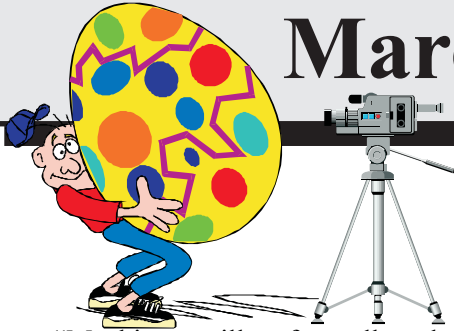


MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

March 2002 Newsletter



Quips N' Tips

by Rick Howell

“Machinery will perform all work – automata will direct all activities and the only tasks of the human race will be to make love, study and be happy.” – *The United States Review, 1853*

“Some people might consider this to be an amazing statement published almost a hundred and fifty years ago, but if you ponder it more carefully you will realize they underestimated technology considerably. But then, one out of three ain't bad.” – *Rick Howell, 2002*

Webster's defines ethical as “being morally correct”. Who is to determine what is ethical when considering technology? This may be one of the most important issues of our time. Consider cloning. In their infinite wisdom, our congress has forbidden the use of federal funds for research in human cloning and are considering banning human clone research altogether in our country. Are the religious fanatics stigmatized by visions of H.G. Wells' *Island of Dr. Moreau*, with genetic mutations lurking in the jungle? Or are they concerned about the possibility that we are trying to imitate God? Many people are anxious to condemn a technology without a complete understanding of the technology. If you look at the benefits to the medical community alone, cloning can be justified. Perhaps if God made man in His own image, He might have done a better job than even He could have realized.

Ok, Ok, so now you're saying what does this have to do with computers? Well, the question of ethics applies to computer technology as well as cloning. Is it ethical for us to log on to Kazaa or Morpheus and download movies or music files when we have not paid for legal copies of the media? This is a question that will end up costing us all a bunch of money before it is resolved. The Recording Industry Association of America and the Motion Picture Association of America are petitioning Congress to pass a law requiring hardware manufacturers to incorporate provisions for copyright protection into their hardware. This would limit or prohibit your ability to make copies of

movies or music media. This extends even farther to cover software as well. This has been a problem since the dawn of the computer age. Remember the old days when some of us even bought hardware boards designed to override disk copy protection schemes? Does the name CopyIIPC ring any bells? It doesn't matter what type of copyright protection scheme they come up with, somebody else will come along with the technology to defeat it. Methinks perhaps they'd better look for an alternative way to make money, and quit wasting Congress' time and taxpayer money.

Wireless internet access seems to be sweeping the country. Go into almost any Starbucks these days and you can order 15-minute segments of wireless internet access along with your coffee and Danish pastry. Many organizations are setting up wireless access for employees or students. DFW airport has wireless internet service available for a fee. If you happen to live within range of a wireless network, you might be able to get internet access for free. More and more New Yorkers living in Manhattan are finding their computers already have internet access when they plug in a wireless network card. This is a result of some company or individual located nearby with a wireless transmitter. As long as they do not control the access to the network, anyone close enough can share their internet service. This network sharing has become so common that some networks are overlapping each other making it difficult to discern what

signal you are using to connect to the internet. This is known as wireless mesh routing and is being embraced as a technology to provide internet access for a wide area. In the San Francisco Bay Area, a user group has been formed called the Bay Area Wireless Users Group. Their goal is to build free wireless mesh networks in communities throughout the region. This is becoming so popular that you will be seeing a new three-letter-acronym (TLA) for Neighborhood Area Network or NAN being used more and more. This mimics the already-familiar LAN (local area network) and WAN (wide area network). Ultimately, you will be able to drive from coast to coast with a

MEETING NOTICE

by: *George Miner*



When: Tuesday, March 12th, at 7:15 PM

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

Program: Our speaker will be Richard Strittermatten. He will present the program *Linux for the Novice*. We will get together at the I-Hop after the meeting for coffee and conversation. Bring a friend. All are welcome!



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Bugs & Fixes: Windows XP -- Xpect Hassles

Microsoft fixes some glitches - including biggies in its new operating system

From the March 2002 issue of PC World magazine

Written by Stewart J. Johnston, contributing editor for P.C. World Magazine

Thinking about getting Windows XP? Maybe you should wait until the dust settles. My e-mail in-box has been flooded with reports of bad "Xperiences" with the new operating system (see our news story for more details on XP's specific problems). One serious snag: If you purchased a new PC with Windows XP preinstalled, and you subsequently reinstall, repair, or upgrade XP, Microsoft says that you may lose some important files and settings, including files you store in XP's Shared Documents folder. This bug does not affect users who upgrade to XP from another OS. Microsoft issued a patch to fix the problem. Unfortunately, the fix cannot retrieve your lost data and settings--another good argument for frequent backups. Download the patch or go to Windows Update to grab XP's Critical Updates.

XP Security Threats

What else is wrong with Windows XP? This: It allows crackers to get access to your computer through the Universal Plug and Play feature. Universal Plug and Play is an extension of the Plug and Play system that has been around for years. Plug and Play is meant to let you automatically use devices connected to your computer--like printers and scanners--without having to futz around with installation disks and device drivers. Universal Plug and Play allows your machine to find and use devices connected anywhere on a network. However, a pair of flaws in the way that Universal Plug and Play "discovers" devices could enable a bad guy to crash your system, or even take complete control of it. Devices compatible with Universal Plug and Play send out messages, called notifications, to tell XP that they're available for use. A hacker bent on sabotaging your PC could send you a message that is designed to look like a genuine notification. In reality, though, the false message would contain too much data, causing Universal Plug and Play to overflow. The malevolent hacker could then run code that circumvents XP's security protections. A second hole also involves bogus Universal Plug and Play notifications sent over the Net, but is less serious. However, it could also affect Windows Me users if they have enabled Universal Plug and Play. (Windows 98 users would be affected only if they have installed the Windows XP version of Internet Connection Sharing.) Legitimate Universal Plug and Play notifications sometimes contain the URL of a server where Windows can find information that lets the OS use the device. A fake notification could contain a URL that sends Windows too much information. Fortunately, this hack would only cause your computer to slow drastically or crash. Microsoft's patch takes care of both problems. Visit Windows Update or download the patch.

By Stewart J. Johnston

Microsoft has posted a cumulative patch for Internet Explorer that fixes all known security holes in IE 5.5 and 6.0, three of which were only recently discovered. Get this patch.

Romantic Worm

Watch out for W32.Gokar @MM. This worm is suave and comes with subject lines like "Just one kiss will make it better." The worm won't damage your PC, but it will mail itself to everyone in your address book. Go to McAfee's removal advice or check out Symantec's instructions.

Beware BadTrans

A known worm is back in a new variation. Dubbed W32.BadTrans.B@MM, the worm not only e-mails itself to your friends, but also records your passwords and forwards them to the hacker. See Symantec's removal information, or see McAfee's set of instructions.



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connections; don't put the cover back on until you're sure that everything's working correctly.


6. Check Your System's Setup Program and Finish Up

Make sure the hard drive installation utility disk is in the floppy drive; then turn your PC on. Enter your PC's setup utility (usually by pressing Delete, F1, or F2 at start-up, although details vary by manufacturer). Then make sure drives 1 and 2 are set to AUTO. If they're not, your PC may not detect your new drive. Save the setup settings, and reboot from the installation utility floppy disk. Follow the directions to set up your new drive and copy the data from the old drive to the new. Finally, remove the floppy and reboot your PC. It should start Windows normally. When you're sure everything's working, reformat your old drive to wipe out its superfluous data and to prepare it for new files.



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laptop in your car connected to the internet the whole way. And you think cell phones can cause accidents. Internet Service Providers are more than a little upset about this technology because they see it cutting into their revenue source. They will probably be bothering Congress for legislation pretty soon too. In the meantime, if you don't want to pay for internet connection, buy a wireless network card for your laptop about 80 bucks street price and drive through just about any neighborhood in Colleyville. Chances are you can pick up some rich guy's wireless network. Download all the porn or music or movies you want and don't worry about it being traced back to you. Kinda like a yuppie drive-by.

See y'all at the meeting. 

Upgrade Guide: Install a Bigger, Faster Hard Drive

by Stan Miastkowski for PC World Magazine, June 2001 issue

Installing a new hard drive remains one of the most popular upgrade projects for PC users. And it's easy to see why. Today's drives are bigger than ever and bargain priced, and they offer a performance boost, as well. You'll need that extra space for the increasingly roomy OS installs and gigabyte-eating applications that are the norm these days. And don't forget graphics, audio, and video files. If your budget is limited, you can upgrade to a 20GB drive for as little as \$120; a medium-size 40GB drive will set you back \$150 or thereabouts. For maximum storage space, you can invest in a 60GB or 80GB behemoth, although prices for these larger drives are in the \$200-to-\$300 range. If you're comfortable making the upgrade without installation software, you can save a few bucks (\$10 to \$30) by purchasing a bare drive. Manufacturers offer most drives in both 5400-rpm and 7200-rpm versions. While the 5400-rpm drives are slightly less expensive than the 7200-rpm models, the latter deliver a genuine performance boost in the form of quicker access times and improved data transfers. The newest IDE hard drives are backward-compatible with the Ultra DMA/66 interface found on most PCs made in the last few years. But most of today's drives support the Ultra DMA/100 interface (alternatively called ATA/100), which offers burst transfer speeds of up to 100MB per second. In some operations, the new interface can speed up data transfers, but the overall performance difference is not that dramatic because the bursts involve only tiny amounts of data. Still, if you want the best performance out of your new drive, your PC must have on-board Ultra DMA/100 support. For about \$40, you can buy a card that adds Ultra DMA/100 to your PC from a company like Promise. Or you can just settle for the interface that your PC uses now. Because your new hard disk will be bigger and faster than the one your PC currently uses, plan on making the new drive your primary drive--the new home for your operating system and applications. You can attach the old drive as a secondary hard disk and use it for archives and less frequently accessed data. All major drive makers pack software with their upgrade kits that prepares the drive for data (partitioning and formatting) and can also copy exactly what's on your current drive to the new one, helping to make the upgrade a snap.

1. Prepare Your PC's Existing Hard Drive

To prevent future problems, make sure the current drive in your PC is trouble-free. Run ScanDisk (Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Scan Disk) and check the Thorough test option. Then run Disk Defragmenter (Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter). These tests sometimes take hours to complete if you haven't run them before, but you'll save time and headaches later in the installation process by ensuring that you will be copying error-free data. Next, make a full backup of your hard drive if you're able to, or at least back up your vital data and configuration files from your favorite programs. Don't forget files like normal.dot from Microsoft Word and Bookmarks or

Favorites from your Web browser.

2. Run the New Drive-Installation Software

Almost all hard drives ship with installation software that takes care of formatting and partitioning. Some even help you transfer data from your old disk to the new one. You must run most installation software before you physically install the new drive, but check the drive's manual or installation poster. You'll either install and run the software from within Windows, or boot from a floppy disk. Program details vary by drive manufacturer, so read the directions carefully.

3. Go Under the Hood

Turn off your PC and unplug it before you remove the cover. And before you begin working under your PC's hood, put on an antistatic wrist strap (available from local electronics supply stores) and clip it to a grounded metal object.

A. Find a space for the new drive. Most PC cases have an easily accessible space for your new drive, usually right next to the existing drive.

B. Find the drive. Note where the red wire of the ribbon cable meets the drive (Pin 1) so you can connect the new cable correctly. (Hint: Mark the location with masking tape.)

C. Find a free power connector. You need power for your new drive. If your power supply has no free connector, get a Y-adaptor that turns one connection into two.

D. Use the new cable. Current drives require an 80-wire cable for best performance, and most drives ship with one. Remove the old cable and replace it with the new one (the connectors are compatible).

4. Set the Drive Jumpers

Usually, you'll install your new drive as the second drive on the primary IDE channel (the same channel where the current drive is connected). When two IDE drives are connected to a single cable, one must be designated 'Master', and the other 'Slave'. The jumper settings are printed on the drives. If you'll be using the new disk as your PC's boot drive, set its jumper to Master, and change the jumper settings on your old drive to Slave. (Check the included installation software to make sure that it supports copying of the data over to your new hard disk.)

5. Put It All Back Together

Install the new drive. Attach the two connectors on the new ribbon cable to the old and new hard disks. (It doesn't matter which of the connectors goes where.) Make sure the red wire on the cables goes to Pin 1. Also make sure the other end of the cable is securely connected to the primary IDE connector on the motherboard, and that it's correctly connected so that the red wire on the cable goes to Pin 1 on the motherboard connector. (A secondary IDE connector is used for things like your CD-ROM and CD-RW drives.) Plug in the power connectors to both drives. Double-check all your

Continued on page 2 - See Upgrade

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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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.

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