

MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

December 2001 Newsletter



Quips N' Tips

by Rick Howell

The People's Republic of China recently announced the closing of 17,488 Internet cafes throughout the country. With a population of 1.3 billion, China currently has about 27 million Internet users, up from 4 million two years ago. Of the 27 million, approximately 4.5 million rely on Internet cafes or Internet bars to log on, and there were about 94,000 of these establishments in the country prior to the shutdowns. Government officials cited failure to block web sites containing subversive or pornographic content as the chief reason for the shutdowns. Additionally, 28,000 establishments were ordered to install monitoring devices which block banned web sites and record user activities. Hmmmm, I wonder if their monitoring devices are made in the USA and called "Carnivore".

In the ongoing battle between first amendment advocates and the corporate establishment, Federal District Courts have upheld the ruling against the Electronic Freedom Foundation and 2600 Magazine who were trying to publish DeCSS, a code to break the copy protection scheme on DVDs. The courts upheld a ruling that publishing the code violated the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. In a nutshell, the DMCA says, "No person shall manufacture, import, offer to the public, provide, or otherwise traffic in any technology, product, service, device, component, or part thereof" that circumvents copy protection technology. Basically, this makes it illegal to devise a way to break a copy protection scheme, for whatever reason. Interestingly enough, this could put severe restrictions on companies which manufacture copy-protection software, as they can't legally ask people to try to break their protection schemes any more. An interesting paradox of the law. At this time, it is unknown whether the EFF and 2600 Magazine intend to appeal to the Supreme Court. Hopefully they will.

A Stanford engineer, Krishna Shenoy and a group of researchers at Caltech have successfully implanted an electrode in the brain of a monkey. Utilizing the electrical signals generated in the brain, the monkey was taught to manipulate a cursor on a screen utilizing thought only. This is the first recorded success story of a neural implant interfacing with a computer. For more information go to: <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/news/pr/01/shenoy1128.html>

In January, Pacific Digital Corporation will introduce their enhanced ATA controller which will allow RAID developers to deploy a six-drive 1-Terabyte storage system at a cost of about \$2400 using Automatic DMA, a proprietary interface developed by Pacific Digital. Comparable SCSI systems could cost as much as \$10,000. ADMA effectively allows data to be transmitted over two independent ATA Ultra/100 channels on a 66 MHz PCI bus. Pacific Digital representatives report the ADMA controller works at about four times the speed of current IDE motherboard controllers. The controller which requires Windows 2000 or NT is expected to be priced at \$149. Not a bad price for that kind of performance. Pacific Digital reports they will also be producing a chip for motherboard manufacturers later next year, so the technology can be incorporated directly on a motherboard.

MEETING NOTICE

by: *George Miner*

When: Tuesday, Dec. 11th, at 7:15 PM

Where: Old Bedford School (in 1800 block of Bedford Road)

Program: **Mick Williams** will return as our guest speaker and the program will be on Internet auctions. Bring a friend!

We will also get together at the I-Hop afterwards for coffee and talk. All are welcome.

OOOHHHHH!!!! Can you say T-E-R-A-B-Y-T-E ? That's a THOUSAND Gigabytes, a MILLION Megabytes.....Gotta Have It!!

See y'all at the meeting.



Rescue Files Trapped On A CD-RW Gone Bad

Taken from PC World - December 2001, Answer Line by Lincoln Spector

Question: *I had to abort copying a file to a CD-RW disc recently (using Adaptec's Direct CD3). I'd transferred several important files to the disc before the copy interruption occurred, and now they're gone. Is there any way to retrieve my data?*

Heidi Meiswinkel, Itasca, Illinois

Answer: The Data is probably still somewhere on your disc. The trick is finding it.

First, three points of caution: Don't write additional data to the problem disc until you've successfully retrieved the files. Also, CD-RWs are too unstable for long-term storage of important files, so use CD-R discs for that purpose. Finally, never keep only one copy of an important file, no matter what media it's stored on. So much for the lecture, now let's get to work restoring those files.

DirectCD's ScanDisc utility (not to be confused with Windows' own ScanDisk) diagnoses and fixes bad CD-R and CD-RW discs. In directCD 3, you launch Scan Disc by selecting *Start*Programs*Adaptec DirectCD*ScanDisc* (your path may vary). This version of ScanDisc does not closely examine the entire disc, however, so don't expect miracles.

The ScanDisc version that comes with Direct CD 5 does a much better job, but to acquire it you must buy and install Easy CD Creator 5, which contains DirectCD 5. Roxio <http://www.roxio.com> lists Easy CD Creator at \$99, though I've seen it for as low as \$69. To launch ScanDisc in DirectCD5, double-click the DirectCD icon in your system tray and select CD Utilities.

If you're happy with your current version of DirectCD and you just need a better version of ScanDisc, consider CD-ROM Productions' \$50 CD-R Diagnostic utility. Instead of trying to restore a damaged disc for reuse (as ScanDisc does), CD-R Diagnostic copies the files to another location. You can visit either <http://www.find.pcworld.com/12225> or <http://www.cdrom-prod.com> to obtain a demo version.

If the software approach doesn't work, you can send your disc to a data-recovery service. I know of two companies that recover data from CD-R and CD-RW discs, and other companies probably offer similar services. Try AcoDisc <http://www.acodisc.com> first, because that company will evaluate your disc free of

charge (except for shipping). Ontrack <http://www.ontrack.com> charges \$100 just to look at the disc. Both companies will inspect the disc and tell you whether a restoration is possible before estimating the cost of that operation, which can range from \$29 to \$1000. Both companies also read, but do not alter, the damaged disc.

Once you've retrieved the needed data, throw the damaged disc away. Don't entrust more files to suspect media. Besides, CD-RW discs wear out over time as data is written and rewritten to them.

Open Explorer to the Right Folder

Bart Dehaese of Veltem Belgium, asks how to change the folder that Windows Explorer defaults to when you open it from the Start Menu. Right-click the *Windows Explorer* icon and select *Properties*. Click the *Shortcut* tab. The target field should contain something like "C:\WINDOWS\EXPLORER.EXE". Add /n, /e, "path" to that, where *path* is your desired default folder. For instance, to have Explorer open to My Documents, you would have to use the full command C:\WINDOWS\EXPLORER.EXE /n, /e, "C:\My Documents". Click *OK* to close the dialog box.



Christmas Party

December 22nd

**Hurst Recreation Center
on Mary Drive**

**Check with Robin for
more details**



Software for Under \$30 or Less

Source: PC World Magazine, Grace Aquino, December 2000

Compiled by Pat Hester

For a small but powerful word processor, for your PC or Palm try Abiword. (3.4 mb) found at <http://www.absource.com>. It contains spell check, Headers and footers and can import Word, HTML and Palm (pdb) files.

With Eprompter you can access your mail from up to eight e-mail accounts, such as Juno, AOL, Yahoo or POP3 accounts. It contains an automatic dialer that will download messages in the background. <http://www.eprompter.com>

Flow LT is a free utility that allows quick drop and drag creation of flow diagrams, utilizes 25 symbols maintains links as you cut and paste.

If you'd like a Calendar program with alarms, appointments and lunar calendar and saint of the day items then try this one - Happy Calendar, <http://www.jimjams.com/xhaca.html> is a 2 mb file that will work at no cost to you. Busy times are shown in red on time line.

To keep up with your stock portfolio, there's a free but long personal registration program with Stockvue 2001. Find it at <http://www.nqli.com>. You can set alerts for price and volume changes and view delayed data on highs and lows and bid and ask prices.

If you'd like a free thesaurus and dictionary try Wordweb a 4.4 mb program found at <http://www.wordweb.co.uk/free>

Five Shareware essentials are:

Cookie crusher, sorts the good cookies from the bad. Cost \$15. <http://www.thelimitsoft.com/cookie.html>

Power Management is file management. Free. <http://www.ontrack.com/powerdesk>

Tweak UI will allow you to fine tune windows (made by Microsoft software developers), but not fully supported by the company. <http://www.find.pcworld.com/12861>

Winzip Is the age old favorite for file compression. <http://www.winzip.com>

Zonealarm will shield your PC against attacks by

hackers. Free. [Http://www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com)

New Utilites to tickle your fancy.

Ad-ware to stop those downloaded ads try Ad-ware 5. It scans your registry to delete those items <http://www.lavasoftusa.com> Try another freebie with Webwasher, this utility gets rid of ads as well. <http://www.webwasher.com>.

Etrust EZ anti-virus cost \$20. but it received a perfect score in repairing infected files. With a \$10. cost per year for renewal. find it at <http://www.myetrust.com> Musicmatch juke box basic 7 is the the music lovers choice, but with another \$20. you can download to your cd burner, make labels and rp cd's to MP3 formats.

The Top Ten Power Pcs are:

Dell dimension 8200 at \$2899.

Polywell Poly 815TS-1260 at \$2150.

Sys Performance 1400 TD at \$1774.

Xi Computer 1400 Mtower Sp at \$2799

Nutrend Ultra 2 at \$1699.

Dell Optiplex GX400 at \$2126

Gateway Professional s1800 at \$2168

MicronPC Millennia Max XP2 at \$1977.

HP Vectra VL420 at \$3028.

Micro Express Microflex 1500A at \$1299.

Find all the details at one the above at : <http://www.find.pcworld.com/15242>

Top Ten Value PCs are:

Nutrend Athlon Mega 2 at \$1069

Micro Express Microflex 1200C at \$999.

Tangent Valera PC at \$1399.

ABS Conquest GL at \$989.

Dell Optiplex GX150 at \$1312.

Polywell Poly 830K70-1000 at \$1100.

Premio Apollo 815EP at \$899.

Dell Demension 2100 at \$999.

Sys Taskmaster 950D at \$1206.

HP E-pc C10 at \$1498.

Find all the details on the above at <http://www.find.pcworld.com/15220>

The top ten printers are at web site: <http://www.ind.pcworld.com/14960>

THE MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

The Mid-Cities PC Users' Group is a not for-profit organization whose objectives are:

- * to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experience,
- * education in the form of seminars and programs, and
- * community as pertains to the computer industry.

Annual membership is \$24.00 per family with one vote per membership. Members are encouraged to notify the Membership Chairperson of any change of address as soon as possible to continue receiving their monthly newsletter. Please address any notifications to: Mid-Cities PC Users' Group: Attn. Membership Chair, P.O. Box 54141, Hurst, TX 76054

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THE MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP NEWSLETTER

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CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES

Article Style: Type all copy flush left without justification; use word wrap feature for your paragraphs. This includes headings, by-lines, and the first line of each paragraph. Place a credit by-line (author's name) between the title and first paragraph. Leave no blank lines between paragraphs. Use only one space between sentences.

File Formats: MS Word or Word Perfect is preferred. If formatting is crucial and you do not have access to the above programs, send a hard copy to show the layout.

Submitting Articles: You may use one of two methods. Uploading the article to Nancy Hester at newsletter@mcpcug.org or you can hand them to her on diskette (3.5" preferred) during the general membership meetings.



Thanks a lot!

Deadline: The last Friday of the month prior to intended publication.

Advertising Rates:

7½ in. x 9 in.	Full Page	\$40.00
7½ in. x 4 in.	Half Page	\$20.00
3¼ in. x 4¼ in.	Quarter Page	\$12.50
3½ in. x 2 in. Business Card		\$5.50

Discounts: 3 months = 5%; 6 months = 10%. 1st month full price, discount applies to months thereafter.

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