

MID-CITIES PC USERS' GROUP

November 2000 Newsletter



MEETING NOTICE

by: George Miner

When: Tuesday, November 14th,
7:15 PM

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

Program: How computer viruses are getting around and what to do to protect ourselves will be our topic this month. Steve Turner has received Microsoft's scare package, "Mindshare" from their users support group and has been finding numerous viruses on his customers' computers as well as his own. Steve will share what he has learned.

Inside the W&B

by Pat Hester

Some interesting sites you might want to bookmark.

To buy US Treasury Bills direct (currently paying over 6%) go to:
www.publicdebt.treas.gov

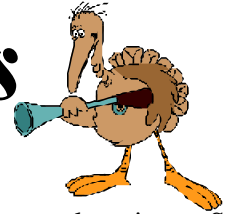
To find interesting stock tips or books try using phrases on the site:
www.tveyes.com

For insight on stock market pickers (analyst) go to:
www.moneycentral.msn.com
choose site map, insight and strategy lab.

To get the latest bank rates go to:
www.bankrate.com

Quips N Tips

by Rick Howell



Well, it looks as though the RAMBUS / DDR DRAM is over for now with DDR DRAM taking the prize.

Back in 1998 and 1999, Rambus was the shining star for future computer systems, and Intel laid plans to use Rambus for all their future offerings. Meanwhile, AMD announced they would stick with DDR (Double Data Rate) DRAM. When design came to reality, manufacturers found that Rambus was difficult to produce, thereby making the prices increase prohibitively. With AMD gaining market share on Intel, Intel's CEO Craig Barrett admitted that Intel had made a "mistake" relying so heavily on Rambus and announced that future Intel offerings would utilize the DDR DRAM memory chips. AMD has poised itself to production of DDR DRAM capable chipsets and plans to take advantage of 266 MHz bus speeds to increase processor throughput. They have already announced development of 1.5 GHz chipsets and are poised to beat Intel to the market by a wide margin. Their future's so bright they oughtta wear shades.

Watch for Compaq's siPac Pocket PC to make a splash on the wireless scene next year. Compaq announced a collaboration with Microsoft (an upcoming Seattle-based company) to concentrate on providing software to make it easier for Compaq's PDA to connect to corporate networks. Compaq's executives feel that it is important for a corporation's employees to have access to intranets

and email from remotelocations. So, at least they can check their email while they're finalizing that deal at the topless bar.

Artificial Intelligence has held a fascination for me ever since I worked in industrial robotics back in the eighties. It is amazing to be able to write a program which controls the movement of a powerful machine. Industrial robots really are simple machines which go from point A to point B, perform a specific task, go on to point C, perform another task, ad infinitum, until the program is complete. They work on a database of location coordinates and just follow programmed instructions. More advanced programs can do conditional responses. Go from point A to point B unless X is greater than Y, in which case go directly to point C. Conditional responses are the basis of artificial intelligence and the reason computers have become so useful in our daily lives.

Neural networks are information databases that are interrogated by search engines which provide data based on conditional responses. Provide answer A unless X is greater than Y, in which case provide answer B. One of the greatest information databases that has ever been compiled is now available to everyone and is commonly called the Internet. The Internet will eventually contain the entire written works of mankind. The key to interrogating all this data will be the programming of a search engine which will be able to discriminate

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Response to Favorite Web Sites

by Rick Howell

The following is an email that Sheryllynn Roberts sent to me this month in response to my pleas for favorite web sites which most of you seem to be ignoring. Sheryllynn, you came through again.

Hi Rick--

I'm sure that other people will be submitting favorite pages, but there are a few in case you need filler...

Sheryllynn

"The Texas Find Your Incumbent (FYI) system provides information about elected officials and the districts they represent. Information includes districts of the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives, Congress (Texas delegation, U.S. House of Representatives), and Texas State Board of Education (SBOE).
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/fyi/fyi.htm>

Historic Events & Birthdates that occurred on a SELECTED day of the year
<http://www.scopesys.com/anyday/>

"the world's largest online encyclo-

pedia of graphic symbols!" searchable by graphic description or name
<http://www.symbols.com/>

hurricane information, satellite photos, news
<http://www.usatoday.com/weather/hurricane/whur0.htm>

state symbols: do you know the state dance or seashell?
<http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/lbb/members/reports/factbook/Symbols.htm>

"VCR Repair Instruction"
<http://www.fixer.com/>

"The MacTutor History of Mathematics archive": some different reading from the university of St. Andrews
<http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/history/>

Search tips of the day:

There are 2 types of search technology for finding internet sites: one is the directory, such as "yahoo", which lists sites in and from alphabetical order. (yahoo stands for "yet another hierarchical organizational order") the other is an

engine such as "altavista", which crawls through the internet and finds matches to keywords. Alta vista has code robots called spiders that it employs to crawl across the web looking for pages and links to add to its database. When searching for a phrase, enclose it in quotes, for example: "texas wildflowers", so that the phrase will be searched for, not the individual words. If your search is not working, try different words for the same idea, for example: instead of "gun control", use "firearm legislation". Also, read a page about a related topic, and look for words in the article, for example: instead of "horseshoeing" an article on smithing uses the word "farrier". Use a "natural query" search such as "ask jeeves": www.aj.com, to type your question as you would speak it, then choose from the results it thinks you might be looking for.

According to searchenginewatch.com there are between 500 and 600 million pages open to the public. There are many million more that are private, and are not available to search results.

Quips...continued from Page 1

between the bad data and the good data and will be able to provide you with exactly the data you want in the format you want it.

With voice synthesis and voice recognition software developing as quickly as we have seen lately, it will be only a matter of a small amount of time before computers are able to recognize a verbal request for information and answer in the synthesized voice of your choice. "Computer, how long will the lithium crystals last at warp 9?"

Speaking of artificial intelligence, I recently learned about a new book which is going to the top of my "required reading" list for the year.

"Robo sapiens: Evolution of a New Species" by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio is an interesting look at the future where human and robot merge to become a hybrid species. Gets my attention. The book is published by MIT Press and retails at \$29.95. There goes my lunch money for next week.

Recently, there has been a lot of discussion about the Clinton administration and repression of second amendment rights, namely the right to keep and bear arms. If you want an update on this, go to www.guncite.com and check out the wealth of information there. However, there has recently been a court decision which infringes on our first amendment rights, freedom of speech.

It seems that 2600 Magazine, one of my favorite publications, published the code which would defeat the copy protection scheme on DVDs, thereby making it possible to make copies of DVD movies. Seems the Motion Picture Association of America, the MPAA, filed suit in a California court and won a lower court decision against the magazine, forcing them to cease and desist publication of the aforementioned code. 2600 has filed an appeal in federal court. This bears watching. If you want the complete story, go to www.2600.com and check out the details. They might even sell you a T-shirt with the code printed on it.

See you all at the meeting.

Moments From Your Possible Near Future

By Timothy Everingham of APCUG

With us increasingly in an interconnected world, you may experience this in the near future:

1. Just before you head off to work in the morning, you start your dishwasher.

2. During your commute, a plate falls down onto the heating coil of your dishwasher. When the drying cycle begins, the plate starts to burn & melt. The dishwasher picks up the burning plate via its chemical sniffer & heat sensors. It then shuts off the heating coil and discharges its Co2 fire extinguisher. It then detects there is no more fire danger.

3. The dishwasher then uses its Internet connection to enter a voice paging service. The dishwasher then calls you on your cellular phone and informs you what it detected, its actions, that it detects no further danger, and is on standby mode. It leaves a copy of this message on your voice mail.

4. As you are walking from your car to your office, you get a call from an appliance repair place you have a service contract with. The service rep informs you that they have received an email from your

dishwasher informing them of what occurred to it this morning. They activated the netcam inside the dishwasher and saw the burned plate on the heating coil. She says they should come out to service the dishwasher (remove the plate, clean off the heating coil, and check for damage to the dishwasher's components). You say you will get back to her in a few minutes.

5. When you reach your office, you log onto your dishwasher's website. It confirms what the dishwasher's voice mail said earlier. You also activate the dishwasher's netcam and see the burnt plate.

6. You then call back the service rep and inform her to go ahead and send someone to fix the dishwasher. You are logged into your home security system's website, so you give the service rep a code received from the website that will allow someone to enter your house only that afternoon.

7. That afternoon you receive a voice mail from your home security system that the repair person has arrived.

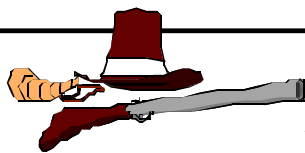
8. Later on you receive an instant message from your dishwasher that

repairs have been completed and asks you whether you want to start it again to wash the dishes you put in this morning. You reply yes and it does so.

9. A few minutes later you receive another voice mail from your home security system that the repair person has left. It also informs you that it was informed by the refrigerator and kitchen cabinets that the repair person took a bottle of soda and some cookies. Thinking that it was probably ok, you don't do anything about it. You log onto your grocery home delivery website and add more soda and cookies to your current order.

10. When you arrive home you find the dishwasher repaired and the dishes washed.

11. About an hour after you arrive home the grocery delivery truck arrives with the items you have ordered, including the soda and cookies. You could have had them put them in the kitchen cabinets and refrigerator while you were at work, but you like to do this yourself.



GET BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

Excerpt taken from Yahoo Internet Life December 2000

For a unique way to select your next read, head over to **Book Forager** - (branching-out.net/forager). Instead of asking you to browse by author or genre, the site presents you with 12

controls that let you determine what kind of book you're interested in by choosing points along sliding scales that range from Happy to Sad, Easy to Demanding. Further choices let you specify the kind of characters, plots,

and settings you prefer. It sounds odd, but it works.

**Happy
Thanksgiving**

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 notification 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: 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 hardcopy 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:

7½in. x 9in.	Full Page	\$40.00
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