bill Ranck 676-7908
C. M. Corley 253-3050
President _____
Vice Pres. _____
Treasurer _____
Secretary _____
1st Member at Large _____
2nd Member at Large _____
Name of nominating member: _____





Mary
Alice
Grant
Secretary

BUG Meeting
21 October 2002

George Rymer, President started the meeting at 7pm. Please note that next month's meeting will be held on **20 November at the Melbourne Library on Fee Ave.**

George asked all members of the club to please email the webmaster of BugClub.org of those things you might be particularly interested in. He also noted that SRUGC has a new web site and requests the members look at it.

The club is having a contest for a design of the Bug Club Business card. Let your creative juices flow and design a winner. If you are planning on using the Bug Club logo, you may go to the web page and download it. A panel of three members of the club, who did not send in a design, will be the judges. The winner will receive a one-year membership to the Bug Club.

A committee for nomination of new officers was selected. They are: Rex Cummings, Bill Rank, and C. M. Corley. If you are interested in running for any of the offices, please send Rex Cummings an email. His email address is: rexgjr@palmnet.net.

Instead of the regular meeting with a speaker for December, the members voted to have a business meeting, then a party consisting of cookies, cake, coffee, and punch. If you are interested in donating cookies or cake, please let George know. That meeting is Wednesday, 18 December 2002.

The speaker was Jennifer Gauthier of Presidential Technology and she works out of Wiler's TV Repair. She repairs printers and gave a very good presentation on printers in general. To find the best printer for you depends on what you do. For instance, if you want good pictures, go for a little bit more expensive one, if you only print text, go for a cheaper one. If you have a business in your home,

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Executive Meeting Minutes

4 September 2002, Approved 9 October 2002.

Attendance: George Rymer, Mary Alice Grant, Charles Principato, Ted Glaser, Jack Nash, Jim Townsend, Eric Arnold, M. Corley

1. MAG read the prior Executive-meeting notes from 14 August 2002. Charles Principato made a motion to accept notes as read; Ted Glaser seconded the motion, passed.

2. Treasurer report: checking: \$766.74; Savings: \$2,151.66.

3. The FACUG Fall conference will be held in Ocala on the 12th of October.

4. COMDEX has returned to Atlanta and will be held at the World Congress Center 9-13 Sept.

5. The first South East Users Group Conference will be held in Atlanta on 13-15 September.

6. The Laptop computer still has not been turned over to Treasurer, Ted Glaser. This is expected to happen before George leaves for Atlanta for COMDEX meeting.

7. Jerry Mannis (Comp USA) will speak in September meeting on digital cameras and printers. BUG club is still looking for leads on speakers for Oct., Nov., and Dec. 2002. Eric found a man on Palm Bay Road who may be willing to talk on his experiences on repairs for monitors for computers. This will be a talk from a technician's view. George asked Eric to request more information re his experience.

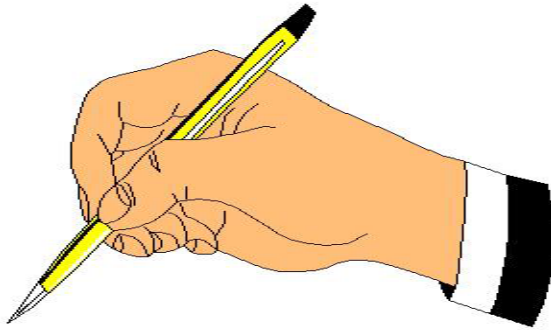
8. George still has not been in contact with Eau Gallie Civic Center for a "garage/computer" parts sale. This is scheduled to happen soon.

9. **NEW BUSINESS:** now have a new domain called Bugclub.org. New web site up and going strong. Eric explained how the web site was built, links to us, commercial advertisements, etc. There is a need to "erase" old web page on geocities to cut down on confusion from club members as to why it isn't being updated. We want our members to see new and updated web site.

10. Eric has three points to bring up to Executive committee re the BUG web site.

a. Ability to run a voting page. Do we want to keep this? Example, asking members if they liked last month's speaker. All agreed to this capability.

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Treasurer's Report

By Ted Glaser

Account Balances as of 30 SEP 02

Checking Acc't	\$ 766.74
DDDW Savings	\$ 2151.66
Petty Cash	—

New Members: Welcome Aboard!

Jacobs, C - #1190
 Millus, Y. - #1191
 Taylor, D - #1189

Renewals: Thanks!

Betchel, P - #1081
 Bowen, C - #1163
 Boyer, J - # 1085
 Buchanan, A - #1023
 Clear, J - #789
 Derby, V - #588
 Frasca, R - #253
 Litke, O - #553
 Maffley, R - #1086
 McEwen, E - #910
 Nash, J - #945
 Principato, C - #1022
 Rymer, G - #982
 Slane, T - #1035
 Standiford, B - #1026



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 W. Melbourne, FL 32904 Fax: (321) 253-2292
 Web Site: AstroToo.com
 Email: Astro@AstroToo.Com

NEW LOCATION!

Secretary, continued from Page 3

you will need an expensive and sturdy printer. HP's, and Cannon, are the best for ink jets and Okidata are good printers for dot matrix. Ms Gauthier suggested a good surge protector for your computers and printers. Especially for the laptops. 70% of printer repairs is due to lightning strikes. She also noted that she has seen quite a bit of damage done from people trying to refill their own ink cartridges. It is better to take the cartridge to a reliable ink refill company, but remember it is only good for four to five refills. Otherwise, the heads on the printers will wear out. It is a very good idea to keep food, and liquid away from the printer and a good cleaning once a year for \$20 to \$25 will make the printer last twice as long.

The club had three new members last night and one of them won a prize. Three prizes were given away to members of the club.

The meeting ended around 8:30pm. Next month's meeting is scheduled for 20 November 2002 at Melbourne Library on Fee Ave.



Ask The Experts

by Jerry Carson

Q : I'm running Windows 2000 Professional with ZoneAlarm. I logged on yesterday evening with my personal ID. As soon as I was logged on and before I had any chance to start any jobs (no internet connection), ZoneAlarm reported an attempt to access the internet from my computer.

The following information was given:

The program listed was Webpdp.fsg_1050.exe. The IP address was 127.0.0.1 port 1029. I found the program in the directory: c:\documents and settings\local settings\temp. I stopped the attempt by renaming the program. Do you have any guess as to what this is?

A : I've done a little digging and here's what I've been able to uncover.

1) The only program I could find named webpdp is a part of the "Gator" input tool that records web site usage. The Gator tool allows the user to quickly input common information, but at the cost of monitoring the sites accessed and presenting numerous pop-up ads.

2) Port 1029 is used as part of a RPC or remote procedure call. This could allow an external program to execute code on your machine. This could be used to download new pop-ups.

3) The IP address 127.0.0.1 is the loopback address. This is very strange. It means that your machine was attempting to talk to itself. Because it uses the Internet Protocol, it still wanted to connect to the Internet.

4) The location of the file (in a temp directory) indicates the program was not installed in the normal manner.

5) The fact that it was launched before you started any tasks means it was automatically launched. This can be done a number of ways by using the win.ini file, the Registry, or the Start Menu. You may be able to determine where it was launched from by viewing the Event Log. (right-click on My Computer, select Manage, then select Event Viewer)

It sounds like you did the right thing by renaming the file. Keep an eye out for any further suspicious activity. And pat yourself on the back for installing ZoneAlarm!

From the WYSIWYG, newsletter of the Sterling Heights Computer Club



For What It's Worth.

By Jack Nash

This came by e-mail. I checked the site it and it works for my local physician. It may help.

I am a practicing physician and the founder of www.MDhub.com, a free service that allows anyone to send an Internet message to their doctor. I thought the members of the Brevard Users Group Inc might find this web site both interesting and useful. Since most doctors do not yet use the Internet in their practice, your message is automatically delivered to the doctor's FAX machine as well as online.

With nearly 400,000 physicians available, MDhub includes virtually every doctor involved in patient care in the US.

MDhub.com is a free service. All messages are encrypted for security and privacy. There is no advertising and no data is collected. Most people find reaching their doctor to be a very frustrating experience, with busy signals, waiting on hold, press 1 for... press 2... and telephone tag. MDhub is a solution to this problem.

Jerry Spitz, M.D.

Founder, The Little Blue Book Companies

Medical Office: 860-525-3434

MDhub: www.MDhub.com/8605253434



Executive meeting, continued from Page 3

b. Email address for each officer is on web page. All emails to each address will be forwarded to the individual. Executive committee requested this be kept to officers only.

c. A shareware/freeware program be downloaded to the web site in place of the disk of the month. This will be placed on the web site and called "Feature Download".

11. Charles made a motion to end meeting at 7:40pm, Ted 2nd and passed.

Respectfully given by

Secretary, Mary Alice Grant

PRACTICING THE BLACK ART

Performance issues in Windows

by Vinny La Bash

Sarasota PC Monitor April 2002

Pointing out that adding memory to your computer will improve performance has become almost like pointing out that the sun rises in the east. Of course it does! Now will somebody please tell me how to improve performance?

Performance means different things to different people. Does it mean how fast a file will open after you select it, or how fast you can scroll through a list of items in a window? Some measure performance by how quickly images appear on the screen during a 3D game and the geeks, propeller heads, and bit-twiddlers use something called benchmarks, which sometimes have a connection to the real world. We are not talking about raw speed type performance, but making Windows work reliably and predictably in everyday situations.

A very realistic measure of performance could be how easy is it to use your system and accomplish the things you want to do without annoying frustrations grinding you to a halt. There are things you can do to enhance your computing experience without having to fracture your wallet or plow through arcane manuals that may as well be written in ancient Sumerian.

The following tips and suggestions are in no particular order of importance or relevance. They cost nothing to implement except a modest investment in time. Some involve “non-recurring” labor. Do it once and forget it. Use them and if you like them pass them on to friends.

Instant Desktop access 1

Here’s a way to get to the desktop quickly if you have several windows open with most of them maximized. You can minimize all open windows at once. Just right-mouse-click any free space on the Taskbar and select Minimize All Windows. Instantly, you’ll have complete access to your desktop. To get back to what you were doing, repeat the procedure but select Undo Minimize All.

Instant Desktop access 2

If you have the Quick Launch Bar active on

your task bar, you will see a ‘Show Desktop’ icon. Left click this icon at any time and your Desktop will instantly appear.

Instant Desktop access 3

Keyboard commands work under any conditions. Press Ctrl-Esc, then Alt-M. This is equivalent to right clicking the Taskbar and selecting Minimize All Windows.

Instant floppy access

If you would like an alternative to opening an Explorer or My Computer window every time you want to see the contents of a floppy disk, add a floppy drive shortcut to the Quick Launch bar on your Taskbar. Double-click My Computer, then right-mouse-click and drag your floppy drive icon to the Quick Launch bar. When the vertical line appears, release the mouse button and select Create Shortcut(s) Here. The next time you pop a floppy into the drive, just select this icon to view its contents in one quick step.

Move your Taskbar

By default, the Windows Taskbar sits along the bottom of your screen. When you feel like doing a little desktop reorganization, move it around. For example, left click a blank area of the Taskbar and drag the Taskbar to the right of your screen. When a fuzzy gray line eventually appears, release the mouse and the Task-bar will reposition itself.

Auto hide the Taskbar

Right-mouse-click a blank area of the Taskbar and select Properties. On the Taskbar Options tab, select Auto Hide, then click OK. From now on, the Taskbar will shrink off the screen when you aren’t using it. When you want the Taskbar back, move your mouse pointer over its visible edge, and it will slide back into view.

You found a great Web page

Internet Explorer makes it easy for you to send Web pages by email. Go to the Menu Bar and choose File, then Send, then Page by E-Mail. When Outlook Express opens, enter the email address and click Send. That’s all there is to it.

Recovering errant windows

Sometimes you inadvertently move a window to a point where it has become all but inaccessible. When this happens to you, right-click a blank area of the Taskbar and select one of the available Window rearranging options: Tile Windows Horizontally, Tile Windows Vertically or Cascade Windows. Every open window falls right into place. A single open window may not respond. If this is your situation, open another window and they will fall into place.

True folder size

If you ever need to know the true size of a folder, including all the subfolders and files within them, simply locate the folder in any Explorer window, then rightmouse-click the folder and select Properties from the shortcut menu that appears. In the resulting dialog box, you'll find the number you're looking for next to Size. It's a lot easier than adding all those files up manually.

Top to bottom

Here's a way to move quickly through Web pages:
Press Ctrl-End to move to the end of the document.
Press Ctrl-Home to return to the top. This technique works for any word processing document also.

Flat panel vs CRT

The average 17-inch flat panel display now sells for around \$1,000, sometimes less. Not long ago, you would have spent over \$3,500 for a flat panel monitor that size. A flat panel makes each and every computing session more comfortable. If you're shopping for upgrades, seriously consider one of these.

For your eyes only

Have you ever wanted to send a message to a group of people, but don't want each recipient to see who else received it? Easy! Create the message as

usual, and enter just your own name in the To field. In the Bcc field, enter the names of all the other recipients. When each recipient gets the message, he or she sees only your name and his or her own in the To field.

Send a picture quick

If you come across a graphic on a Website that you must e-mail to a friend immediately, just do the following:
Right click on the graphic and select Copy from the pop-up menu. Switch over to Outlook Express and type Ctrl+N to start a new email message. Fill in the To: and the Subject: boxes. At the message area, type Ctrl+V to copy the image into the body of the message and off you go.

Quick rename

The next time you need to rename a file, folder or shortcut, don't waste all that energy right-clicking the file and selecting Rename. Assuming the item is already selected, simply press F2 on your keyboard. It's the same thing and much easier on the wrist.

Copying numbers from the calculator

When you use Calculator and need to copy a figure to another location, let Windows do the copying for you. Assuming you've just used the Calculator to come up with a figure, press Ctrl-C to copy that number to the Clipboard. Switch to the destination, press Ctrl-V, and without fail you'll see the same number you started with. You can also use this technique to copy numbers from a spreadsheet to a word processor table.

Summary

Obviously, the above do not constitute the usual performance suggestions. Nevertheless, these common sense techniques can greatly decrease any frustration factors while making your computer experience both productive and fun.



Visit the BUG Club Web Site at
<http://BugClub.Org>
Got Questions? Go to the Forum and Ask!

Maximizing “System Restore” In WinME and WinXP

Depending on how you use it, this component can be a help—or a hog!

By Fred Langa

“System Restore” is built into every copy of Windows XP and ME. In theory, it’s sort of a system-level “undo” command that lets you recover from a failed software installation, a software conflict, or other similar problems.

Microsoft describes it this way: “System Restore actively monitors system file changes, so that if something goes wrong with your computer, you can restore your system to a previous state without losing data.”

And that’s true, as far as it goes. But, if the volume of reader mail I get about System Restore is any indication, many, many users are confused about exactly what System Restore can and cannot do.

System Restore can be useful—and we’ll get to the details in a moment—but it’s important to note its four main limitations:

1. It doesn’t back up your user files and documents. System Restore focuses on system-level files and services; it doesn’t back up most files you create. If you munge or permanently delete an important document or spreadsheet, or want to go back to an earlier version of such a document, System Restore can’t help you. System Restore doesn’t take the place of full, normal backups. (See <http://www.langa.com/backups/backups.htm>)

2. System Restore isn’t a true “roll back” tool. For example, if you install new software that crashes badly, System Restore may be able to get Windows running again, but may not erase the errant program as a whole; may not delete leftover vestiges of the program that failed to uninstall properly; and may not clean up any messes the troublesome program made outside of the system file areas.

3. The default settings make System Restore an enormous space hog. For reasons known only to the programmers at Microsoft, System Restore, like the Recycle Bin and the Internet Explorer cache, sets

aside space for itself based on a percentage of what’s available on your hard drive. This might not have been too bad when disks were small, but with today’s large hard drives, the total space for System Restore (and Recycle Bin and the IE Cache) can be ridiculous: it can amount to gigabytes in total! This not only consumes disk real estate, but also creates a huge amount of needless extra data you have to process when you do a normal backup.

4. System Restore is CPU- and disk-intensive when it runs, which is fairly often:

- * At first boot
- * Every 10 hours of continuous system operation
- * Every 24 hours of real-world time
- * Every time Windows Update installs something
- * Every time you install any software using an installer program that System Restore recognizes (such as InstallShield 6.1 or higher)

If System Restore were a 100% “roll back” or “undo” solution, it might be worth all the activity and disk space. But to me, System Restore takes too much and gives back too little to let it run in its default mode. So, let’s look at how you can modify System Restore to make it more efficient, more useful, and far less wasteful. There are three main approaches, and one of them will be right for you:

Simple Option: Let It Run, But Rein It In

You can reduce System Restore’s voracious appetite for disk space by manually reducing the area set aside for the Restore cache area. Here’s how to access that setting:

In XP: Right click on My Computer, then Properties, and then the System Restore tab. Select the hard drive you wish to adjust (in XP, each drive can have its own System Restore setting), and click the Settings button.

In WinME: Right click My Computer, then select Properties, then Performance/File System/Hard Disk. Next, in both operating systems, move the slider to choose a reasonable amount of disk space for the System Restore files. I suggest you start by choosing the smallest allowable Restore

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System Restore, Continued from Page 8

area (usually a still-hefty 200 megabytes) by moving the slider all the way to the left.

Don't worry: You don't have to guess if that's enough space. Over the next few days and weeks as you use your system, you can check to see if you have enough "Restore Points" available for your own needs and preferences. Here's how:

In XP: Click Start/All Programs/Accessories/System Tools/System Restore.

In WinME: Click Start/Programs/Accessories/System Tools/System Restore.

In both operating systems, select "Restore my computer to an earlier time" and click next. You'll then see a calendar with some dates in bold; those are the days with one or more available Restore Points. Note how far back the bold dates go. Next, click Cancel to exit the Restore tool. (In other words, don't go on to the next step and actually to perform a System Restore; you're just checking to see what Restore Points are available.)

I find that the minimum 200 megabytes of Restore area easily provides a couple weeks' protection for me, but it's highly dependent on how you use your system. If you want to have more Restore Points available, simply repeat the size-setting procedure outlined earlier to increase the amount of disk space available to System Restore until you've found the right balance between disk space usage and the number of available Restore Points.

Extreme Option: Disable It Entirely

If you're already making regular, full backups by some other means, you don't really need System Restore at all: Your backups already do far more than System Restore can. Good backups protect *everything* on your system (system files and user data) and can get *every part* of your system fully back to trouble-free operation.

If you have a good backup regimen in place (e.g., <http://www.langa.com/backups/backups.htm>), consider turning System Restore all the way off. Here's how:

In XP: Right click on My Computer, select

Properties, and select the System Restore tab. Select the checkbox labeled "Turn off System Restore on all drives." Or, if you wish just to disable System Restore on some of your drives or partitions, you can do that, too: Select the drive you wish to adjust, click the Settings button, and then check the box marked "Turn off System Restore for this drive."

In WinME: Right click My Computer, select Properties, then Performance/File System/Troubleshooting. Then check the box marked "Disable System Restore." Note that unlike XP, WinME does not allow per-drive settings; it's all or nothing.

With System Restore disabled, you'll reclaim previously wasted disk space, and also avoid the CPU-and disk-intensive background tasks that System Restore otherwise automatically launches from time to time.

Hybrid Option: Run It Only On An Ad Hoc Basis System Restore can be handy as an ad hoc tool, when used in conjunction with full backups:

You can use System Restore to set a manual Restore Point just before you install new software or make significant system changes between backups. This way, should the new software mis-install or cause other problems, you can get your system running stably again in less time that it would take to do a full restoration from your backups. But because you're using full backups as your main line of defense, you don't have to leave System Restore running all the time: You can shut it down once you're sure your new software is working OK, or your system change worked out. Used this way, System Restore is a kind of handy, temporary safety net.

Here's how:

First, follow the steps above in "Extreme Option:

Disable It Entirely" to turn off System Restore. Then, when you're about to install major new software, or make other significant system changes, simply reverse the process:

In XP: Right click on My Computer, select Properties, and select the System Restore tab.

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System Restore, Continued from page 9

Deselect (uncheck) the checkbox labeled “Turn off System Restore on all drives.” Or, if you used per-drive settings, select the drive you wish to adjust, click the Settings button, and then deselect the checkbox marked “Turn off System Restore for this drive.”

In WinME: Right click My Computer, select Properties, then Performance/File System/Troubleshooting. Then uncheck the box marked “Disable System Restore.”

Once System Restore is re-enabled, manually make a new Restore Point:

In XP: Click Start/All Programs/Accessories/System Tools/System Restore.

In WinME: Click Start/Programs/Accessories/System Tools/System Restore.

In both operating systems, select “Create a Restore Point” and follow the prompts. Now install the new software or make your system changes. If the new software installs cleanly or your other system changes go smoothly, you can then turn System Restore back off until the next time you need it. But if there’s a problem with the software installation or system changes, you can use the newly created Restore Point to set things right again.

What’s Right For You?

First, note that the default settings for System Restore are almost always needlessly wasteful. At the very least, you should manually control the size of the Restore area so that it’s not consuming huge amounts of disk space.

Beyond that, the ideal approach for you depends on how your system is set up, how you use it, and whether or not you make regular, full backups:

For users with fast PCs and large hard drives, the “Simple” option discussed above is probably best. With a large hard drive, losing 200MB is not a big deal; and with a fast CPU, you won’t be impeded for long when the system decides it’s time to create an automatic Restore Point. As long as you also make regular, full backups to protect the files that System Restore doesn’t monitor, you’ll be well guarded against both the smaller kinds of problems

System Restore can fix, and also major trouble that can wipe out not only your system files, but also your data files, too.

The “Extreme” option may be best if you have a slower system, or don’t want to lose disk space to System Restore; and/or if you rarely modify your system. In this case, a regular, unattended backup will provide all the data and system-file security you need, without any of the annoyances of System Restore.

If you’re a “tweaker” who frequently modifies or adjusts his or her system; or if you experiment with lots of new software; and if your system is such that the “Simple” option isn’t appropriate, then the “Hybrid” option is probably best. Regular backups should still be your main line of defense, but the ad hoc use of System Restore can help correct minor problems that may arise from errant tweaks and software mis-installs.

What’s Your Take?

Do you use System Restore? Did you know it was such a space hog? Do you use one of the three approaches outlined above, or do you have another method of ensuring you can restore your system in the even of trouble? What tricks and tools do you use to bulletproof both your data and your system setup? Join in the the discussion!

Resources:

More info on tuning WinXP:

<http://www.informationweek.com/story/IWK20011204S0009>

More info on tuning WinME:

<http://content.techweb.com/winmag/windows/features/merunbetter>.

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Reprint from Space Coast PC Journal 9/2002



ADOBE PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS

by Gary English

reprint from *A Prompt of Jacksonville, FL*.

September 2002

If you're like me, you probably have several pieces of photo-editing software. Maybe you got one with your scanner and another with your new camera. Then there is the free album software that you downloaded from the Internet that also has some features for fixing red-eye, cropping, and such. You may have even purchased a commercial package that promised to make your photography look professional without any effort. If that sounds familiar, join the club. I've been there and more.

Most of this type of software has some really good features. However, I've not been able to find one that met all my needs. I've felt limited by what these types of software could do and needed something more powerful.

But I've also been intimidated by those professional-level packages like *Paint Shop Pro* and *Adobe Photoshop*. I've had the opportunity to see what *Photoshop* can do in the hands of an experienced operator. But watching such a person work made me realize there is a fairly steep learning curve to get me to that level. Plus, I really didn't need all the power offered by *Photoshop*.

Photo Editing for Beginners

So why am I telling you this? I've run across another offering from Adobe that has all the power I need, but is not quite as overwhelming as *Photoshop*.

I'm speaking of *Adobe Photoshop Elements*.

Right off the bat, you will notice one of the best features of *Photoshop Elements* is its price. This package is much more reasonably priced for the home user's budget than its big brother. It lists for just under \$100 and can be had for less than that by watching the sales. With *Photoshop* priced at **\$550 or more**, that's quite a significant savings.

Photoshop Elements has a great assortment of tools to help you capture your photos from a digital camera, a scanner, or other source. There is also a suite of tools to help you retouch your images. You can crop, resize, straighten, and rotate. It has a great red-eye fixer, and gives you full control over contrast, brightness, color, and tone.

Not only that, you can apply a wide range of filters and special effects to really get creative. Many of these effects can produce outstanding results using

their automatic functions. Yet *Photoshop Elements* also gives you the ability to manually adjust individual settings to your heart's content.

Oh, did I mention that you also get a **Background Eraser** that lets **you** get rid of an offending background with out affecting the foreground? Well, you do. You can have a good bit of fun with this feature.

I was also impressed to see that they even included a tool to create a panorama from multiple images that automatically resizes, skews and blends them into one seamless view. If you have ever seen this demonstrated, you will appreciate this feature.

Select Bells and Whistles

Photoshop Elements uses the tried and true *Photoshop* layers and palettes metaphor to work its magic. By using layers you can create composite images with different elements placed in individual layers, which give you flexibility to move or modify them without affecting the rest of your image. You can also use layers to apply your correction without altering your original image.

Palettes are really just tool bars that contain the options relating to whatever task you may be performing at the time. If you are using the airbrush, the palettes let you adjust the color, size, and shape of the spray, just for starters. As you work, you can move the palettes around the screen, dock them, or minimize them until needed again. Working with layers and the palettes is still quite a bit different from other software applications, but with the included help and hints you'll be up and running in no time.

The program also includes called recipes, which are basically step-by-step check lists of how to perform common photo-editing tasks. Even if you make some mistakes as you learn, there is a healthy Undo feature **provided by the History** Palette, which gives you multiple levels of undo.

Included is an integrated file browser, which lets you search for and view thumbnails of all the images in a folder. There are tools especially designed to assist you in creating visuals perfectly suited for posting on the WWW. The Web Photo Gallery lets you automatically produce photo gallery Web pages using custom templates. No HTML required, and you can even compress the files for easy uploading.

If you are so inclined, *Photoshop Elements* has a good array of drawing and painting tools you can

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Newbies Corner

by Jim Hally B.U.G. member

Awakening

After years of denial, I have come face to face with the fact that I have CRS. CRS is an acronym for Can't Remember S___ (stuff). In my former employment we used to refer to all the houses by lot and sub-division. My boss referred to a home we built for Mr. Young and I quickly blurted out 121 Deerwood Trail. He wondered how I remembered that, when we built the home almost 3 years before that. Now, I barely remember yesterday.

Looking for a little help

Presently I work for The Home Depot. Starting out as a sales associate, I made the assumption that all I had to do was keep the shelves stocked and take care of the customers. Assigned to the building material end of the store means you have to know that area well, for it encompasses three departments. It didn't take long to realize that the job entailed more than I thought. Walking from end to end of the building is routine. It is a part of the job. Customers come first and you must get them to the product they want. Cashiers call throughout the day, needing stock numbers so they can ring up the customers they have. On my end, this entailed walking to the product and reading off the number. The calls that came in were for all three departments not just the one I am assigned to. It didn't take long to realize there were plenty of steps involved in this common occurrence. I had to cut down on the walking or at least the extra walking.

A small spiral bound notebook was my answer. I started it off by writing the SKU's that the cashiers frequently asked for. It worked well for a while. Pretty soon I was tearing pages out for this and that. The cover became loose and I had to keep it together with a rubber band. The notebook was helpful, but as you assume more duties there is more and more to remember. Numerous items needed to be kept at hand like computer procedures, contacts, phone numbers. Soon the notebook was in shambles and I went to a bound notebook. Heck, I didn't want to transfer all that information to the new

notebook, so I kept both. Then it got to a point that when I got home I needed the notebooks for something.

PDA's

I had seen them but just couldn't see myself owning one. One day while helping a customer in the hardware dept. my eyes opened. The man spotted an item while picking up something else and said "I didn't know you guys have this." He then whips out a Palm 125 and types in the item and price. I knew the man and asked to see what he wrote.

"HD 1/2 bra grom. 4/.97" - Now he knows we carry 1/2' brass grommets in a 4 pack for .97. I thought this to be a bit pretentious.

A few months later I was playing golf. As we made the turn one of my fellow golfers, Shelia, got a cell phone call. The conversation lasted about 15 seconds after which she pulled out a PDA and typed in a phone number. Here I am thinking, Damn Yuppies!

When we got through playing I asked her what she used the PDA for? Her reply was, everything, and gave me a short course on her methods. She copied the phone number into a To Do list for the next day. (9:00 a.m.)

Today's list included picking up dry cleaning on her way home. Her memo's included a shopping list as well as one for what was in her freezer and the dates she put them in there. I asked couldn't you put a list on the freezer door, like I do? She said she had one but the list isn't with her when she is grocery shopping. Her argument was, there was no reason to make an impulsive buy on chicken, for example if she had 6 packages in the freezer. My thoughts turned from pretentious to practical. She informed me that while seated in a doctor's waiting room she typed an e-mail to her mother. While walking to her car after the visit she remembered the name of a wine she wanted to try. Zap into a new memo.

We went on to discuss operating systems and brand names and prices. It turns out that she has two PDA's. One which uses an operating system which does Window's software which allows her to transport her back and forth between home and

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work and another which uses the Palm OS which she does everyday things on.

Purchase

Armed with lots of information, I went out and bought a Sony Clie' S360 with USB cable and charger for \$154.00 after a rebate. This product comes with enough software to get you on your way. These include an Address book, a To do list, Memo area, Calendar and Calculator along with software for you desktop computer.

One of the first things I did was set up a memo for the SKU numbers I frequently needed at work. Because the Palm system is similar to the Windows we are all used to, it allows you to save the memos in several categories. I chose to put this in the Business memo area but typed in information on a golf outing in Personal files. The system is compatible with Word for example. On your desktop computer if you start an article in Word and click on Save AS you will notice the first few words of the article will be the default name of the article or memo, until you change it. There is no Save As option in this OS. The best way to name a memo is to type, on the first line, what you think the memo should be called. Let me use my upcoming trip to Spring Lake.

The first thing I did was create a Memo called Trip. I opened the Memo area and went to Personal from the Menu icon. I typed Trip on the first line, by using the on screen keyboard. This is a slow way to do it but it works and I will show you a better way as we go along. I then hit the carriage return on the same keyboard and I was brought to the second line. Even if I stopped doing the memo at this point, it would have been saved as Trip as long as I hit the Done button. I then typed in the phone number of Spring Lake Golf Resort. Gee! That may come in handy. I then proceeded to type in the items I plan on taking with me, swimsuit, coffee, cups, beer etc.

Thinking ahead, I just know when I get back to work and gush about the time we had someone will ask me how to get in touch with the place. I just highlighted the phone number with the stylus and it was copied automatically to the clipboard. I then touched on the done button. I opened the address

book and typed in Spring Lake. I highlighted the work number area and touched on Edit on the screen. At this point the Menu bar on the top of the screen changed giving me three options, Record, Edit and Options. From here I touched on Edit and went down to paste. Poof! The number was now in the address book as well.

Thinking Ahead

This year we have eight of us going over. Every time we go we think of getting prices for an extra day, random day prices, green fees etc. Somehow, we never remember. What I have done is started a new Memo called S.L.Prices. On the second line I typed in extra day, on the third line green fees, on the fourth lodging, etc. When I get there all I have to do is touch the stylus to a place right after extra day and I can begin typing a price. I have in effect created a fill in the blank form for myself.

Advantages & Disadvantages

I believe all PDA's come with a synchronization program. Sony uses a piece of software called Hot Sync. Lets say I get a phone number at work and type it in the PDA. When I get home I can Hot Sync with the Palm Desktop and the number will automatically end up in the addresses of the Address book. In effect, I now have a backup. Every time you do a Hot Sync the data is transferred from the PDA to the desktop computer and visa versa.

One hindrance of the PDA is the screen size. This gives you a relatively small keyboard. Depending on time and perseverance I don't know that I would start an e-mail on it. I may be more inclined to type in some thoughts and look at them when I got to my desktop. Having said this I will tell you the truth. The S.L.Prices I wrote about above I did in Word. I copied it to the desktop's clipboard, opened a new Memo in the PDA software, then Hot Sync'd it to the PDA.

There are many freeware pieces of software on the Internet for PDA's but I haven't gotten around to checking them out.



Photoshop Elements Continued from Page 11

use to add labels, buttons, and other such doodads. However, if creating images or visuals from scratch is what you are after, you'll be better off with a professional illustration package or with **Photoshop**. **Photoshop Elements** has built-in libraries of interesting graphic elements, Web buttons, and banners, as well as shapes and symbols for those of us who are graphically challenged. They struck a good balance here.

Easy Printing and Sharing

What would a photo program be without good printing tools? **Photoshop Elements** makes it easy to get outstanding printed results using the Picture Package feature. This feature lets you take full advantage your printer's capabilities and produces multiple photos on a single page.

Lastly, but not least in my opinion, is Photoshop Elements' ability to import from and export to all kinds of file formats. You can easily change from **BMP to GIF to JPEG** and more. It even includes the ability to open and save your files in **Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF)**. Now you can share pictures with others who have the free Acrobat Reader program.

All in all, Adobe has hit the mark with **Adobe Photoshop Elements**. It is an extremely capable package for a very reasonable price that will handle just about any image or photographic chore you can think to throw at it. And if you ever do find it lacking in ability and need to move on to the industry standard **Photoshop**, everything you learn in Elements will apply almost directly to **Photoshop**.



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From the Webmaster,

Its time for some good news! The **bugclub.org** site is now listed in **Yahoo.com**! This is an occasion worthy of celebration, because of the difficulty involved in accomplishing this! It took me several submissions to get our site listed, now that it is, we will see the Visitor Counters at the bottom of our web pages increase rapidly. This is the result of massive exposure to the internet community; consequently, we now have a dozen pages listed in the top position in **Yahoo** and other search engines! At the time of this writing, the 1st page of the BUG site has had over 950 hits!

Last month, the bug site was accepted in the **d.m.o.z (Open Directory Project)**. This was equally as important as **Yahoo.com**, with one exception: the **d.m.o.z.** supplies the raw data of all it's indexed web pages to thousands of other search engines! Needless to say, if your listed in the "**d.m.o.z.**", your listed everywhere! Now, here is the rest of the information!

Our server's statistics:

10/13/02

Our Bandwidth:

Total HTTP transfer for the last **30** days is **368.65 MBps**.

The total number of requests your site has received is **23871**, making your average MB per request **0.02**.

Server space usage:

Quota: **250 MB**
Used: **49.46 MB**
Free: **200.54 MB**

Wow, **368.65** MegaByte's per second is a lot of data, but our server can handle **25** GigaByte's per second! So lets see if we can spend more time in the maze of BUG pages!

Sincerely,
Eric Arnold
(webmaster)



Special Interest Groups

WIN 9X/ME SIG

Meets 7:00 PM Thursdays
1st & 3rd Thursday at Eau Gallie
Library.
All Other Thursdays at Melbourne
Library on Fee Avenue.

IMAGING SIG

Meets at 7:30 PM the second and
fourth Thursdays, after the Windows SIG,
at the Fee Ave Library in Melbourne.

NEWSLETTER SIG

Meets twice a month on the Saturdays before
and after the BUG monthly meeting.
Members interested in helping develop the
newsletter are welcome.
Place is Jim Townsend's home
call 728-5979 for directions.

TINKERS SIG MEETS

on most Sundays at
Bob Schmidts house.
Call 952-0199 for directions
and to verify meeting.

BUG Club Information

BUG E-MAIL LIST

To be included in the BUG E-Mail roster,
send an E-Mail to George Rymer at:
grymer@cfl.rr.com.

We will need your full name, E-Mail address
and your BUG membership number. You will
then receive notices and updates on BUG
activities, special events, changes to
schedules, etc.

BUG Board of Directors

Meets the second Wednesday of the
month at C.M. Corley's home.
Time 6:00 pm
Call 253-3050 for directions.

Sponsorship Rates

	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
Full Page	\$160.00	\$ 310.00	\$ 550.00
Half Page	\$ 85.00	\$ 160.00	\$ 300.00
Qtr Page	\$ 45.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 150.00
Bus Card	\$ 25.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 85.00

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Brevard Users Group Directory

Meetings:

Are held at the Melbourne Library on Fee Ave. the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM.

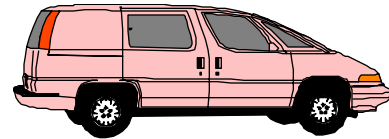


Membership

is by application and payment of \$25.00 annual dues. Membership is for 12 months from receipt of dues and includes a year's subscription to the newsletter.

Mentor Program

John McNeil 723-5550 AutoCad
Frank C. Miller 729-9589 Graphics
Al Buchanan 728-2789 Works 6.0
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Bill Ranck. 676-7908 Word Perfect
Rex Cummings 242-9601 Netscape



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Attn: Treasurer
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& e-mail to the Newsletter at jimtownsend@earthlink.net

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A volunteer is needed to take over the Disk Of the Month position.

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