

# MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

## January 2001 Newsletter



### MEETING NOTICE

by: George Miner

**When:** Tuesday, January 9th, at 7:15 PM

**Where:** Old Bedford School (1800 block of Bedford Road). See map at [www.mcpcug.org](http://www.mcpcug.org) if needed.

**Program:** Our speaker for January will be Mr. Matthew Stevens who was supposed to be at our December meeting that was cancelled due to bad weather. Matthew represents the DFWPUG (Dallas Fort Worth Palm Users Group). He is also a Hardware Manager for Handango, a local retailer of handheld computing devices. Matthew will bring a variety of hand held devices for display and discuss the pros and cons of each.



*In time for Christmas 2001 here's the picks from 2000 by ZD Net...*

#### **Best of Computers 2000:**

ABS Performance Alpha  
ABS Performance 3  
Atlas Micro AS9800  
Compaq Presario EZ2200  
Dell Dimension 4100  
HP e-Vectra P2024T  
IBM Net Vista X40i  
Sony VAIO PCV-L640 Slimtop LCD  
Systemax PJM-A7 Excite PC  
Systemax PJM-T733 Excite PC

*Continued on next page*

## *The Internet - Ya Gotta Love It!*

*By Sheryllynn Roberts*

The Internet has made a great tool for communicating possible: "e-mail." Just as we use a "word processing" program like Notepad or Wordpad to write and read documents on the computer, we use a "browser" or "web-page processing" program like Internet Explorer or Netscape to read web pages.

We have gotten used to the "windows" of the GUI (graphical user interface) browser. The GUI version of the Web allows us to view pictures, fill out forms, and click on links. It also allows us to use e-mail through browser program settings on our computer, or to use e-mail through an Internet site without putting settings on our computer. This is possible because e-mail uses a special "e-mail processing program" that is easily adapted to being "read" over the Internet through the GUI browser—or even without a GUI browser.

It is common for Internet Service Providers to package free e-mail accounts and free web space with their dial-up account services; often the ISP gives the user a disk with a special browser interface that makes it easy to get mail—"joe@myisp.com", through a selection in the browser menu, or on the start page of the ISP's web site.

There may be times when you need different or additional mail addresses: you want to keep your privacy when filling out forms that require an e-mail address; you need to offer an e-mail address, but you do not want to receive spam or marketing mail in your personal ISP account, you want to create special accounts for business, family or social use; you want to create an account that many people can use; you want to have an account that you can check when you

are away from your home computer or that you can check from your phone or PDA; you need more space for mail, photos, and attachments.

Be aware that you have the right to privacy when filling out forms, and that care should be given to who will use and view your "profile" information. Give information in profiles that you are comfortable with, and which does not pose a privacy risk. Many of the questions you may be asked are for marketing purposes. To pay for free mail services, banner ads are tailored to your preferences, and to suit the market, ads are priced to vendors on the audience they will reach. Some of the questions are for security and service purposes at the mail provider so that you can be alerted if there is a problem or a maintenance announcement.

Some Internet e-mail allows you to choose whether or not you will be included in a phonebook-like directory for member or public use. Some e-mail gives you the option to choose to receive magazines and newsletters. Check the space limits on the e-mail account as magazines, "html" mail and newsletters can rapidly fill up your mailbox allotment. You may choose to receive only "text" based rather than "html" e-mail to save space.

Several Internet based mail accounts and features are listed below.

[www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com): 6 mg free. very easy to use; teamed with geocities, offers web space, chat, messaging, and clubs.

[www.excite.com](http://www.excite.com): [www.mailexcite.com](http://www.mailexcite.com) has voice mail, fax, and auto-forwarding capabilities. Decorate your mailbox with a theme.

[Www.visto.com](http://Www.visto.com): starts with 15  
*Continued on next page*

## *The Internet...continued from page 1*

mgs of space, calendar, bookmarks, has club and file sharing built in. I have used visto accounts on many team projects. Is also WAP enabled for PDA's.

www.email.com: NBCi's *snap* merged with *xoom* for this service. Easy name to remember. An NBCi account comes with web space.

www.thatweb.com: use this Internet site to check your personal ISP or dedicated work mail account when you are away from your home or office computer.

www.hotmail.com: 2 mg limit, an oldie but goody. Neat bulk mail filter and blocker.

www.netscape.com: easy to access from the Netscape start page

comm.lycos.com: 15 mgs, messaging, wireless, voicemail

www.turbosport.com: whopping 40mgs of space.

www.com: listen to music while you check your mail

Themed mail: email.angelfire.com: angelfire.com is also known for providing web space

www.acmecity.com: cartoon themes, web space available

Mail.go.com: disney's contri-

bution, member services include web space

www.chickmail.com

www.cybergal.com

www.cybergrrl.com: grrl news start page

www.gurlmail.com: gURL news and services, 4 mg mail, 11 mg web space

www.kittymail.com: familiar with "hello kitty?"

www.meowmail.com: fun site; get your cat an account

www.floydmail.com: for pink floyd fans

www.jokes.com: a joke a day keeps the doctor away

www.lovefootball.com: get your team in your address

Allows sending and retrieval of mail over the phone:

www.planetarymotion.com: coolmail.net

www.shoutmail.com: sign up online or via the phone

www.zdnetonebox.com: voicemail, email, faxes

Www.emailaddresses.com: this site has information and utilities for e-mail

## **The Best Of's**

*Continued from page 1*

### **Best of Software 2000:**

Adobe Photoshop 6.0

Cakewalk Pro Audio 9

Complete LandDesigner 6.0 3D

Design Collection

Corel Painter 6.1

Enfish Onespace

Extensis Portfolio 5.0

Generations Grande Suite 8.0

GoBack 2.2

Homesite 4.5

L&H Voice Xpress Professional 5.0

Macromedia

### **Best of Hardware 2000:**

Epsom Stylus Scan 2500

Hitachi CM771

Lexmark Optra E312

Maxtor Diamond Max 60

Netgear PA301 Phoneline 10X

Nikon Coolpix 800

Nikon Coolpix 990

Plextor Plexwriter 12/10/32A

S3 Rio Digital Audio Receiver

Samsung SyncMaster 770TFT

Sonigstix Monsoon MH-500

Multimedia Speaker System

Sony DCR-PC100

Thrustmaster Nascar Pro Digital 2

Racing Wheel

Umax Astra 3400S3 Rio Digital

Audio Receiver

# **Who Killed My Heros?**

**By Will Knight, ZDNet (UK) January 2, 2001**

It wasn't a happy new year in the fantasy world of Diablo II, as hackers assassinated the top characters in the popular role-playing game.

Online gamers on Monday saw their champion characters mercilessly killed off by computer hackers who gained access to their players through a security hole in Blizzard Entertainment's games server. Blizzard Entertainment, the company behind the game Diablo II said Tuesday that the problem had been fixed and all characters would be brought back to life.

Last week infiltrators exploited a vulnerability in the sign-in system to gain access to numerous player accounts. At first they began to discard valuable items belonging to these players, but later began disposing of some of the game's top characters. According to some reports, eight out of the top ten players were assassinated.

Resurrect the dead? It is thought that an update to the software behind the login process is behind the flaw. The mass murder caused great distress to many games who saw characters they had spent many

hours playing with killed. "We recognize that the loss of a hardcore character or unique items is a cause of great concern to layers," said Blizzard in a statement. The company said that on January 8, it would reinstate all powerful characters killed between December 19, and January 1. Blizzard also said it would put in place a system allowing players to recover valuable lost items.

Diablo II is a fantasy role-playing game based on a world filled with dragons, sorcerers and warriors.

# The School Bell

***By Gil Hennon Contributing Editor of The Bridge - Journal of the Memphis PC Users Group***

The honeymoon is over. Governments of several countries have decided there is too much freedom on the Internet. In the past month, several courts and legislative bodies have taken action to eliminate or control a technology they perceive as threatening to their power. A French high court ordered Yahoo (in California) to filter its content entering their country so that French citizens cannot view or purchase Nazi paraphernalia. The fact that it is technically impossible to design a filter that can catch every instance of this sort didn't temper the court's ruling. Maybe the French make lots of laws that no one can obey. Some German judges have formulated an opinion that they have the power to dispatch German police into other countries to bring back perpetrators for trial when-ever foreign citizens on foreign soil break Germany's laws. They did that in 1941 and the world called it "invasion." I guess if German judges have jurisdiction over everyone in the world, then it is not surprising that French judges believe they can tell the sun to stop shining.

United States jurists and legislators are more materialistic—their concern is raking in the money. A task force is currently investigating how to establish a single-rate sales tax to apply to online sales. This tax will be collected by each vendor and paid to the state where a purchaser resides. It is very likely to happen in the near future. State governors dislike the Internet and all of the "cheaters" who shop on-line and avoid paying sales taxes.

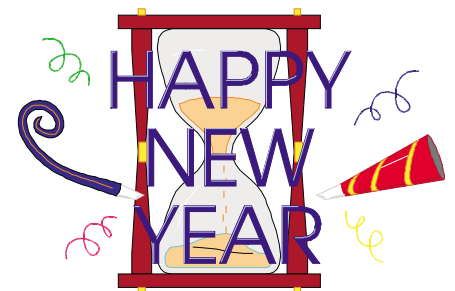
Two European attempts to control data and cybercrime have resulted in proposed international "agreements" that seriously infringe

upon the freedoms guaranteed to U. S. citizens in the Bill of Rights. The European Union Data Directive (EUDD) and the Cybercrime Treaty are both being written by governments that do not recognize the Constitutional rights of Americans, or the rights of anyone else, for that matter. EUDD is aimed at curtailing free speech, and would seriously impact our First Amendment rights. Along with other forms of data exchange, the operation of search engines, like Alta Vista or Yahoo, would violate the EUDD. The Cybercrime Treaty limits non-governmental use of encryption tools, requires retention of data for an extended time, and gives investigators data access far beyond what is reasonably needed. So far, the U. S. Congress has balked at ratifying either of these initiatives because language in both documents assumes they will legally supercede the authority of the Constitution of the United States. While our government probably will not accept any treaty or agreement that seriously endangers existing Constitutional rights, individual privacy might get tossed out the window. As one Congressperson noted recently, the Constitution and Bill of Rights make no mention of any citizen rights to privacy.

This month's weird news story (told by <http://www.cluebot.com/>): Michael Kamburowski, president of the conservative group Americans for Tax Reform is urging Congressional legislators to enact a bill requiring the Postal Service to snoop inside letters and packages coming from outside the United States. This odd stance for an organization that generally supports individual privacy was the result of Mr. Kamburowski's discovery of the Marc Emery Direct Web site ([www.emeryseeds.com](http://www.emeryseeds.com)),

which advertises having "the largest selection of marijuana seeds in the world." Proprietor Marc Emery has been in business on the Web since 1994. Stories about his "highest quality marijuana seeds" sales have run in The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and many other popular publications. The ATR organization was especially steamed over Emery's shipping recommendations. He prefers not to use overnight express carriers (UPS, FedEx, etc.) because these firms too often check for contraband and cooperate with customs agents. The U. S. Postal Service is a safer bet—or as Marc Emery says, "regular mail is anonymous and safe."

Strange news story #2 (reported by [www.ananova.com](http://www.ananova.com)): Geoff Marsland had enough of the late, noisy parties at his neighbors' house. Several nights each week the din kept him awake. Deciding that a dose of the same medicine was appropriate, the New Zealander recorded 64 uninterrupted minutes of the high-pitched whirr of his lawn mower onto a CD and turned his speakers toward the house next door. "When the neighbours hack you off by having a late party, whack it on, and go out of the place and have a coffee for an hour," he recommends. Since creating his "suburbia" CD, Geoff has sold over 4,000 copies. He is planning other "retaliation releases" and has formed a new production company named Urban Assault.



## 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

### 2000/01 OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

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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 5.0 is preferred. If formatting is crucial and you do not have access to Word Perfect 5.0 or Microsoft Word, send a hard copy to show the layout.

**Submitting Articles:** You may use one of two methods. Uploading the article to Nancy Hester at nancyhesterusa@netscape.net 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
3¾ 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.*

*Payment: required with 1st ad copy.*

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