

User Friendly

September 2002



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FUTURE MEETINGS	
Tuesday October 8 , 2002	
Transferring Records to CD's. — Bruce Fries	
Tuesday November 12, 2002	
Program to be determined ♦	

LACS General Meeting

Are You Getting Good Prices?

PAMELA SWARTWOOD
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FOR PRICEGRABBER
Tuesday September 10, 7 P. M.

Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave., Westchester

How would you find comparison prices for things you want to buy? Yahoo! Internet Life recently named PriceGrabber.com as its "Best Shopping Comparison Site." PriceGrabber is a free web site that gives users access to information about millions of products such as computer hardware and software, consumer electronics, video games, movies, music, books and more.

PriceGrabber's unique services include: BottomLinePrice (tm) calculation, detailed product information, e-mail notification of the best prices on the Internet, side-by-side product comparisons , reviews of products and merchants, and wireless access from WAP-enabled phones and other devices.

Want to sell something? PriceGrabber recently introduced a new service called Storefronts that allows an individual to sell products to PriceGrabber.com visitors. Learn more at the meeting.

Bring a friend (or two or three). It will be an interesting evening.

NOTE: The computer forums for beginners and advanced users start at 6 PM. Information: (310) 289-7177 or <http://www.lacspc.org>



AUGUST MEETING REPORT

by **Paula Van Berkomp**, LACS

The meeting was called to order promptly at 7:00 PM by President **Charlotte Semple**, who had the SIG leaders present announce their next meeting, time, location etc. De-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

LACS Election: VOTE!

A Nominating Committee consisting of **Stephanie Nordlinger** (Chairman), **Leah Clark**, **Joe Clark** and **Leah Freehling** has developed a slate of candidates for four officer and three director positions for 2003.

Additional nominations may be made at the September

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(AUGUST MEETING REPORT)*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)*

tailed information on all SIG's is found on the calendar page of *User Friendly* each month and at <http://www.lacspc.org>.

Stephanie Nordlinger, Chair of the Nominating Committee, announced the nominees for the officers and directors of LACS for 2003 selected by the committee and opened the nominations for any additions to be made on the floor. No additional nominations were made.

An article listing all nominees including a brief statement from each candidate and information about the election is included in the article on ELECTONS beginning on page 1

PROGRAM

Vice President **Charlie Semple** introduced **Carol Robbins**, Director of Public Relations and **Steve Demogines**, Director of Technical Support of **PANDA SOFTWARE**.

Carol introduced Panda's latest Anti-Virus software named *Titanium* and then Steve gave a quick overview of the 3 categories of malicious programs.

- Viruses such as **Klez** and **Nimda** are activated through preview panes on MS Outlook and Outlook Express or opening files, usually attached to e-mails.
- **Trojan Horse**: Programs that let an outside computer do things on your computer without your permission.
- **Worm**: Sends e-mails of itself to everyone in your address book

PANDA started in Spain 12 years ago and is now in 45 countries.

TITANIUM is their latest product.

Their method of checking for viruses:

- Scanning engine
- Dynamic Built-in Signature file or virus definition file.

Two types of scanning:

- **Real time scanning**, runs all the time when you open or close a file or program.
- **On demand scanning**, you open the program and activate the scanner, and it scans all files on the drive or selected files or folders.

He stressed the importance of updating the virus definition file daily. The e-mail scanning goes different levels deep (30 or more). It scans forwarded e-mails and e-mails with attachments many levels deep. It does message-body scanning against malicious HTML code. There is no firewall with the product yet.

Q. How does your company stay on top of the new viruses?

A. We stay in touch with virus institutions and other antivirus companies, and Panda has its own lab that researches viruses. Panda shares its signatures with all of the other antivirus companies.

Q. Does Panda store and delete viruses?

A. You can rename or delete a file yourself, if you choose, or quarantine at your discre-

tion. He advised to quarantine it, so that you can send it to the lab and they will analyze it and reply to you in 24 hours.

Q. What is a signature file or virus definition file?

A. It is a listing of special keywords or code by which viruses can be recognized. The lab finds something unique in the virus code. This helps detect and identify the virus.

Q. Is it advisable to have two antivirus programs running?

A. Not only do not RUN two programs, but don't have two programs installed on your computer. They use the same registry files and therefore interfere with each other. You can have three types of protection, i.e.:

- Firewall
- Content filtering
- Antivirus

But you should not have more than one copy of each.

Q. Does the program check for conflicts at installation time?

A. It looks at the registry for the presence of another Antivirus program and it will advise you to remove it via the add/remove program in the Windows control panel.

Q. Do I have to disable your program when I install new software?

A. No.

Q. Does it restore a Master Boot Record?

A. No.

FEATURES AND BENEFITS

Steve explained the features and benefits of the PANDA software: that it is a low drain on resources and does not per-

ceptibly slow a system down. It is invisible and fast. Once installed one just forgets that it's there. It requires only 10 MB, and can be used with many platforms: Windows95/98, 2000PRO, NT 4.0, Millennium and WindowsXP.

Ultra-fast install...and forget.

Panda Software's headquarters is in Spain, 9 hours ahead of the Pacific Coast, so it has new signature files ready early each day. Whenever you go online, the program checks to see if an update is available and it will notify you.

Technical Support: (818)543-6901, Glendale Calif. The price is \$24.95 and the annual update fee is also \$24.95. To download and purchase the program, go to <http://www.pandasoftware.com>

Awards and certificates:

PC Today, PC World, Dealer World, PC Actual, PC Pro, Computer Idea.

At 8:45 PM, we had the lucky draw of five T-shirts and five CD's with **Panda Software** and 1 year of virus protection.



NOTICE

The columns, reviews and other expressions of opinion in *User Friendly* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Los Angeles Computer Society.

LACS. ♦



(LACS ELECTION)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

10th general meeting at which time nominations will close. Be sure to get the candidate's consent, and the candidate's statement for the ballot is required by September 11.

The Elections Committee (**Gene Jacobs**, Chairman) will prepare the ballots and mail them to members in mid September. Ballots must be received by 5 PM on Friday, October 4th. The election Committee will count the votes and report the results at the October 8 general meeting

Patsy Bellah, Helen Karagozian, Todd Martin, and **Dick Smith** will serve out the second year of their two-year terms as directors.

Stephanie Nordlinger is automatically a member of the board as Immediate Past President.

The following members have been nominated for the year 2003

For President:

Charlotte Semple

Being President of LACS for 2002 has made it an interesting and challenging year. Having been Treasurer in 2001 was a good "lead-in." I gained a lot of knowledge of how LACS works. That made the job of President a lot easier, and this past year has helped me to be well-prepared for another year as your President. Unlike in many other organizations, membership seems to have stabilized and, if everyone "pitches in," 2003 may well be

a year of resumed growth. I'll work at it if you will.

For Vice President:

Herb Van Brink

Since joining LACS about three years ago, I have been the meeting reporter for User Friendly, participated in program planning, written a couple of product reviews, and helped staff the LACS table at the Business Computer Group. Before retiring in 1998, I had a long and varied career in a field whose names kept changing - from "the IBM shop" to EDP to DP to MIS to IT and many more. Organizations such as North American Aviation, Republic Aviation, Union Carbide, Atlantic Richfield, and UCLA all saw fit to pay me for doing what I loved. Platform: 100% stable operating systems that are immune to viruses, and error messages that are completely comprehensive and self-explanatory. (Hey - I'm not the only politician to make impossible campaign promises!)

FOR SECRETARY

LEE FREEHLING

After attending several meetings in my capacity as a Director and watching already overburdened officers sharing the job of Secretary I volunteered to take the minutes. LACS has provided me with a lot of helpful information and support. I don't have the knowledge to reciprocate in kind, but by serving as Secretary I can lighten the load a bit for other officers and make my contribution to keeping this valuable organization running smoothly. Please allow me to

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(LACS ELECTION)*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)*

continue in the position of Secretary by electing me to office.

For Treasurer**Joe Clark**

Hi! In a moment of madness, I said I would run for Treasurer of the LACS. I have taken accounting classes at El Camino College, and I have been Treasurer of two other non-profit organizations. My wife is the SIG leader for the Genealogy SIG, and we both attend the Digital Photo SIG.

Candidates for the Board of Directors (Three open offices – for Two Year Terms:

Joseph A. Falcon has been a member of LACS for three years. A Principal in a consulting firm in power and energy systems engineering, he also worked at a major multinational firm on energy projects. He lived in about 12 different countries on various assignments and taught courses in power and nuclear engineering, part time, at UCLA for 32 years. He had a 4-year appointment in Washington D.C. on the Energy Committee of U.S. Agency for International Development. He was President, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 1993. Currently, he serves on the boards of several non-profit organizations. He started using computers a decade ago. Platform: will work to meet the stated goals and objectives of LACS.

Dick Harmetz

Richard (Dick) Harmetz, a retired community college English professor, has been a member of the Los Angeles

Computer Society for over a decade. He has been a copy editor on *User Friendly* to which he has contributed many articles. AOL awarded him a prize for one of those articles. He was active in the Desktop Publishing SIG, and he has loaned his house for SIG meetings. He was a LACS delegate to the last two APCUG user group meetings at COMDEX. Currently a board member, he edits a mini-User Friendly to attract nonmembers to LACS meetings and to encourage them to become LACS members.

Effie Katz

I have been in the computer business for 40 years, retiring from TRW five years ago where I had been Assistant Program Manager for software development and APM for systems engineering on multiple projects, and a division-pricing manager. In the past I was active in the Association for Computer Machinery (ACM) and a past chairman of the L.A. chapter. I have been a member of LACS for 3 years. I am a Members Helping Members volunteer and have been active in the Beginners SIG. If elected, my primary objective would be to ensure that the leaders of LACS continue to be responsive to the needs of our members.

Fred Kong

Being a member of our Society for the past two to three years has really helped me in my general knowledge of computer use. I feel that I'm leaving the level of beginner at last. Besides a good bit of reading and questioning, what's helped me the most is attending our SIGs, helping out in them and the honor of being the Co-leader of the Digital Photography SIG. Be-

ing unemployed from a government construction - technical position has allowed me the time to do these things. I look forward to continue this and urge others to do the same. Bring a friend to a SIG, get involved, help out, there's so much to learn and so much free fun to be had!

Charlie Semple

The Vice President's role has been fun. Now, it's someone else's turn. As a Director of LACS, it will still be possible for me to contribute to the growth and well-being of the Society. What we really need is a few people to take on the other tasks of SIG Leadership, equipment "bearer" and operator, etc. Many hands make light work. Our organization functions best when people share the load.

Paul White

I am running for re-election as Director and ask for your support. I have been an active member of LACS since 1988 and, in addition to being on the present Board, also serve on the Membership Committee and the Audit Committee. I have derived many benefits from being part of the LACS community, from attending both regular and SIG meetings. Consequently, I am committed to helping ensure that emerging developments in computing and software applications are brought to the attention of LACS members. I also enjoy interacting with my fellow board members, all of whom work very hard at the various tasks involved in keeping LACS a viable organization. If elected, I will do my utmost to see that the interests of members are properly supported. ♦

From the Workbench— Thinking about a Dual Boot with Windows XP?

by **Carol Theodore**, LACS

If you are considering a dual boot configuration with Windows XP, do some research before you begin. First find out if your system is compatible with Windows XP. You can go to the Microsoft website and check the Windows XP Hardware Compatibility List at www.microsoft.com/hcl/. You should check all your hardware including peripherals such as scanners, printers and digital cameras. Also, download and run the Windows XP Upgrade Advisor. Go to www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/.

A CLEAN INSTALL

There are two ways to install a dual-boot of Windows98 and WindowsXP. With an "Upgrade Install" you create a copy of your Windows 98 (or Win ME) partition and use that as your XP partition. With a "Clean Install" you create free space and then create an XP partition (usually NTFS). Why a "Clean Install"? Because you will have an easier time with applications and hardware drivers if you install XP cleanly into it's own NTFS (New Technology File System). XP uses NTFS partition version 5 .

With either type of dual boot installation, I recommend that you use Boot Magic to handle the dual boot function. It is the easiest utility to use that I've found for this purpose, and it's free with Partition Magic. Boot Magic offers you a menu at boot up with the choice of op-

erating systems. When you choose one, the other primary partition is made inactive since you cannot have two primary partitions active on one drive. Be aware that if you proceed with the "Upgrade Install" Boot Magic will be on both partitions so boot with the Boot Magic Rescue Disk. You will be notified that the program exists on both applications and will be asked to disable it on one partition. Be sure you disable the program on the Windows 98 "copy" partition.

The easiest way to do a dual boot with a "Clean Install" of XP is to use Partition Magic 7.0 to create your second boot partition for XP. Create the free space in front of your Win98 or other boot partition, and then create the partition. (There is a pretty good explanation of this in the Partition Magic manual.) **Important Note: Back up your system before beginning any change in your drive partitions.** Create free space and then create a NTFS primary partition (mine was 5 GB). You will need at least 1.5 GB of space for a normal install of Windows XP Home Edition. You can also create another NTFS partition for XP Applications. You won't see this partition in Windows 98 or ME because these operating systems do not support NTFS while XP and Windows 2000 do.

Once you have created the partition in Partition Magic you will have the choice to make it a "hidden" partition. You cannot have two primary partitions on one hard drive. Be aware that if you hide the

partition you cannot boot with it. When you are ready to install XP on your new partition use Partition Magic to make it the active partition then boot and install XP. Also be sure to disable Boot Magic. You can enable it after you install XP by using the Boot Magic Rescue Disk.

When you have installed XP, then you can configure your hardware drivers. Download any new drivers that are available for your particular hardware. For instance, my modem although it is fairly new, didn't have an XP driver available; however, the default driver works fine for now. You can also try a Windows 2000 driver which may work in some instances although not always.

INSTALL SOFTWARE

The reason for a clean install of XP is that even if you have XP compatible software installed in Windows 98, you may still have to reinstall that software. Software such as Norton System Works is Windows XP compatible, however, the way it is installed is different in Windows XP than 98; the same with Roxio CD Creator 5. Other Windows 98 programs may or may not work in XP.

Whichever dual boot scenario you choose, you should be sure to back up your data or if possible, you can make a disaster recovery image of your hard drive. This will make recovering from a problem (and sometimes there are problems) easier.

E-MAIL ADDRESS CHANGE

Some of you have tried to

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(FROM THE WORKBENCH)*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)*

reach me at my previous Earthlink email address. I had a few problems with my previous e-mail address; namely someone was forwarding e-mails to my address from another server. The interesting thing was that the address these errant e-mails were being sent to was **not** my address. Many of these forwarded e-mails had viruses attached (my trusty Norton e-mail virus checker snagged these). I got tired of trying to straighten out this problem with Earthlink whose various tech-support people gave me different explanations each time I called. They didn't seem to think that their e-mail server should have bounced these messages back to the sender. Instead of finding another ISP, I just changed my user name. I haven't had any problems so far. The new e-mail address is listed below. Let me know what you would like to see in this column or if you have any questions.

Carol Theodore is an LACS member and owner of Mycroft Consulting specializing in computer consulting for businesses and individuals and solving an array of hardware and software problems. She can be reached at 310-659-0604. Her e-mail address is: cgtheodore@earthlink.net ♦



Review — Symantec's Norton Utilities 2002

by **Douglas Mechaber**,
MCNE, MCSE, CCDA, BCSD,
LACS

The last time I carefully examined Norton Utilities was several versions ago. The newest version no longer supports any variety of Windows 95, and, most annoying to me, will not work on any server version of MS software. I routinely use Win 2000 server and Win NT server as personal workstations and sometime servers, as do many professionals in IT. This is good practice for certification exams and learning network connectivity. I also have one program that downloads log information from my SCUBA dive computer by rebooting the computer, a security/OS violation in anything newer than the original Win 95. I can't live without this program.

CHANGES IN NU

The newest NU is a surprise. The manual is a svelte booklet, a mere 123 pages long. My version's box only added a CD. An older version for DOS/Windows came with a manual weighing three times as much, with at least that many more pages, recovery disks, forms, etc. *Both* versions are marked Not For Resale, so the version is not an explanation for Norton's new manual diet plan. Recovery disks only work with Windows Me and 98, so you are supposed to make your own disks with this new version. For later Windows versions, you boot from the CD if necessary. But the biggest change to NU is the interface,

oversimplification of software controls, and market appeal to the general masses, rather than the techie crowd that was NU's core audience.

OPERATIONS

The crown jewel in NU has been the Unerase utilities. Unerase has become simpler, and you no longer need the complicated manual method where some files' recovery is based on gathering disparate pieces from far-flung disk sectors. This is largely because of the Recycle bin — a built-in file recovery system — and better OS tracking of file segments. Symantec's partial solution to this simplification of recovery is to implement a Norton protected recycle bin, to protect all deleted files from permanent loss. You can set the amount of disk space devoted to this feature. However, I miss the disk editor and the ability to read sectors in hex or ASCII. This feature is only available by specifically searching the CD, and described *only* in the online manual. Reading a disk sector would be a security violation for NTFS disk system — for the longest time MS said it couldn't be done — but Mark Russinovich and Bryce Cogswell of Winternals (<http://www.winternals.com>) have successfully released programs that read NTFS information and allow recovery of deleted files, or systems with lost passwords!

I recently reviewed *FileRestore*, an Unerase utility for Windows, for *MCP Magazine*. Unlike NU, it works on all flavors of recent MS OSs, and it integrates into Windows Ex-

plorer. An additional panel shows the likelihood of recovery for any file found.

NU's Unerase is a separate panel, either generated from the Start menu or within the System Integrator. On the one hand, NU isn't integrated seamlessly into existing Windows utilities. On the other hand, NU lacks the sophistication, some of which is hidden behind wizards, that used to distinguish NU from the also-rans: the NAI/McAfee or On-track/Mijenix offerings, to name two.

SYSTEM INFORMATION

Another favorite utility, and my second most used, was System Information. The new utility is very, very fast, generating a cornucopia of information at the touch of a button. It correctly identified my processor as an AMD K6 running at 450 MHz (449), as well as identifying the cheapo graphics card (an old S3 Virge with 4 MB of RAM) and its limited capabilities.

I upgraded the very capable Biostar motherboard that came with an IDT Winchip (200 MHz) via a series of tweaks I found described on the Web to run a chip more than twice as powerful. The K6-III chips command a premium on eBay, but it was worth it. In preparation for an article describing how I did this, and before running NU, I downloaded the overclocker's favorite utility: SiSoft's *Sandra* utility. I found this utility much more useful than NU 2002's System Information, akin to what I would expect from a current generation of NU SysInfo. Sandra lets you compare performance against preloaded base benchmarks

and compares current information against previously saved ratings. Incomprehensibly, NU now has no performance ratings of any kind. Previous NU disk benchmarks were notoriously inaccurate because of caching, and the software's inability to handle such. The processor benchmark could be fooled by a good algorithm built in on the numeric co-processor. NU SysInfo was still the fastest and most easily accessible benchmark in common use. In spite of the potential inaccuracies, the NU SysInfo benchmark still served its purpose, especially for a quick ballpark performance estimate. Now, this functionality is gone.

WinDoctor, DiskDoctor, and Speed Disk round out the most useful utilities included. The interface for the doctor programs matches the default XP look and feel, but the techie look and controls are missing. Example: Under Speed Disk, you can select which groups of files are to be excluded or placed at the beginning or end of the disk. I did not see other relevant options; the wizard takes care of that for you. I prefer the current version of Executive Software's *Diskeeper*, which has much more customization available, and whose server version can be scheduled across a network.

NU includes a registry tracker and editor, but these are only available in 98 and Me. I prefer Iolo Technologies' *System Mechanic* for registry tasks, although Norton is faster and does include the registry editor. Iolo is still available (www.iolo.com), and its utili-

ties included a duplicate file checker and other house-keeping tasks that I would never otherwise perform and system performance would be degraded if they were not done.

Live Update, although not an original concept, was championed by the former Symantec CEO, Gordon Eubanks, as the next great thing. Although it works well, it is no longer a distinguishing feature, as every anti-virus program and some other utility programs have similar functionality.

CONCLUSION

The newest NU attains very high marks for ease of use, and is designed for general users. Though the wizards hide much of the sophistication behind an all too glib interface, some of the cutting edge utilities or functions that distinguished Norton in the past are 404 — not found (!) For the technical user, the inability to control exactly what the program is doing will prove frustrating. I will have to look elsewhere.

REQUIREMENTS

Pentium 133 MHz, AMD K5 equivalent or greater, except for XP: 233 MHz Pentium or AMD K6 or greater; a CD-ROM drive and 50 MB of disk space. This product is for Win 98/Me/NT W Service Pack 6.0/2000 Pro (Ws)/XP (all flavors) only. Memory requirements range from 32 MB for NT and Win to 64 MB for 2000 and XP.

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(REVIEW — NORTON UTILITIES 2002)

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Symantec Corporation, 20330 Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino, CA 95014. Tel.: (408) 517 8000. www.symantec.com. Service and support: <http://service.symantec.com>. Automated fax retrieval support: (800) 544-4403. ♦

TIPS 'N TRICKS

compiled by **Charlotte Semple**, LACS President

JUMPING BACK AND FORTH

When you have multiple programs open and need a way to easily jump back and forth between them, hold down the Alt key and the press Tab. You'll see a small window with all of your open programs. Continue holding down the Alt key and press the Tab key to scroll through the programs. When you do this, you'll also see a brief description of each program document, making it easy to find what you're looking for. Once you find what you need, just release both buttons, and you'll go directly to your chosen document.

RENAME START MENU ITEMS

In earlier versions of Windows, you were mostly stuck with names like My Documents on your computer. Microsoft may have realized that some people think this is dumb, or at least getting out of hand (My Documents, My Music, My Pictures, etc.), so they made it much easier to change. For instance, to rename My Documents in the Start Menu, simply click Start,

then right-click My Documents and choose rename. Type in the new name, then press Enter. Voila! That's all there is to renaming these folders.

DEALING WITH PHOTOS

When scanning prints, most of which have some curl, it's hard to keep them from moving while closing the scanner cover. A solution is to use the glass from a 5-by-7 picture frame to hold down those prints before closing the cover.

GETTING ANSWERS

Anyone who uses a PC should know about FreeAnswers.com. The site lets you ask questions in English. It often has relevant answers, straight from the vendor's site.

GAMES

Hey! Got some time to "waste"? Try Candystand.com for a bit of fun! There are 13 arcade games, bowling, football, snowboarding, card games and darts, to name a few.

MOVING PARAGRAPHS

Moving a paragraph in Word is relatively easy. Just place your cursor at the top of the paragraph and highlight it by pressing Ctrl-Shift while tapping the down arrow key. (Or start at the bottom of the paragraph and use the up arrow key.) Then hold down Shift-Alt while moving the paragraph with the up or down arrow key. Neat!

SHIFTING EXCEL SHEETS

To move to the next worksheet in your spreadsheet, press Ctrl-Shift while tapping the Page Up and Page Down keys.

ADDING DATES IN EXCEL

Press Ctrl-; (the semicolon) to insert a date into an Excel spreadsheet. Hold Shift down in combination with Ctrl-; and the time's inserted. Easy! ♦

Genealogy SIG News

by **Leah Clark**, LACS

The Genealogy SIG is currently meeting quarterly, in January, April, May, and October, on the second Thursday, at the home of Leah and Joe Clark. The next meeting will be on October 24, because the Clarks will be out of town in the beginning of October.

The members are keeping in touch, exchanging ideas, and asking and answering questions via their own Yahoo e-mail list. At the meetings we examine the many genealogy web sites, and discuss the merits of various genealogy software applications. The meetings have been informal, allowing for individual input and questions. We also enjoy fellowship over tea and coffee where ideas spring up spontaneously! In the past, some of the members visited the Family History Center in Westwood, The Southern California Genealogy Society Library in Burbank, and the annual Genealogy Jamboree in Pasadena. We hope to plan more field trips in the future.

If you have any interest in Genealogy or family history, would like to join the SIG, or be added to our Yahoo list, please contact Leah Clark at <lclark@ucla.edu or 310-677-2792. Leah Clark P.O. Box 4154 Inglewood 90309-4154 310 677 2792 lclark@ucla.edu <www.homestead.com/LeahJoeClark ♦

September 2002 into October 2002

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 Daytime SIG 12 PM (lunch) Office SIG 7: PM	4	5 7 Board meeting 7 PM sharp	6	7
9	10 General Meeting 7 PM Forum 6:00 PM	11	12 Investment SIG 7 PM	13	14
16	17 Daytime SIG 1 PM Hardware SIG 7 PM	18 e-mail/Internet SIG 7 PM	19 Membership Committee 7 PM	20	21
23 Digital Photo SIG 7 PM	24 Beginners SIG 7 PM	25	26	27	28
30	1 October Daytime SIG 12 PM (lunch) Office SIG 7 PM	2	3	4	5
7 Board meeting 7 PM sharp	8 General Meeting 7 PM Forum 6:00 PM	9	10	11	12

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

SIG meetings are run by and for LACS members. Visitors are welcome to attend up to six SIG meetings (three of the same SIG) before joining LACS. To inquire about a SIG, please call or e-mail the contact person in advance. SIG Coordinator: Vacant, sig.coord@lacspc.org.

SIG	Contact	Telephone	When and Where, Notes
After Meeting	Cap Kierulff	310-472-9206	Dinah's Restaurant on Sepulveda, southwest of Centinela.
Beginners	Dorothy Miliman	310-473-1391	4th Tuesday, 7 PM. Cal. Fed. Community Room (basement)
Computer Forum	Beginners Welcome		2nd Tuesday, 6:00 PM before general Meeting. Front of hall.
Daytime	Cap Kierulff	310-472-9206	First Tuesday, 12-1:30 PM, Golden China Restaurant, L.A. capk@juno.com
Digital Photo	Helen Karagozian	310-454-3426	helenk2@earthlink.net. 4th Monday, 7 PM American Legion Hall, 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City
Genealogy	Leah & Joe Clark	310-677-2792	Second Thursday, 7 PM once a quarter at the Clark's home Next meeting October 21 lclark@ucla.edu.
Hardware	Charlie Semple	310-398-5052	Third Tuesday, 7 PM, Cal. Fed. * csemple93@earthlink.net
e-mail/Internet	Patsy Bellah	310-280-0951	Third Wednesday 7 PM at American Legion Hall, 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City
Investment	Stephanie Nordlinger	323-299-3244	If interested, call or e-mail pastpres@lacspc.org.
Membership	Bert Stock	818-905-1756	Third Thursday, 7 PM. Call or e-mail 74274.2312@compuserve.com, for location.
Office Suites	George Wolkon	310-459-2671	First Tuesday 7 PM. Cal. Fed.* wolkon.gbwwolkon@verizon.net

* California Federal Bank Community room (in the basement), 12101 San Vicente Blvd. (at Saltair), Brentwood, \$1/meeting donation requested for room rental at Cal Fed and at American Legion Hall. ♦

Members Helping Members

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone during the hours listed below. Select the topic from the list and then call a person whose number is listed next to it. We hope that you find this free service useful. ***If you are experienced in a particular program or topic, please volunteer to be a consultant.*** To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please e-mail editor@lacspsc.org or call Dick Smith at (323) 294-3441. More Quick Consultants are always needed. You can always decline or postpone a call if it catches you at the wrong time. You perform a valuable service and often learn something unexpected! ♦

Adobe Acrobat - 47	Microsoft Access - 48	Printing - 42, 43
America Online - 20, 44	Microsoft Excel - 7, 49, 51	Procomm + - 24
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No.	Name	Daytime Phone	Eves/Weekends	From	To
1	Broido, Joe	310-829-3736	310-829-3736	9 AM-10P M	
7	Greenberg, Allan	310-576-1310	310-576-1310	10 AM-10 PM	
8	Heller, Elmer	310-839-9764	310-839-9764	9 AM-10 PM	
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20	Nordlinger, Stephanie	323-299-3244	323-299-3244	9 AM-10 PM	
24	Springer, Karl	310-645-3410	310-645-3410	10 AM-10 PM	
27	Rombouts, Tom	310-519-2941	310-519-2941	6 AM-11 PM	
32	LaVere, Hy	310-837-6517	310-837-6517	10 AM-9 PM	
33	Kierulff, Cap	310-472-9206	310-472-9206	9 AM-9 PM	
34	McDonald, Len	310-836-8698	310-836-8698	9 AM-10 PM	
36	Hage, Elias	310-815-8020	310-815-8020	9 AM-10 PM	
37	Ganz, Bill	310-360-7088	310-360-7088	9 AM-9 PM	
41	Engfer, Mark	N.A.	310-451-1942	5 PM-10 PM	
42	Theodore, Carol	310-659-0604	N.A.	9 AM-5 PM	
43	Semple, Charlie	310-398-5052	310-398-5052	9 AM-10 PM	
44	Lang, Bobbi	310-454-9903	310-454-9903	10 AM-5 PM	
45	Gibson, Merrill	310-785-9487	N.A.	9 AM-5 PM	
46	Martin, Todd	818-766-1151	818-766-1151	10 AM-10 PM	
47	Gold, Mike	N.A.	310-379-8321	6 PM-10 PM	
48	Flores, Alexys	N.A.	310-306-8403	8 PM-11 PM*	
49	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	N.A.	9 AM-5 PM	
50	Silverstein, Elliot	310-670-1544	310-670-1544	10 AM-10 PM	
51	Katz, Effie (Pager)	310-785-3313	310-785-3313	9 AM-10 PM	

*Weekend: 3 PM-10 PM ♦

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Software for Review

by **Stephanie Nordlinger**,
LACS

Members can get free software in exchange for writing reviews for *User Friendly* and our Website. Almost anyone can write a good review, and we will supply guidelines and editors to help you. Be a published author! Some of these products will make you more productive, while others are just for fun. Members wanting to review something make a deposit (usually a check) in the amount shown (the approximate list price of the product, without tax or discounts) that will be returned uncashed if you submit a printable review.

If you want to review a program shown below, contact the Product Review Coordinator (productreview@lacspsc.org) or (323) 299-3244. If you would like to review another program and need a review copy, contact me and I will attempt to obtain one for you. All programs require a 4x- or faster CD ROM drive unless otherwise specified. (A few products, including some not listed here, are downloadable; let me know if you want them.) The editor also accepts well-written reviews of products you obtain by purchase, etc.

XPlay by Mediafour lets you plug an Apple iPod into a Windows computer and transfer MP3 music files back and forth, so that you can organize songs, artists, playlists and albums for on-the-go listening. Automatic synchronization is also available. Even data files and documents can be transferred to an iPod, which Xplay makes ap-

pear like a normal hard drive. (\$30)

Mastering Nikon Compact Digital Cameras - Coolpix Series by Peter Nova, an e-Book on CD for Mac and Windows. Graphics Management Press. (\$50)

BackUp My PC from Stomp, Inc. An award-winning flexible backup program. For single users and networks and many kinds of media. (\$70)

Novosoft Inc.'s **Handy Backup 3.5** for Windows 9x/NT/2000/Me/XP automatically backs up critical data to virtually any type of storage including CD-R/CD-RW, remote FTP servers, local network drives, ZIP, JAZ, MO, HDD and floppy disks. Designed for a single computer or a network, it can be used to synchronize files between two computers. Its disk spanning option allows backups to be divided among several CD-R/W disks. Award-winning. Downloadable. <http://www.novosoft-us.com> (\$30)

ACDSee 3.1 PowerPack v. 4.0 combines two image management programs: FotoCanvas and FotoAngelo. FotoCanvas is a fast, flexible photo editor with many corrective, drawing, selection and special effects tools. FotoAngelo helps you create multimedia slide shows and screensavers. <http://www.ACDSYSTEMS.com>. (\$80)

Click'N Design 3d. Are you creative? Create 2D and 3D text and texture mapping. All major CD Label templates are supported. Includes 100's of designs and over 5,000 photos and pieces of clip art. Includes

some photo effects. <http://www.stompinc.com>. (\$20)

Screen Creator Deluxe, v. 6. Why just look at the Windows logo? Create complex professional quality screen savers quickly. You can add audio files for a background music playlist. <http://www.individualsoftware.com>. (\$30)

Fitznik, an interactive fantasy puzzle game from Dexterity Software. Levels from young children up to adults. <http://www.dexterity.com>. (\$20) ♦

Welcome to You All

NewMembers (3)

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Elmer Heller
Ron Hunt
Harold Klein
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Review — Hemera's 50,000 Photo Objects, Volumes I and II

by Maria Joyouspirit, LACS

How exciting to have 100,000 photo images just for the choosing!



Hemera's *50,000 Photo Objects*, Volumes I and II are two similar products that together provide 100,000 photographic images anyone can use. Since photo objects have no background attached or surrounding the image, they can be used for almost any purpose, with a few legal exceptions [given below]. Volumes I and II have 8 CDs each, for a total of 16 CDs. Thousands of images are on each CD. Because all images are not installed on your computer, space is not used up in advance. The program also contains *Photofont Maker* to "add life to your text" with realistic, photographic quality textures.

INSTALLATION

A breeze, as they say, whoosh and the installation took less than 3 minutes. This is because the images are not installed but selected as needed later. The User's Guide booklet is short without a lot of reading to do before the simple installation.

REQUIREMENTS

Hemera recommends that you have at least a 200 MHz Pentium Processor with 64 MB

of RAM and 215 MB of hard disk space. The program runs under Windows 95, 98, ME, NT 4.0, or 2000. You also need a CD Rom or DVD drive and a High Color [16-bit] display adapter. Mac versions are available for OS 9 and OS X.

HOW TO SELECT AN IMAGE

This is the best part. Each volume has a soft-back book that shows in full color pictures of all of the images; these photos are also viewable from the installed program. Most images are not separately exciting or artistic, but they are more practical, such as objects of daily use, or a few images of a person, e.g., a woman holding a video camera or doing yoga.

Stoves, cameras, masks, telephones, audio-visual equipment, coins, musical instruments, skulls, a person exercising, shoes, antique tables and wood fancy boxes are just a very few of the multitude of objects. And of course, cooking utensils and religious objects too. Many, many more images than one person can look at in one sitting.

The installed program also shows a window with the images below a general verbal description, under the key words of Object, Category, and Description.

I chose "[object] motorcycle 11 [category] transportation... [description] yellow chopper hog". You can "select " or type in a word that may guide you to that kind of image, or choose a category to select what area you prefer. For example, the Transportation Category would include other vehicles. You can see the images four at a time on the screen. Then, on the side a no-

tice states "Please insert CD # 8 for..." to obtain that image on that CD for your use. All very conveniently and clearly readable and usable on only one screen. The selection is available in one easily readable place.

After putting in the appropriate CD, a larger image of that item appears and then you select what kind of software the image will be used in. The choices are: 1- into Word processor, 2- into Slide presentation, 3- into Web authoring tool, 4- into Graphics application, or 5- into Exporting the image.

The next Dialogue box allows you to resize the image, crop it, and adjust the resolution. Then you may choose what background you want for the image, with an offer of a color palette. So I chose Purple, with this yellow chopper, and it became a Wow! It is also possible to move the image within that solid color background, and to reduce the size of the item from 100%.

I could now "Drag & Drop Copy to Clipboard" this image with its solid-colored background to wherever I chose. It could not have been easier, especially if you like motorcycles. I put this image into a Word document, enlarged the size to make a birthday card, and it was striking.

Remember that each photo object is one image of one object and not a whole scene of any kind. But they can be combined over any other scenes and backgrounds you may have, like an opaque collage or paste-up and not as a transparency..

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(REVIEW HEMERA 50,000)*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)***PHOTOFont MAKER FOR TEXT**

The PhotoFont Maker is included in the initial installation, and a shortcut is put on your desktop unless you choose otherwise. This program offers practically all the fonts you may already have on your computer, with a nice visible preview of each of them. You can see the text filled in with textures of as many bright or unusual kinds as you desire. For example, the fill-in texture could be: American flag, colored beads, animal skins, blue water, blue leather, carrots, cardboard or Christmas and much, much more. So instead of solid-colored letters and words, this program creates a bit more exciting filled-in lettering in the font of your choice. Fun!

Imagine cutting out letters from wrapping paper, and you have an idea of what the final appearance is like. The preview is fun to play with for a while, but making a final choice is more difficult. The printed words can be placed over the images or anywhere you decide is most effective.

TRANSPARENCY

However, both the photo objects and fonts do not support transparency, so you cannot overlay one image upon another one in a see-through way. Certain other software

may allow transparency, such as a graphics application that supports 32-bit images with a transparency mask. Selecting either TIFF with Transparency or Targa with Transparency may be available. I did not try this out because the complexity is beyond my means and needs.

USEFULNESS

Applications of these images are unlimited based on your imagination, time and desire to please yourself and others. Build web pages, make cards, create artistic scenes as collages, add clever or ironic visuals to your correspondence if your friends allow HTML on e-mails. Of course, the many ways printed images can be created and used are exciting possibilities, including collage cards that you print out after seeing the effect on your computer screen.

This would be a good program for those who like to be more creative in what they send to others. Also, if you want to advertise a product similar to a Hemera Photo Object image, such as for a sale on Ebay or some other auction, you can use this program instead of making the photograph yourself. If you like to just dress up your web site, personal start page, or play around with the images in any way, you may enjoy this multitude of photo images.

LEGAL LIMITATIONS

Hemera Technology's legal requirements say, "You may use any images in your own original work and publish, display and distribute your work in print. If you want to copyright ownership, you must indicate both you and

Hemera as licensor. But you may not resell, sublicense or otherwise make available the images for use or distributions separately or detached from a product or web page "images" may not be made available for downloading separately intended for permanent storage or reuse by others."

In other words, the images are for your use only and not to be used commercially. So you "may not trademark or claim proprietary rights to... any of the images.... not rent, lease, sublicense... "etc. etc. It all makes sense. It is for your use and not to be sold in any commercial way.

CONCLUSION

I did not need to use Tech Support, happily, and I had no trouble finding quite a few images that would suit my taste to start playing around with and imagining what else these photos could be used for — flyers, publications, announcements, greeting cards, business cards, nasty notes to bad politicians and corporations, and so on. I recommend these programs.

List Price: \$99 each (CD) or \$129 each (DVD) for Volumes I & II. Street price for both on CD: about \$185. Vol. I includes 25,000 images previously published by Hemera as Photo Objects 25,000 Premium Collection. Hemera Technologies, POB 79093, Hull, Quebec, Canada J8Y 6V2. Tel.: (819) 772-8200. Fax: (819) 778-6252.

<<www.hemera.com>>. ♦



Review — DRIVE COPY 4.0

by **Bill Hughes**, LACS

My initial notion in the investigation of PowerQuest's DRIVE COPY 4.0 was to install a backup on my primary drive. Wrong! This product is wonderful for backing up, but the backup must be on a separate drive.

This revelation certainly required a redirection in my plans. Here is a case for PowerQuest's PARTITION MAGIC. One doesn't use PARTITION MAGIC every day, so I usually just install it, apply it, and un-install it right away and probably never need to use it again on that computer. I planned to make a partition and use DRIVE COPY 4.0 to copy my primary drive onto a second drive, a logical drive, as a backup. So I reviewed PM's manual and then installed PARTITION MAGIC on my machine. It went on just fine, and all appeared to be well. My latest version of PARTITION MAGIC clearly stated it would handle FAT32 partitions, so I marched ahead unarmed, alone, and unafraid.

TROUBLE

My first hint of trouble was when the screen differed from the illustration significantly. The buttons were uniformly grayed out, and the bar was not labeled with the drive letter. Gee! That's odd! Try HELP. No help there. Try hitting the button anyhow. Nope. Nothing. What's the matter then? After many subtle and ingenious attempts to get the thing to give me a partition I tried

rebooting into Safe Mode. That didn't work. But, after fooling around for a spell I was rewarded with a dialog box that said that while PARTITION MAGIC worked fine on FAT32 partitions, it wouldn't work on FAT32 partitions generated by Windows 98 (referred to as FAT32x partitions)! Frustrating!

I installed another hard drive. Easy enough except that the install disk for my new hard drive was infected with a virus! Well, never fear, you have not one, not two, but THREE antivirus programs on your computer, so nothing could get by all those defenses now, could it? Ah, you are forgetting something.

Remember a little program called *End It All!* When you do something like installing a new hard drive, it is recommended that you shut down all unnecessary programs running on your machine. So I ended it all. Yes, really! That included the antivirus programs. So as soon as I began the install, the virus entered my computer and wiped out the Root Directory of my hard drive. Wow! Now there was no way to access the hard drive. Even my dear friend, *GO-BACK*, was disabled and could not be used to save me. PARTITION MAGIC could still see the drive, but it couldn't deal with the FAT32x, so the obvious work-around, setting up a second partition, which might be set up as the Primary Master was not possible. I was at an impasse.

VIRUS PROBLEMS

Clearly, the first thing to do was to get rid of the virus. I

dug out an old 386 machine and got it working after a little tinkering. It already had a virus program on it, so I slid the safety tab up on the install floppy so it could be accessed by the virus program and scanned. Yep! There was AntiCMOS-A, one of the more destructive and nasty viruses out there. It wipes out your root directory without warning and then stays around to infect whatever machine tries to run it. It isn't always triggered, which is why it survives; otherwise, it would be self-destructive. I have no idea of just what triggers it, but Norton's F-PROT found it and cleared it out, and substituted a new, generic, root-directory on the floppy. I slid the write-protect tab back down immediately. (Ah, but, how did the virus get onto the install floppy in the first place? It had never been used, and it was write-protected, no? How did it get there? I don't know.)

NEXT PROBLEM

Now my install disk was back in action, but how do I use it in my computer? A start-up disk is a great thing when you have problems like this. Always have one on hand for the operating system (OS) you are using! The start-up disk (write protected, mind you, or it could just spread the virus further) got Windows 98SE up and running. I could find Drive C, but I could not open it. The anti-virus software that cleaned the hard drive of the virus also wiped out the boot section of the drive. And it offered no fix, i.e. a substitute Master Boot Record, as it did on the floppy. At this point,

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(REVIEW — DRIVE COPY 4.0)*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)*

there was no access to the old hard drive. What to do?

I disconnected my main hard drive and set the jumpers on the new hard drive to make it a Master hard drive. Fortunately, the second hard drive could still be low-level formatted by the now cleaned install disk. I ran it and was rewarded with a hard drive ready to be partitioned and formatted. We are warned to be very wary of the DOS command, F-DISK, and with good reason. It works very well and is easy to use, but it does wipe out everything on the hard drive while it is establishing the partitions you desire. This does not happen when you first invoke the command, and so I disagree with the way the warning is generally given. F-Disk first brings up a menu with several options. Only one of these options will kill your data. One option allows you to look at the structure of your hard drive, and that is often useful and destroys nothing. So don't be afraid of F-DISK; just be afraid of what you can command it to do after you invoke it.

F-Disk allowed me to set-up FAT32X partitions on the second hard drive. I elected to set up a 2GB primary partition, which was set as "active." Then the remainder of the disk was set up as a secondary partition, which was then divided into several logical drives. This provided drives labeled C, D, E, F and G, thus making H the CD-ROM drive.

A reinstall of the OS in the primary, active partition, C, was easy enough, and I am back

up and running, after a lot of effort. My data and applications are still on my first hard drive even though I cannot reach them. I strongly suspect that there will be a program around that will restore the boot section/root directory of my hard drive, and all I have to do is find it. Otherwise, it'll be necessary to learn machine language for this computer to re-establish the hard drive and reach my data. I certainly don't want to lose my data and re-format that hard drive, although it might come to that.

DRIVE COPY TESTED

After all the trouble experienced so far, the actual test of *DRIVE COPY 4.0* was anticlimactic. It was totally easy to use and carried you through the very few steps easily. You put the CD-ROM into your drive and follow the simple directions. Assorted screens come up to allow you various choices. Do you want to copy one drive to another? Would you prefer to copy just a partition? Where would you like to copy that partition? When you click on the answers, the program does the work for you, and rapidly.

I chose the longest, slowest transfer, with all the verifications, and my whole C: drive was copied in less than ten minutes. I cannot find anything wrong with it. The other copies will go as well. There was one surprise in the operation for me. It makes sense. When you copy the operating system to another partition, you must hide that partition or your computer may go bonkers trying to decide which partition to open up on. The simple answer to this is to

make the backup partition HIDDEN. Then the computer won't see it. That's simple, but Hidden partitions do not have drive letters. So what would have been my G: partition is still there but is hidden with no drive letter and my CD-ROM drive which was previously designated H: is now designated as G:. The old G: drive no longer shows up on MY COMPUTER or anywhere else as far as I can see.

You find it with the DOS command F-DISK if you know it's there. Everybody is so scared of F-DISK that they don't even put it in beginners' manuals. You can also find the hidden logical drive by going back into **DRIVE COPY 4.0**; or you could find that hidden partition with PARTITION MAGIC. I'm not sure that you could find it at all using just your operating system. It is fascinating how important and useful our old friend DOS remains. While it is very difficult to find DOS at all with the newer Windows OS's, my friends assure me that DOS is there still alive and well.

EPILOG

For the benefit of our readers, it might be well to describe the subsequent recovery of the original hard drive (HD). You'll recall that a virus on the hard drive installation disk infected the boot sectors of both hard drives. I made the dumb mistake of disinfecting them as soon as it happened. The disinfections wiped out the MBR's (Master Boot Records) of both HD's. It was possible to do a low-level format on the new HD, followed by an F-Disk partitioning, followed by formatting the partitions. This

put me back in business. But I still didn't have my old HD or my OS. I went ahead and installed an OS onto the first partition of the second HD and then used DRIVE COPY 4.0 to copy the OS onto one of the partitions, which had to be Hidden so that it would not cause confusion during boot-up. This all worked very well and the computer was back in business. There was an OS and there was a backup (in a hidden partition).

It lacked its Master Boot Record (MBR) and was therefore inaccessible and useless. Inquiries elicited only one answer, "Say goodbye to everything that's on the old HD, and go ahead and F-Disk it." This came from many and respected sources, including two techs at two different CompUSA stores. I was pretty well resigned.

Club member **Cora Kameran** came to the rescue! She had heard me singing the blues at the Hardware SIG and did a little research to come up with the opinion that one of the *Norton Utilities* might restore the MBR. So I disconnected the new, operating HD and reconnected the old, now useless, one and booted up with a rescue disk. Norton Utilities' Disk Doctor was invoked. Eureka! The drive was back in action in seconds! And it was seemingly as good as new. The new HD was rejumped as a Slave and it ran fine.

NEW PROBLEM

There did appear a strange problem, however, with the original OS. Everything seemed cool, but when one

tried to type in messages in Outlook Express, the screen just didn't respond! OE ran fine otherwise. To notify my friends that I was back on the air, I had to send my message in the SUBJECT: line. This limited my messages significantly but worked. It was easy enough to export my Address Book to Netscape, again at Cora's suggestion, and switch over to Netscape. She informs me that I can re-install OE after an adequate backup of its data. In the meanwhile, Netscape is working fine. I downloaded Eudora and Opera just to be on the safe side, and they work great too. I can especially recommend the new, free, version of Opera.

A new version of OE was released, v. 6.01, and I installed it. It is really good. It runs fast. There is one small quirk I have yet to resolve: When you open a message, it comes up in a small window. There ought to be an option or preference somewhere, but it is yet to appear.

CONCLUSION

Once you have identified the requirement for it, *DRIVE COPY 4.0* is a really smooth, easy tool to add to your repertoire, and I can recommend it most heartily. List price: \$50. (Special lower prices are available for user group members at Gene Barlow's website, <www.ugr.com>.) POWER QUEST Corporation, P. O. Box 1911, Orem, Utah 84059-1911. Telephone: (801) 437-8900. FAX: (801) 226-8941. <www.powerquest.com> ♦

REVIEW — MODEM BOOSTER 4.0

by **Bob Ashen**, LACS

INTRODUCTION

Modem Booster purports to increase the speed of your Internet connection by automatically optimizing modem settings. Trying to set up and use the program was surreal: a major mystery just about every step of the way. Maybe it will improve the operation of your modem, but maybe it will not, or maybe it will make it worse.

INSTALLATION, SETUP AND OPERATION

The download and installation was quick and easy, but it was all down-hill from there. The set-up and operation are so automatic and simple that you cannot tell what is happening, the nature of problems, when things are done, and what are the results are.

For set-up you can choose between (1) manual tune-up of one or more of four features: (for advanced users), or (2) auto-tune-up of all four features. To avoid interference during tune-up, I attempted to remove all other programs. This did not go well, maybe because of Modem Booster or maybe because I used the "EndItAll" program. Just after I started a tune-up I got an error message and had to shut down. After this repeated several times I used control-alt-delete to individually close programs, and at least the tune-up progressed for a time.

The automatic tune-up in-

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(REVIEW — MODEM BOOSTER)

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volves 36 tests (with no explanation of what they are) and takes several hours, I did not get to the end. First there was "test canceled because failure to send request." I changed a configuration setting and hoped. No way to continue from the problem point (wherever that was since all you have is the error message screen). So start over with 1 of 36. Another "test canceled" screen. Here is where inconsistencies began (but did not end). The program lets you look at the "Last Result," so I did. "Congratulations, completed tune-up suite" and here are the test results. (I thought it was serious when it said test canceled; guess not.)

The results were pretty unintelligible:

Extreme performance.....up
42%

Average performanceup
1%

Best of the Best.....up
0%

I found some definitions, and I could understand the one for "Average performance." If there was no significant increase in "Average performance," your modem settings before optimization were already OK. This "seemed" to be the case for me. I could make no sense out of the other two definitions.

OPERATION

You simply click on an icon on the Windows Task Bar and a small window says that the modem is being optimized,

and very quickly then tells you that the optimization is completed, and that you should make your Internet connection as usual. No clue as to what was done, and the program does not track or effectively indicate what, if any, improvement was achieved.

Modem Booster does not tell you what the optimization changed, by how much, whether the change impacts other operations/programs, or any choices about anything. Even when I chose to do a manual tune-up as to do only one of the four possible features, I got no such information or choices.

Modem Booster purports to let you check your modem speed. So I tried. Sometimes the speed was almost 300 Kb/sec ... sometimes about 75 Kb/sec, and sometimes 2-4 Kb/sec. Most confusing was sometimes getting a low speed when I thought I was checking *after* optimization, and sometimes getting a high speed when I thought I was checking *before* optimization, and getting totally different speeds when I rechecked without changing anything. As I said, you may be getting something, but you may not be.

At some point (in FAQ #18), I found a suggestion to use Internet Explorer 4.0/5.0 and a different Website, i.e., www.altavista.com. I had been using Navigator 6.1, so I changed and managed, I think, to get the tune-up to complete. When I tried to check speeds, the same confusion.

DOCUMENTATION

There is no documentation, no readme file, and the most minimum of on-line help (which includes about 20 FAQs).

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

There is no telephone support (I would have settled for a long distance call), no e-mail help, etc. There is an online fill-in-the-blanks question support form at: <http://www.inklineglobal.net/support/mb-faq.html>. A notice said that they might be too busy to respond to all inquiries, but that registered users would get preference.

REQUIREMENTS

Pentium 90 and above, 12MB of RAM, and 8MB of hard disk space. Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP. Internet Explorer v. 4.0/5.0 or perhaps 6.

CONCLUSION

While this program *may* work, based on my experience I doubt it. My suggestion is to avoid it.

Modem Booster, Version 4.0

Can download. \$25.00 to register.

InKline Global, Inc., <www.inklineglobal.net>. ♦



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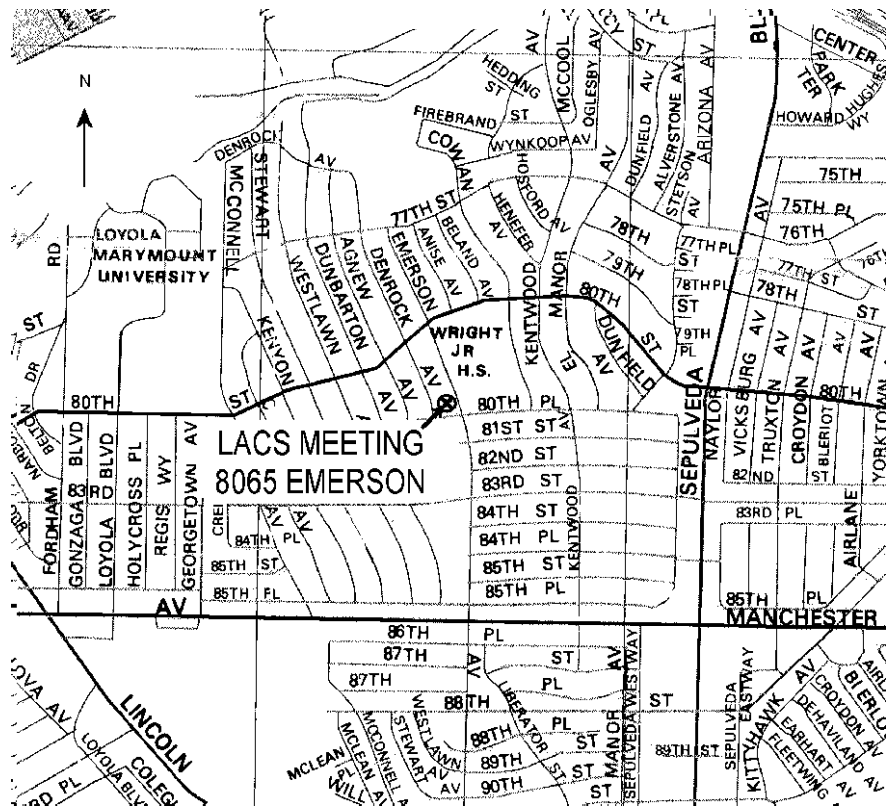
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From the South, East or West: Take Manchester Ave. to Emerson Ave. Turn North and go about eight blocks to W. 80th Place. Fellowship Hall is on the Northwest corner of Emerson and W. 80th Place. There is plenty of street parking and a small parking lot West of the church. ♦

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