

User Friendly

July 2003



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FUTURE MEETINGS

Tuesday August 12

Tuesday September 9

LACS General Meeting

Dragon Naturally Speaking

You Speak, It Types

BY RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
Tuesday July 8, 7 P. M.

Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave., Westchester

In recent years there have been many attempts at "automating" the typing process. One of the leaders has been and is Dragon Naturally Speaking. Remember how it was necessary to "train" the software for a long time? Dragon v. 7 only needs about 5 minutes of training to produce accurate results in the 90% range. With a little more time using the software, accuracies in the high 90% range become common.

Rich Blumenthal, President of the Saddleback Valley (Mission Viejo) IBM PC User Group visited LACS last year. We're happy to welcome his return. Rich will also have software for us at special user group prices and for our lucky draw at the end of the meeting.

If you can't wait, take a sneak peak at these websites: <http://www.voicefactor.com/>, <http://www.scansoft.com/naturallyspeaking>, <http://www.winplanet.com/winplanet/reviews/4773/1/> or <http://www.winplanet.com/winplanet/reviews/4773/2/>

The usual computer forums for beginners and advanced users start at 6:00 P.M. Information: 310-289-7177 or <http://www.lacspc.org> ♦

June Meeting Report

By **Stephanie Nordlinger**, LACS
The introduction of visitors included a conversation with a Marina del Rey branch librarian who was seeking help for those who use the library's computers. The remodeled library has nice facilities, but it is only open until 8 p.m. President Charlotte Semple took a quick survey of

whether anyone would be interested in having a SIG meeting there from 6 to 8 p. m., and there was very little interest.

Our President asked those who wish to bring equipment, books or magazines to donate to other members to take them home at the end of the meeting if no one takes

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

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

them. Also, if you leave early, please leave quietly and don't try to take your chair back to the cupboard in the rear of the room. This noise disturbs others still attending the meeting.

Charlie Semple made various SIG announcements, including an organizing meeting of the Wireless Users SIG during what would otherwise be the first half of the Hardware SIG meeting the third Tuesday of June. He said that the South Bay Wireless Users Group had met the previous night and seemed to want to be independent of us. Charlie also said that vendors weren't very responsive to his requests for products to review.

The Program

Jeffrey Padin, President and CEO of JP Cybertech, Inc., an El Segundo (CA) company, talked about "**The Password Problem**" and how his company's *Enigma II* software was designed to meet it.

Most people have easy-to-remember passwords that are easily cracked by someone who knows them. The password is often the name of a family member or pet, or an athlete or actor or cartoon character the person especially likes. Any word in the dictionary can be cracked with appropriate software. People often use the same password repeatedly or write it on paper B even Post-Its or messages taped onto their computers!

Hacking is easy if your password is not secure. Eighty percent of the time hacking is done by someone you know. It may

not be obvious at first. The hacker may acquire personal data and use it later instead of doing immediate, obvious damage to your computer.

A secure password consists of random upper and lower case letters and numbers and typographic symbols if permitted. Such passwords are usually hard to create and remember. Enigma II lets you pick a random sequence of letters and numbers for each account and stores the password in an encrypted file on your computer. Instead of remembering dozens of odd passwords, you only have to remember one master password, pass phrase, drawing or equation to access your passwords. Passwords thus created can be 10 - 20 characters long including spaces.

PASSWORD DO'S AND DON'TS

1. Always try to use cryptic passwords. To select a cryptic password, hit any keys you like on the keyboard. This version of Enigma II (V1.2) does not create passwords.

2. Change passwords regularly.

3. Don't share passwords even with your spouse or lover.

4. Don't use the same password for different accounts or websites

5. Don't write down passwords anywhere (except in Enigma II).

6. Use a password-protected screen saver when you are away from your desk at work.

7. Use a hardware or software firewall. Remove the RJ11 jack on your external modem or turn off your computer.

8. Use up-to-date anti-virus software regularly.

Mr. Padin demonstrated *Enigma II* v. 1.2, which seemed relatively easy to use. Most menu information is on the home screen, which is fairly small (e.g., 3" wide x 6" long), so you can also see another screen at the same time. Your data is encrypted differently every time you send it or close the program. Only a long series of numbers appears. To see your account information, you click on "Decrypt" and then on the name of the account. You cannot cut and paste passwords into or out of the program—you must retype them. PIN numbers and other account-related data are also storable. You also must manually go to an account (writing data to memory to do this process automatically isn't safe).

This version does not have a password reminder system; such a system tends to lead to weak passwords. If an individual forgets his or her master password, there is no way to get it back. There is a tool for retrieving passwords in a corporate account. The professional version handles 50 accounts, while the personal version handles 20 at a time. The company can create larger versions on demand. The program and data don't take up much disk space and will fit on a floppy. The personal version costs \$39.99, but it was offered to members at the meeting that

night for \$20 without sales tax. For more information, go to www.jpicybertech.com.

THE LACS LIBRARY

Charlie announced that there wasn't much use of our library's books, which were old and heavy to lug to each general meeting. He said the Society was selling any of the books there for \$2 each (first come, first served). Door prizes including a copy of Enigma II were raffled away. ♦



Welcome To You All

NEW MEMBERS (5)

John Houck
Bill Lauritzen
Roger Noorthoer
Gertrude Welles
Rita Williams

RENEWING MEMBERS (12)

Wayne Cutler
Helene Karagozian
David Naistat
William Rickles
Carolyn Rosenberg
Ed Schnauss
Charlie Semple
Charlotte Semple
♥ Dick Smith
Jennifer Solis
Carol Theodore
Randy Waller
♥ Contributing ♦

From the Workbench ©

By **Carol Theodore**, LACS

Summer is here! Time to go to the beach and read a good book. Computer related, of course.

NON-FICTION BOOKS I RECOMMEND ARE:

- 1) Simon Singh *The Code Book: The Science of Secrecy from Ancient Egypt to Quantum Cryptography*. Published by Anchor Books.
For anyone interested in the history of cryptography this is thoroughly engrossing and well-written book. Singh's writing is clear and not the least bit pedantic. He traces the development of cryptography from ancient times to the present and provides some puzzles in the numerous appendices. This book has been out a while and is available in trade paper.
- 2) Steven Levy. *Crypto: How the Code Rebels beat the Government-Saving Privacy in the Digital Age*. Penguin Books. By the author of *Hackers*, this book is about the development of public key cryptography and the personal story of the guys who figured it out and fought the government along the way, thus providing the ordinary user a way to secure personal information online.
- 3) Cliff Stoll. *The Cuckoo's Egg. Tracking a Spy Through the Maze of Computer Espionage*. This was

published in 1989 but still provides a really great read. It's a non-fiction book that reads like a detective story.

- 4) Also by Cliff Stoll. *Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway*, published by Doubleday (definitely out in paper) is an iconoclastic look at the Web. Cliff Stoll challenges the conventional wisdom and asks important questions about the information highway. A great read.
- 5) Katie Hafner and Matthew Lyon. *Where Wizards Stay Up Late, The Origins of the Internet*. Published in 1996, this book provides an interesting overview of the people involved in the beginnings of the Internet. Although it was first published in 1996, this book provides great historical information regarding the Internet.

These are my choices, what are yours? Let me know.

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



Ants in my Hub

By **Paul Lujan** by way of an e-mail forward

So, last night, I come home after a 4-1/2 hour drive back from Las Vegas (note to law enforcement officials: that's a "6" there, really), and sit down in front of the computer to check my mail. My connection is, for lack of a better word, ass-slow. I go to look at the hub to see if everyone else is having this problem.

Nope, Mike and David's activity lights are busily flickering; it's only me who has been screwed. I reach down to fiddle with the connection, and notice that the hub is covered with ants (as well as my hand, after the fiddling). "That's odd," I think to myself, "what would ants want with our hub?" But I'm way too tired to deal with it at the time, so instead I go to sleep.

I wake up this morning, and decide to investigate further. Yep, the hub is definitely swarming with ants. And it doesn't look like the ants are just going over it to somewhere else (especially since there aren't any tasty ant treats anywhere nearby); they're clearly going into and out of the hub. Some of the ants going in are even carrying little white pellets. "Is that food?" I wonder. "Where is it coming from?"

ACTION

I unplug the hub and pick it up, and then kill all of the ants that come out of it. And kill

some more ants. And kill some more ants. This goes on for a while. I begin to think that the little white pellets look an awful lot like eggs. I shake the hub, and it sounds like someone has poured a handful of coarse sand into it. "That's odd," I think to myself, "I could have sworn this hub didn't come with the sand option." I initially thought that there were just some ants here, but it's pretty clear I've got more on my hands now.

So, I decide to take a closer look at the hub. Unfortunately, the hub boasts a screwless construction, but I know that my screwdrivers can be used for more than merely removing screws, so I start prying. As I do so, a bunch of ants and eggs, as well as what look like larvae (basically, they look like slightly-smaller-than-normal ants, but a very pale brown instead of black) continue to fall out (into the sink, since I've become clever enough to do this over the sink).

I finally get the thing open, and see a bunch of eggs lying on the circuit board, but less than I would have expected if there's really a colony set up here. So, I figure that they're probably under the circuit board, and set to work unscrewing the circuit board to take it out of the box.

Jackpot! (That is, if my goal were to win an ant colony, which it really "wasn't.") The entire bottom of the box is coated with eggs, and I see a large ant which I can only assume is the queen. I terminate the queen with extreme prejudice, and then wash out the box (it's made of metal, so I fig-

ure it'll be okay.)

The circuit board, on the other hand, I can't just wash off (since I hold hopes of saving the hub, not really wanting to have to drop \$30 on a new one), and there are lots of eggs wedged in small places, like between the link lights or between the chips connected to the ports, where they'll be really hard to get out of. So, I set the circuit board aside for the moment to take a shower.

When I come back, I notice that the ants have actually done me a favor! (Suckers!) In their futile attempts to save the colony, they've picked up the eggs themselves to scurry around like maniacs, solving my problem. I pick off the ants, and then vigorously shake the board to try to dislodge anything still stuck in the ports, and much to my surprise another queen falls out. (I've read that Argentine ants can have more than one queen per colony, but this is still a surprise, especially since I thought I had already gotten almost everything.) I dispose of her, too, clean up the remaining ants, and figure I might as well try putting the hub back together. Not that I can completely undo my prying, but hey, that's cosmetic anyway.

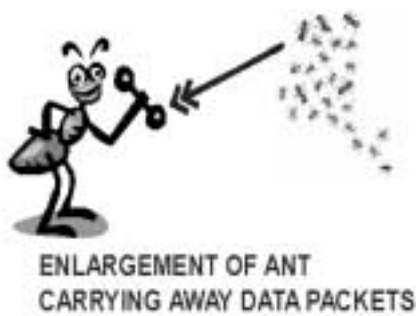
Much to my surprise, it actually works! And my performance is back from miserable to normal. Ants 0, Me 1.

Man, I hate ants. If I could choose one genus to completely wipe off the Earth, assuming that it wouldn't, like, destroy the ecosystem (but really, what depends on ants? Anteaters? Well, they're not doing a very good job, are they?!), it would be

them. Well, okay, I suppose I should probably choose something like mosquitoes, since even though they're less personally annoying to me, they still have the whole large-scale disease-spreading thing. But I'd expect some serious compensation from the WHO for not choosing ants! --

Paul Lujan. Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which LACS belongs. ♦



Broadband Routers Small Office, Home Office Network Basics,

by **John Woody** and **Michael Espinoza** December 2001 PC Alamode

This column continues a look into the Small Office, Home Office network basics. It will begin with "how-to" coverage concerning that class of routers known as broadband routers. This class of routers has been developed to handle low end broadband communication

connections. Broadband communication is at the low end of the digital communications techniques. Broadband communications provides connections in the 1100 to 1500 Kbps range downstream and 200 to 400 Kbps upstream, in general terms. These connections are direct connections, i.e., they are on all the time as opposed to analog and ISDN dial-up. A direct connection as has been noted can be a security concern.

Broadband connections can be provided via two distinct technical methods. One method is through the television cable, called direct cable, and, the other is through POTS (Plain Old Telephone System) connections, called **ADSL** (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line). Both utilize frequency spectrum capability not normally available for the intended communication medium. In the case of direct cable, the frequency spectrum at the upper (in excess of 20 Mbps for downstream signals) and lower (in excess of 2 Mbps for upstream signals) end of the cable is available for data. This is in addition to the cable TV signals that may be transmitted.

The ADSL service furnished through the telephone system also uses frequency spectrum previously not used in the last 18,000 feet of the copper twisted pair POTS communication system. It's not completely true that this frequency spectrum has not been used, in that, the TELCO had previously used it for home and business security dialing at a much

cheaper cost than broadband would demand. The POTS phone line continues to function for telephone, fax, or analog data communication as before.

What does this have to do with broadband routers, you ask? Well, for starters, with home and small business connections having this much (1100 to 1500 Kbps) bandwidth, more than one computer may be setup to be on-line at the same time. The best way to accomplish this is to establish a network for the computers and to install a router to handle the connection. The class of routers for this task are called broadband DSL/Cable routers as noted above. Most of these routers have one or more, usually four, ports in a switch arranged to act as a smart hub in the network. One or more computers can be connected to the router through the switch ports. The router then acts to keep the connection with the broadband modem, DSL or cable.

BROADBAND SERVICE - DSL OR CABLE

A brief description of broadband service, DSL or cable, includes the ability to provide a direct connection to the Internet. And, it goes without saying that either technique is much faster than analog dial-up Internet access. A physical connection general description of each broadband technique follows. Each router may have its own installation quirks that must be attended to from the instructions provided by the vendor.

In the case of direct cable, a

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

(BROADBAND ROUTERS)*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)*

splitter is installed to tap the data signal off of the TV signal. The cable company provides its signal through a series of subnetworks within its cable infrastructure. These subnets each service about 250 to 400 customers. Each subnetwork provides adequate TV and data signals through the COAX cable to provide both TV and data. The data COAX is split and run within the home or business to a demark wall plug. A COAX jumper cable connects the demark cable with a broadband cable modem. The cable modem is then either connected directly to a NIC (Network Interface Card) within a single computer or to the uplink in a hub or switch in a network. This cable is provided by the modem vendor and is a CAT 5 cross-over RJ45 cable. This is the point that a broadband router comes into the picture. The cross-over cable is plugged into the router WAN (Wide Area Network) port. The computers are plugged into the router switch ports via RJ 45 CAT 5 jumper cables.

In the case of the DSL connection, the ADSL functions are turned on at the TELCO CO (Central Office). A regular POTS phone line is used as the carrier. There is a physical limit to this service. The user's copper twisted phone line must be within 18,000 feet of the CO to maintain data signal strength. SW Bell actually requires that the service be within 17,500 feet. The TELCO can determine if a user is

within the required copper distance during the phone call for service startup. As above, a DSL modem is attached to the demark line connection. The TELCO, (SW Bell in San Antonio), provides line filters for the analog side of the phone line. Use the filters per their instructions. The DSL modem is then either connected directly to a NIC within a single computer or to the uplink in a hub or switch in a network. This cable is provided by the modem vendor and is a CAT 5 cross-over RJ45 cable. Again, at this point, a broadband router can be installed in the network matrix. The cross-over cable is plugged into the router WAN port. The computers are plugged into the router switch ports via RJ 45 CAT 5 jumper cables.

As can be seen, the physical connection of the broadband router into the network is fairly simple. The router becomes another node on the local network. Its function is to know where to connect to in the next stage upstream from the network. Routers are specialized computers that send data along to it's final destination by knowing who is at the other end of its connection between networks. Routers work between networks. Routers know where to send its data by maintaining configuration tables of the connections inside and outside its network to other networks. The configuration table maintains the addresses of each node inside the network and the addresses of other networks that it is directly connected to. An example for our broadband

router is that it knows the addresses of the hosts in it's network by its IP addresses, and, the address of the next level up, either satx.rr.com, for Time Warner Roadrunner, or sbcglobal.net for SW Bell.

I need to make one point about these routers. Broadband routers are simple computers with a need for only limited knowledge about the inside and outside of the networks they service. The Internet Domain Name Server routers in the backbone have massive address list configuration tables to keep track of. All routers work within the TCP/IP protocol standards. Routers have two separate, but related jobs. First, the router makes sure that data does not go where it should not go. This is crucial for keeping volumes of data from clogging the connections of bystanders. Second, the router makes sure that information does go to the proper destination address.

BROADBAND ROUTER CONFIGURATION

In general, nearly all of this class of routers are set up by using a browser to log-on the router Web page using an Internet protocol address pre-set into the router. Most are set with one of the Class C non-routable IP address, 192.168.X.X, with a sub-mask of 255.255.255.0. This allows up to 256 users on one transmittable IP address. The general settings that must be setup in the router Web page using one's browser are as follows.

Most of these broadband routers have a quick setup page. In the Addtron ADR-200 router I am now testing, the quick setup asked for the WAN IP setup.

There are three choices; Dynamic, Fixed, and PPPoE. Dynamic WAN means that the ISP will dynamically assign the IP connecting address. There are not enough IP addresses to cover all the users in a subnetwork by the ISPs. By dynamically assigning these IP addresses, the ISP can have many users in the system just like the analog dial-up providers do. It is also a security feature as well. Fixed WAN means that the ISP provides an Internet routable IP address. PPPoE WAN means that the router will be connected to a VPN (Virtual Private Network) for secure communication. The only other entry in the quick setup is to assign the DOMAIN of the ISP so that the router knows where to send its data. This Addtron router is working through my Roadrunner connection at this time.

Most of these routers have advanced setup steps as well. The primary setup to be concerned with is the DHCP (Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol) built into the router. This function allows the user to set up the internal network as a TCP/IP addressing scheme. The usual DHCP addressing scheme installed in the router is a Class C IP addressing set, normally 192.168.1.1. With the DHCP function turned on, each computer NIC in the network can be set to receive its IP address dynamically. Windows 95/98/Me, Windows 2000, and Windows XP all are ready to receive the IP address dynamically. The router controls the IP addressing to each computer and handles the NAT (Network

Address Translation) between it and the ISP IP address. NAT, by the way, is a basic line of defense against hackers. The 192.168.X.X IP addressing scheme is also non-routable to the outside world. DHCP functions in the router are setup via the router Web page set up scheme.

BROADBAND ROUTERS ON THE MARKET

This class of routers are shelf items at computer stores. They can be obtained from catalog vendors, local computer stores, and wholesalers. Their cost is from \$59 to \$300. Keep in mind that you get what you pay for. The lower end routers do not have as many functions as the upper end models. I recommend that one pay for the upper end models in order to gain security from hackers.

Vendors include Linksys \$93. to \$159, Addtron Technology \$98. to \$120., MultiTech \$275. to \$500., Sonicwall Tele2 \$529. to \$4,150., Zoom, SMC Networks \$109. to \$259., Farallon \$109. to \$264., Xsense \$94.00 to \$279., Netgear \$259., Watchguard \$359. to \$1,999., Asante \$145. to \$329., Cisco \$1,139. to \$2,319., and Netopia \$309. to \$639.. One's pocket-book and sense of security should determine one's router of choice.

I have installed Linksys, Addtron, and MultiTech broadband routers. Each presented it's own quirks in installation. None was hard to do. I personally like the MultiTech line because I get good Customer Service help and a lifetime warranty. The Addtron

router is a good shelf product and has a good warranty.

CONCLUSION

Broadband Internet connections provide each of us the ability to have high speed connections to the Internet. Adding a broadband router into the mix allows individuals and SOHO users the ability to set up and operate networks at home or in the small business. This class of routers is within the price range of individual and SOHO users. And, they are not hard to set up.

John Woody is a networking communications consultant specializing in small office, home office networks, training set up, and internet connectivity.

Michael Espinoza is owner of Technology Coaching, a training and consulting firm that specializes in the PDA market. He co-chairs the Alamo PC PDA SIG with John Woody. ♦



Office SIG June 3 Report.

By **Paula Van Berkomp**, LACS SIG leader George Wolkon conducted the Office SIG on 6/3/03 at the Cal Fed building with 15 members in attendance. **Paula Van Berkomp** did the presentation about lesson one of the book: *Microsoft PowerPoint 2000 Step by Step*. We learned: 1) How to start PowerPoint, create a presentation using the AutoContent Wizard. 2) Move around in a presentation. 3) Change and add text in Outline pane and Slide pane. 4) Change to different views: and preview slides in Slide sorter View. 5) Save a presentation by creating a default folder where the files always will be saved to.

The second half of the meeting was dedicated to Q&A.

George Wolkon showed us how to split the screen. He also demonstrated how to display two different documents on one screen and copy and move data from one document to the other by drag-&-drop and copy(cut)-&-paste. Charlie showed us again about different colors for active windows, which comes in very handy, especially in a split screen situation. The question was asked about defrag and why the defrag program still seems to leave a few spots "undefragged" on the hard drive. Todd Martin addressed that question. Charlie showed, as per one of the member's request, how to set up an address book, using the Wizard

in the Microsoft Works database. The next meeting will be held July First. Lesson two will be by **Nancy Cattell**. See report in next month's User Friendly. ♦

Humorous Quotations About Computers

- A computer is like an Old Testament God, with a lot of rules and no mercy. -Joseph Campbell
- A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history - with the possible exceptions of handguns and tequila. -Mitch Ratliffe
- A human being is a computer's way of making another computer. Yes, we are their sex organs. --Solomon Short
- All parts should go together without forcing. You must remember that the parts you are reassembling were disassembled by you. Therefore, if you can't get them together again, there must be a reason. By all means, do not use a hammer. -EBM computing machine maintenance manual, 1925
- Computers are useless. They can only give you answers. -Pablo Picasso
- Computers will never take the place of books. You can't stand on a floppy disk to reach a high shelf. --Sam Ewing
- Don't explain computers to laymen. Simpler to explain sex to virgins. -Robert Heinlein (The Moon is a Harsh Mistress)
- Hardware: the parts of a computer that can be kicked. - Jeff Pesis
- Man is the best computer we can put aboard a spacecraft ... and the only one that can be mass produced with unskilled labor. -Werner Von Braun
- No computer has ever been designed that is ever aware of what it's doing; but most of the time, we aren't either. -Marvin Minsky
- One thing a computer can do that most humans can't is be sealed up in a cardboard box and sit in a warehouse. - Jack Handey
- There is only one satisfying way to boot a computer. - J. H. Goldfuss
- They have computers, and they may have other weapons of mass destruction. -Janet Reno
- The most likely way for the world to be destroyed, most experts agree, is by accident. We're computer professionals. We cause accidents. -Nathaniel Borenstein
- To err is human-and to blame it on a computer even more so. -Robert Orben
- Usenet is like a herd of performing elephants with diarrhea—massive, difficult to redirect, awe-inspiring, entertaining, and a source of mind-boggling amounts of excrement when you least expect it. -Gene Spafford
- Wow! They've got the Internet on computers now! - Homer Simpson
- *Reprinted from the May 2000 issue of Toggle, the newsletter of the Tacoma-Seattle Area Microcomputer Users. Group ♦*

July 2003 into August 2003

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 July 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 Genealogy SIG 7 PM	11	12
14	15 Daytime SIG 1 PM Hardware SIG 7 PM	16	17 Membership Committee 7 PM	18	19
21	22 Beginners/Internet SIG 7 PM	23 Internet/e-mail SIG	24	25	26
28 Digital Photo SIG 7 PM	29	30	31	1 August	2
4 Board meeting 7 PM sharp	5 Daytime SIG 12 PM (lunch) Office SIG 7 PM	6	7	8	9

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: Charlie Semple, 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.
Begin./Internet	Dorothy Miliman	310-473-1391	4th Tuesday, 7 PM. Check e-mail for location
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
		kierulff-cap@juno.com	Third Tuesday, 1-3 PM, Felicia Mahood Center, W.L.A.
Digital Photo	Helen Karagozian	310-454-3426	4th Monday, 7 PM American Legion Hall, 5309 Sepulveda Blvd., Culver City helenk2@earthlink.net.
Genealogy	Leah & Joe Clark	310-677-2792	Second Thursday, 7 PM once a quarter at the Clark's home leahclark@sbcglobal.net
Hardware	Charlie Semple	310-398-5052	Third Tuesday, 7 PM, CitiBank. csemple93@earthlink.net
Comp. Faire	Stephanie Nordlinger	323-299-3244	If interested, call or e-mail pastpres@lacspc.org.
Membership	Vacant		Third Thursday, 7 PM.
Office Suites	George Wolkon	310-459-2671	First Tuesday 7 PM. CitiBank. * wolkon.gbvolkon@verizon.net

* CitiBank Community room (in the basement), 12101 San Vicente Blvd. (at Saltair), Brentwood, \$1/meeting donation requested for room rental at CitiBank 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@lacspc.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
Ami Pro, WordPro - 14	Microsoft FoxPro - 27,48	QModem, QMPro - 24
Basic - 8, 48	Microsoft Office - 41, 43	QuickBooks - 14, 37
C++ - 27	Microsoft Power Point - 49	Quicken - 14, 20
Communications - 24	Microsoft Publisher - 14, 32, 33	Speed Read - 24
Data Bases - 48	Microsoft Word - 9,43, 49	Terminate - 24
Genealogy - 20, 34	Microsoft Works - 32, 34, 44	TurboTax - 14
GoldMine - 41	Modems - 24	Unix - 48
Graphics - 33	Netscape - 43	Viruses - 46, 48
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Internet - 43, 44, 45, 48	OLX - 24	Windows 95/98 - 7, 41,43, 48
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No.	Name	Daytime Phone	Eves/Weekends	From	To
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
9	Hershman, Irv	310-397-9453	310-397-9453	11 AM	11 PM
14	Kamerman, Cora	310-472-7487	310-472-7487	10 AM	8 PM
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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Tips 'N Tricks

Compiled by **Charlotte Semple**, LACS President

BANISHING WINDOWS BLOWUPS BEFORE THEY OCCUR

PC manufacturers and software designers could develop a crash-proof computer, but you'd have to be on Forbes's list of the 100 richest people in the world to afford it. Still, there's plenty we regular Joe and Josephine PC users can do to keep our machines from aging prematurely, slowing down, or developing the computer equivalent of arteriosclerosis.

The easiest way to keep a PC healthy is to avoid changes: Don't add new hardware or software, ever. In the real world, though, change is inevitable, and the computer industry is a veritable drug pusher when it comes to keeping customers "jonesing" for ever more upgrades. Here are a few Golden Rules on software updates and maintenance.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT

If your software manufacturer is pushing Version 0003 and you are using Version 0002 and loving it, Why Change?

KEEP YOUR SOFTWARE SPRY

One exception to this rule is to limit your use of really old 16-bit applications. Generally, your system will be happier with applications designed for today's 32-bit operating systems. Almost all Windows software created in the last five years is 32-bit, but if you're not certain, check the product's

manual or the manufacturer's Web site.

AVOID MILESTONE UPGRADES

Don't buy software ending in ".0" This usually signals new features that may not be adequately debugged. If you really need the software, go for the older version, for example, 2.0c or 2.1 if 3.0 is the latest thing. Not only is it likely to have fewer bugs, but it will also run much faster because it was designed for older machines.

WATCH WHAT YOU'RE DOING

Before installing new software, take a snapshot of your system so you can learn how the installer altered it. One great way to view changes made to your Registry is with the free-ware utility *RegShot*. Use it just before and after installing software to get a report (in text or HTML format) of the Registry modifications made by the installation. Go to PC World's downloads page for your copy. If you want to monitor how installers add, remove, or change files on your hard drive.

MASTER MAINTENANCE

Set up an ongoing regimen for system maintenance, including defragmenting your hard disk and checking it for errors. A simple way to automate your PC maintenance chores is to use Windows' Scheduled Tasks feature. You can use Windows' built-in utilities.

CRUSH CRASHES

Some software claims to prevent crashes or at least mitigate them. Among other tricks, the programs intercept under-the-hood crash messages as they

travel between your applications and Windows, then try to fix the problem before your system freezes up. If the crash stopper can't reverse the damage, it attempts to stall the crash long enough for you to save the files you're working on. One such product is *Crash-Proof*, which is part of V Communications' *SystemSuite 4*. The suite costs \$54 to download from www.v-com.com, and \$60 for a CD-ROM (with rescue disc). To get an anticrash program without any other tools, check out TFI Technology's \$30 *StayAlive 2002* and download a 30-day trial copy.

BACK(UP) TO BASICS

We've said it before, but we'll say it again. You need to back up your system regularly, as well as just before you make any major changes to your computer. The backup utility included with Windows 2000 and XP has a check box for an option called System State (in XP, start in Advanced Mode and look under My Computer on the Backup tab). This feature allows you to back up your Registry and other critical system files in one step.

If you want to back up just the Registry, read "Care and Feeding of the Windows Registry." Then get the skinny on all kinds of backups as described in last June's (pcworld.com) "How to Evade Data Disaster."

TAKE YOUR TIME

Never install multiple programs or drivers one after the other. Before loading something new, wait several days

after an installation to ensure that the program is working and didn't mess up anything else. If you install five programs in one day, you'll have trouble figuring out which is to blame if something goes wrong. Similarly, when manually deleting software or files in your Windows folders, make backup copies of the files on a removable medium or in a temporary folder and wait several days or weeks before deleting the backups, just in case you erased a file you need.

GET A GOOD DRIVER

It's surprising the number of seemingly unrelated system problems that can arise from buggy drivers for graphics adapters, sound cards, and other hardware. If you don't know who manufactured your devices, you find out by peeking into Windows' Device Manager: 1) Right-click My Computer and choose Properties. 2) In Windows 9 x and Me, click the Device Manager tab. In Windows 2000 and XP, click the Hardware tab, then the Device Manager button. 3) Click the + sign next to any hardware category (or double-click the name) to see a list of components in that category. 4) If the component name doesn't include the name of the manufacturer, right-click the entry and choose Properties. The manufacturer's name should be listed on the General tab. Plug the name into your favorite Internet search engine to find the maker's Web site, then search the site to see if any recommended updates are available for the device. Don't install

new drivers willy-nilly, though. Update drivers only if your PC is acting quirky. And as always, keep the old drivers on hand in case you need to revert. The instructions with the new drivers should say what files are being upgraded; if they don't, refer to the next tip.

BE A PEST

If your PC crashes more often than a remedial driver's ed. student, or if its documentation is unhelpful, tell the manufacturer. In the honey-beats-vinegar department, be sure to let vendors know when they do things right, too.

STAY UP-TO-DATE

The Windows Update feature automates downloads of the latest security patches and other fixes for your OS from the Internet. It's generally a good idea to keep up with the most critical fixes (unless you read otherwise in PC World). Fortunately, Windows Update doesn't force any download on you, but lets you review each one before installing.

CHECK UPDATES

You can check for updates manually by choosing Start, Windows Update (Start, All Programs, Windows Update in Windows XP). But it's easier to let Windows do the checking for you. This feature is built into Windows 2000 (service pack 3), Windows Me, and XP. For other Windows versions, you may have to download and install Microsoft Windows Critical Update Notification. (If you're not sure which service pack was last applied to Windows 2000, right-click My

Computer and choose Properties and look in the System description in the top right of the dialog box.) If you use Windows 98, 98 SE, or Windows 2000 (prior to service pack 3) and you're not sure whether you already have this feature, double-click the Task Scheduler icon in your system tray (the area on the bottom-right of the screen near your clock), if such an icon is there. If you don't see a Windows Critical Update Notification icon in the Scheduled Tasks window (or if there is no Task Scheduler icon in the tray), then this utility isn't installed.

INSTALL TOOL

To install the tool, point your browser to windowsupdate.microsoft.com: 1) In the left panel, click Pick updates to install to expand that category. 2) Underneath, click your version of Windows (for Windows 9 x or 2000) or Critical Updates and Service Packs (for Windows 2000 service pack 2). 3) Scroll through the list of recommended updates on the right; when you see Windows Critical Update Notification (9 x, 2000) or Windows Automatic Updating (Windows 2000 service pack 2), click Add for that item. 4) Select the updates you want, and click Review and install updates. 5) When you're done reviewing, turn off your antivirus software and click Install Now.

UPDATE ALERTS

If you don't want update alerts, uninstall it: 1) Open Control Panel, double-click Add/Remove Programs. 2) Select Microsoft Windows Critical

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 14)

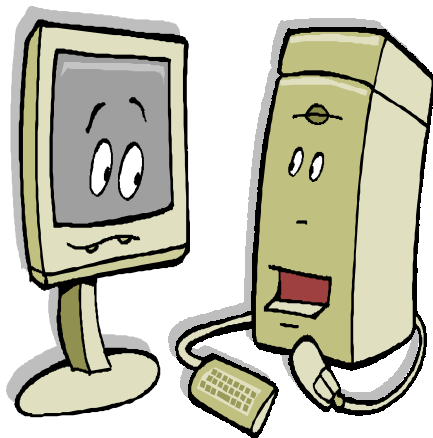
(TIP N' TRICKS*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)*

Update Notification. 3) Click Add/Remove or Change/Remove.

WINDOWS AUTOMATIC UPDATING

With Windows Automatic Updating for Windows 2000 service pack 2, Windows 2000 service pack 3, or Windows Me, turn off automatic updates by, 1) Opening Control Panel and double-clicking the Automatic Updates icon. Select one of the options (a good one is the Notify setting) and click OK. In Windows XP, 1) Right-click My Computer in Explorer or on the desktop and choose Properties. 2) In the System Properties dialog box, click the Automatic Updates tab. Make sure Keep my com-

puter up to date is checked. (If you haven't kept XP up-to-date, you may not see the check box, but you'll still see similar configuration options.) 3) Choose an option (again, Notify provides the most control) and click OK. ♦

**The Spell Checker Poem**

Provided by **Leah Clark**, LACS

Eye halve a spelling checker,
it came with my pea sea It
plainly marks four my revue,
miss steaks eye kin knot sea.
Eye strike a key and type a
word and weight four it two
say Weather eye am wrong
oar write, it shows me strait a
weigh. As soon as a mist ache
is maid, it nose be fore two
long And eye can put the error
rite, its rare lea ever wrong.
Eye have run this poem threw
it, I am shore your pleased two
no Its letter perfect awl the
weigh, my checker toiled me
sew.

Isn't soft wear grate? Why did
eye waist all that time inn Eng-
lish classes? ♦

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Computing Factoids -

By **Steve Bass**, Pasadena IBM Users Group

HARD DRIVE REPAIR CONUNDRUM

A PIBMUG member was struggling with a faulty hard drive. An Ontrack product manager provided an answer. Question: I have a question about getting rid of data on a hard disk, I have read articles about reformatting and assorted software that gets rid of your data. However, I had a hard disk crash and must return the old disk to the system vendor in order to have my credit card credited for the cost of the new one they sent me (under warranty).

I do not want them or the OEM to be able to recover that data. With the disk not working, how do I get rid of the data? If I hold magnets around it, will that work? Should I drop it in a boiling pot of chicken soup? Your advice would be appreciated.

Smart-ass Answer: Chicken soup may work provided you remove all the fat, chicken feet, and carrots (strangely enough, celery and onions can stay).

More realistically, I have to admit I'm stumped. Lemme call in some experts from Ontrack, the hard drive recovery company. Mark? Any ideas? -Steve

ONTRACK'S RESPONSE:

The magnet idea isn't going to work unless you've got some incredibly strong magnets laying around. A degaussing unit strong enough to erase the platters of a hard drive would generate a field that would damage other magnetic media

within several yards. Also it would erase the servo-patterns on the drive used to control the movement of the read/write head, so it would certainly ruin the drive.

We've requested ideas from the real experts, our clean room technicians.

They had a few solutions, but nothing simple. You could see if an authorized shop (like a disk recovery shop who has authority to break a drive seal without voiding the warranty) would take on a special job (for a fee) to open the drive and degauss the platters.

You could request to review the warranty policy from your HDD manufacturer and see if they have a policy for protecting data that may be on a warranty returned drive.

Trust the HDD manufacturer to destroy the platters as part of the end-of-life of a returned drive. -Mark

BETTER BACKUPS

After using tapes and zip drives for back ups, I finally decided to just back up to another hard drive. To simplify the process, I installed two mobile mounts and connected the IDE cables so that the upper mount or drawer is an IDE1 master and the lower drawer is an IDE2 Master. I purchased two drives of the same capacity. Both are jumpered as masters. The original is in the upper drawer, and the backup will be placed in the lower drawer.

I use "Drive Copy" which with installation generates a 3.5" floppy "Drive Copy" boot disk.

The boot disk is used to start the copy process. Make certain that your two hard drives are labeled so that you will copy from the original to the backup, and not from the backup to the original.

Remove the backup and set it aside for that sad day when the original fails or is infected with a virus. The reason that I like this approach is that if the original drive fails, I can just power down and remove it from the drawer and insert and boot the backup, which is already jumpered as a master drive, and you are immediately up and running. Whereas if you were using a tape you have the problem of trying to salvage the original from the tape, hoping that it works. The same is true of Zip disks.

I will usually start the backup when I go to bed and it is done in the morning. The cost of a 2nd hard drive is probably cheaper than a tape drive or Zip drive and the cost of the tapes and zip disks just add even more cost. -Clifford Ford (kb6ia@earthlink.net)

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG). ♦



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* Author of article reprinted from various user groups and other PC publications. ♦

Charlie Sez: WiFi is The Latest "Buzzword" What Does It Mean And How Will It Affect Us?

By **Charlie Semple**, LACS Director

WLAN, router, switch, access point, wireless PC CARD are some of the terms (there are many) used in wireless networking.

Why wireless? Some people simply want to link computers at home or in their office without

wires (either strung from place to place or in the walls). Or they want the convenience of taking their laptop out on the patio so they can easily work outdoors and connect to their main computer and/or the Internet.

Others want to be able to connect their computers to the Internet as they travel around the community or the country and wireless connection is becoming the easiest way to do that. We see and hear news items about WiFi connections in coffee shops, hotels, restau-

rants and other places. Those are the "official" places. Some users enjoy finding available "hot-spots" where they can get access to someone else's network and through that, the Internet.

New member Leo Salazar is organizing a WIRELESS SIG. If you are interested in learning more and participating in this new SIG watch for e-mail announcements or contact Leo Salazar at leos@specialtyinternational.com.

Charlie ♦

Membership Information

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Patron	250
Angel (individual) or Corporate	\$1000 (or more).

Subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership. Non-member subscription is \$30.

Contributing and higher categories of members may attend all SIG meetings without charge, including those where an admission fee is normally charged. A corporate membership includes ten individual memberships including

free SIG attendance. Associate members are people who live in the same household or work for the same company as a regular member; they do not receive their own subscriptions to *User Friendly*. Students must prove full-time status. If you have a question, please call our Voice Mail at 310-289-7177.

In addition to LACS monthly general meetings, members enjoy these special benefits:

- ◇ Monthly Journal *User Friendly*. We publish your submissions! Free classified ads to buy or sell your computer items.
- ◇ Eligibility to win our presenters' door prizes.
- ◇ Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to solve your problems.
- ◇ Occasional swap meets and information on trade shows.
- ◇ Product discounts, special offers and group purchases.

- ◇ Free software and computer books (if you review them for *User Friendly*).
- ◇ Network with people sharing your interests.
- ◇ Members and Quick Consultants to call when you need help.
- ◇ Rewards for Recruiting Members: LACS will give you three extra entries for drawings for each new member you sign up. You may use any or all of them at any meeting within six months. While you may not win two prizes at one meeting, if your name is drawn twice, you may swap the first prize for the second one if you wish.
- ◇ Members receive LACS announcements and members' Q & A info via LACS e-mail lists. Send requests for subscription changes with your e-mail address to: changes.form@lacspc.org ◇

LACS

Membership Application

Please return this form with applicable fees to:

Los Angeles Computer Society, 10410 Palms Blvd., PMB 13, LOS ANGELES CA 90034-4873

Please PRINT Clearly

Renew Regular - \$36.00 Associate - \$12.00 Student - \$18.00
 New Contributor - \$50.00 Benefactor - \$100.00

Name: First _____ Last _____ Name of Associate: First _____ Last _____

Company: _____ Your Title/Occupation _____ Retired?

Address: _____ Home Work Address

City, State, Zip + 4 _____

Phone: (Home): _____ (Business): _____

(Do not Publish Phone No. in Roster)

e-mail address: _____

I Think I am a:

Beginner Intermediate Advanced Programmer Professional Hobbyist

I am willing to : (at least one, Please)

Serve on a Committee Assist the Editor Help at the Meetings Join a SIG Other _____

User Friendly

Los Angeles Computer Society
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 Los Angeles, CA 90034-4873

Voicemail: 310-289-7177
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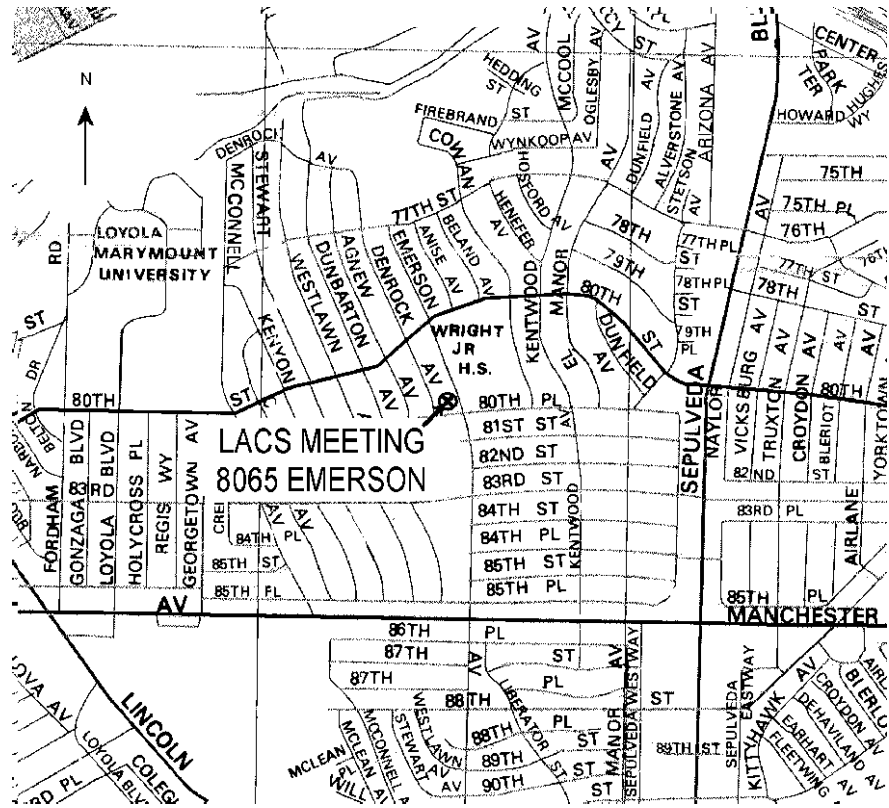
DIRECTIONS TO GENERAL MEETING

From the North: Take Sepulveda Blvd. SOUTH to W. 80th St. Turn WEST/right and go about one mile to Emerson Ave. Turn SOUTH/left and go one long block to W. 80th Place. Fellowship Hall is on the Northwest corner of Emerson and W. 80th Place.

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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