

User Friendly



**April
2003**

**Next Meeting
April 16, 2003**

Barry Robbins Reviews

Via Voice

A Voice Recognition Program

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Palmia Computer Club



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User Friendly

a publication for members of the Palmia Computer Club & the Palmia Community.

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Guidelines

Articles (1) must be submitted to the Managing Editor no later than the 10th day prior to the month of publication; (2) should be no longer than 1,000 to 1,500 words (approximately three columns), although longer articles may be published; (3) may be edited by staff for clarity, spelling and grammar, and should be relevant to its readers. The choice of articles to be included in any issue is solely the prerogative of the Editorial Staff.

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Computer Club Special Interest Groups

SIGs meet from 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. on the specified Fridays unless noted otherwise:

- 1st Friday** - Computer HardwareRichard Jenkins
(*Notice: New SIG Leader*)
- 2nd Friday** - Email and the InternetJerry Moore
- 3rd Friday** - MS Office (Word, Excel)Barry Robbins
(*Notice: Special Time 4 to 5:30 P.M.*)
- 4th Friday** - Photo Editing & Scanning Don Yenche

There is also a "HELP" SIG! This SIG is intended for beginners to answer your basic questions relating to computers (This is not a class). It meets on the first, third and fourth Mondays of each month at 10:00 A.M. The SIG leader is Joe Lebovitz.

Contacting Board Members and Officers

All Board members and officers are available for help or information via their email addresses as follows:

Barry Robbins, President - drdisk@cox.net
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Please Help

Your User Friendly newsletter needs a back-up, or co-editor, to Ali Tabikh who is not in good health. This fine publication must continue to serve everyone. So many members rely on it to stay up-to-date on computer developments. This is a learning opportunity for someone willing to help as well as a fine way to help the Club. **Please call Ali at 699-1962 or Herbert Sax at 455-1315.**

The Palmia Computer Club meets in the Palmia Ballroom the second Wednesday of each month, except July and August, at 7:30 p.m. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. for Q&A and socializing. For visitors from outside our Palmia community the address is: 21455 Monterey, Mission Viejo, CA 92692. The parking lot is just past the gate on the left side of Monterey. Telephone: 949-472-5075

From the President's Desk

By Barry Robbins

Thanks to Herb Sax for making such a fantastic presentation on TurboTax. It was obvious that he did a lot of preparation for his presentation. He made it a lot easier for me when I prepared my Mom's tax return on TurboTax. This is the first time I used it, but because of Herb's presentation, I was able to anticipate the questions and it was a simple job to complete the tax return.

Our April meeting will feature yours truly, making a presentation on IBM's ViaVoice. "You speak and it types." I will demonstrate how to train the software to recognize your voice, and how easy it is to use the program. ViaVoice will also make it easier to surf the web, as all you need to do is tell it where you want to go.

Our May meeting will feature a speaker from LinkSys talking to us about networking. This should prove to be a very interesting meeting. In June we will have a social evening with lots of door prizes and a lot of fun. Be sure to mark your calendar for June 12th.

I was shopping at COSTCO the other day and picked up a software program called SpamKiller, published by McAfee. SpamKiller monitors your incoming email and "kills" the spam. You then have the option of reading the spam or just deleting it. You can also send an error message to the spam sender that makes them think that your email address is no longer valid. The program really works, and costs only \$6.99, after rebate.

We still need your help. Ali Tabikh is still looking for someone to assist him with publishing the User Friendly. If you are interested in helping Ali, please contact him at 699-1962.

The PCC board of directors is looking into the possibility of issuing User Friendly as an e-letter, saving the cost of publishing hard copy. You would be able to print your copy on your own printer. If we have your email address, we have sent you information on this. If you have not responded, please do so. If we do not have your email address, please write to us at <palmia@palmia.org>, and let us know how you would feel about not receiving the User Friendly in hard copy.

Just a reminder that our SIGS are held each Friday afternoon. For more information visit our website at <www.palmia.org>. Also Joe Lebovitz moderates a SIG each Monday AM. Bring him your questions and computer problems and he will help you find the answers. Just a reminder: from 6:30 PM to 7:15 PM prior to our monthly meetings, we have a Q & A session. Bring us your questions and we will try to answer them.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our April 9th meeting. It will start promptly at 7:30 PM.

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Acknowledgement

The Editorial Committee wishes to thank all those who contibuted articles and /or other assistance to the production of this issue of the newsletter.

Please keep up the good work.

What the Heck's a Megapixel?

Answers To Common Digital Camera Questions

By Jennifer Farwell

Smart Computing - November 2002 • Vol.8 Issue 11

When they first appeared in the late 1990s, consumer-grade digicams (digital cameras) were viewed largely as tools to create images for the Web, where image quality and size are not major concerns. Most early digicams lacked the technology to reproduce colors and fine details accurately. The images they produced often lacked contrast and were generally unsuitable for print reproduction. Even the much more expensive, professional-grade cameras could not compare in quality with standard film cameras, and many photographers dismissed digital cameras as worthless.

In the past few years, however, the technology has changed dramatically, and you can find models that rival quality film cameras for less than \$1,000. Cameras that will satisfy most consumer requirements are available for less than \$500 (and often much less). Nevertheless, as with most consumer electronics, price does not always guarantee top quality, and the process of selecting a digicam can be a minefield for the uninformed. In this article, we will answer the questions that consumers should be asking when they purchase digicams.

Q: A friend has a 1.3-megapixel camera that he is very happy with, but many of the newer cameras are 3 megapixels or higher. What is a megapixel and how many do I need?

A: Megapixel is a term, like megabyte, that uses the prefix "mega" to mean one million of something, in this case pixels. Pixels are the smallest parts of a digital image that a computer printer, display, or camera can control. A 1.3-megapixel camera uses approximately 1.3 million pixels to capture and reconstruct the image present in the camera's viewfinder when you take a shot. A 3-megapixel camera uses approximately 3 million pixels to capture the same image. Cameras that use more pixels to capture an image provide more detail and can replicate more depth of color. A 1.3-megapixel camera will reproduce close-range shots, such as portraits, very well. For distance shots, such

as landscapes, you'll be happier with a 2 or 3 megapixel camera.

The number of pixels in an image also has a direct effect on the size at which you can reproduce it. 1.3-megapixel shots make great 4 x 6 inch prints; for 8 x 10 inch prints you'll want 2 or 3 megapixel shots.

A digital camera with a true optical zoom is easy to spot because its lens moves in and out of the camera body. The Olympus has an optical zoom; the HP does not.

Additionally, some cameras capture a lower number of megapixels and then use software to increase the final number of megapixels. The resolution captured is the optical resolution. The final resolution is referred to as the interpolated resolution. When shopping, remember that this trick does not always result in good picture quality.

Q: In addition to megapixels, I keep hearing cameras discussed in terms of resolution. Is that different from megapixels?

A: Resolution is the total number of pixels in an image, broken down by height and width. Megapixel is a unit of measurement for the resolution.

For example, a 1.3-megapixel camera produces an image that measures 1,280 pixels by 960 pixels. $1,280 \times 960$ equals 1,228,800 pixels, which rounds up to 1.3 megapixels. A 3-megapixel camera produces an image that measures 2,048 x 1,536 pixels (3,145,728 pixels).

Resolution also refers to the number of pixels per inch used to reproduce an image for print or online use. Web images, for example, generally have resolutions of 72 dpi (dots per inch, which is the same as pixels per inch). Digital images should be at least 200dpi, and commercial printing requires 300dpi. To determine how large an image can be and still retain quality, you can divide resolution by dpi. For example, a 1,280 x 960 pixel image at 200dpi will print at 6.4 x 4.8 inches (which is how we arrived at 4 x 6 inches for a 1.3-megapixel camera).

The Truth About Mail-in Rebates

By Roger A. Poverny

Mail-in rebates are a bonanza for retail computer stores: They can advertise a very low sales price (or even a free price, after mail-in rebates), and then charge buyers of these so-called bargains a higher-than-normal sales price. It brings in the customers who are looking for good deals, and who may purchase other items while they are in the store. It means higher sales figures for the retailer since these mail-in rebates are underwritten by the manufacturers, and they cost the retailers nothing. It also creates a cadre of unhappy customers. Why? Consider this: according to the Wall Street journal, up to 95% of people forget to claim the rebate. They end up paying more for the product than they would have without a rebate. For those who make the claim, there are a variety of reasons why the claims go unpaid. Some of these reasons are detailed below.

Let's start with this premise: manufacturers don't want to rebate money to you, so they put a number of obstacles in your way. Sometimes the rebate forms are hidden in the store or you have to ask the cashier for a copy. The rebate form lists the submittal requirements in great complicated detail so that a simple non-compliance error on your part will void your claim. You must include a copy of your purchase receipt (sometimes with the purchased item circled or underlined) along with the original UPC code from the package. Be careful here, as some packages have multiple UPC codes with different numbers. Then you must mail the completed rebate form, with inclusions, to a specified address (usually a fulfillment house hired to handle the rebate). There is always a window of opportunity; i.e. an "offer expiration date" and a "postmark before" date. Most mail-in forms tell you to expect your rebate in eight to ten weeks. Very seldom will a rebate check arrive by the promised waiting period. You are forced to call their 800 number (although some don't have a toll-free num-

ber) to find out what the holdup is. The manufacturer is counting on you to forget that a rebate promise date has passed. If you do remember to call them, this is generally when the excuses start. Typical excuses are: "We didn't receive your UPC code or register receipt," "We never received your letter," "You didn't complete your rebate form properly," "The offer has expired ... or is no longer funded by the manufacturer." The fulfillment houses are experts at not paying, and as a matter of

According to the Wall Street journal, up to 95% of people forget to claim the rebate. They end up paying more for the product than they would have without a rebate.

fact are hired by some manufacturers just because they are so tough. Many times you will get a postcard, not a letter, saying you were denied a rebate. Postcards are easy to lose or throw away in the trash, which is why many rebate checks are mailed in the form of a postcard. They don't even look like checks! Most people will stop trying once they have been rejected. The manufacturers count on this. At a FRY's the other day, a customer relations representative pointed at two 4-drawer filing cabinets and said they were full of customer complaints about rebates. That's eight drawers of unhappy customers, and they represent only that five percent (according to The Wall Street Journal) who actually sent in their rebate forms. After all is said and done, probably 2% of the customers receive a rebate check. Manufacturers and retailers make more money from us when the items they are selling have mail-in rebates, so it doesn't seem likely that the practice will end any time soon. The number of items using rebates appears to be rising exponentially, and the customer is the loser. It is just plain unfair. How can we fight back?

Fighting Back

There are two ways to fight back: (1) Politically, through our Legislatures, Better Business Bureaus, Federal Trade Commission, Retail Store Managers, etc. We can write letters or call and complain; (2) The second method is to make it so costly for the manufacturers to offer these rebates that

Continued from page 5

they will abandon the practice. We can do this by making sure we get every one of the offered rebates. If you follow the directions outlined below, you will get every one.

1. Make sure you have the rebate form before you leave the store. Check the form to be sure you fall within the offering's dates. Also ask the cashier for a second copy of the purchase receipt.

2. As soon as you get home, remove the UPC code from the container or wrapping before you throw the packaging away. If you intend to try out the product first to make sure you want to keep it, and don't want to remove the UPC code yet in case you want to return it, see #7 below.

3. Read the form carefully so that you will comply exactly with their requirements. Read it a second time before you fill it in. Don't forget to circle or underline the item on the receipt if required to do so.

4. Make copies of everything you send, including the UPC code. This is where most people falter since they don't have copy machines. They set it aside to take to work or to a copy store and forget about it. But, most of us have scanners! Use them to make your copies. Even most fax machines will work.

5. Staple together all the pieces: receipt, UPC code, rebate form. Then they can't say they were not with your submittal, or must have fallen out of the envelope.

6. Mark the mailing date on your copy. Also mark the date when the waiting period ends, 8 to ten weeks later.

7. This next step will help you to remember. Go to: <www.memotome.com> (memo to me) and sign up for their free e-mail reminder service. Ask them to send you an e-mail when the rebate check was promised. If you are trying out a product prior to sending in the rebate form, ask for a reminder in a couple of weeks.

8. If you haven't gotten your check after the promised time, call the telephone number listed on your copy of the rebate form. Try to talk to a live person. Tell them the waiting period has passed and insist that you be paid. Keep on insisting if you get the brush-off. Ask to speak to a supervisor. Mark the names of those you talked to, the dates and excuses on your rebate copy. If necessary, send another copy of your submittal in case

they deny receipt of all submitted items.

9. If all else fails, go to the retail store where you purchased the item. Bring your paperwork and insist that they do whatever is necessary to get you the rebate check.

Roger A. Poverny is on the Board of Directors of The Users' Group Network (TUGNET) in Granada Hills, California. This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization to which this user group belongs.

Ed. Note: Go to <www.memotome.com> and sign up for free reminders. This is a great utility, particularly for us senior citizens.

Computer Classes

They are free



The Mission Viejo Library is offering computer Classes starting on March 21 through May 16, 2003.

These classes are free and cover a wide variety of subjects. A flyer with full description of the classes offered is available at the library:

100 Civic Center, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 (or log on www.cmvl.org).

Sign up is at the Library Technology Center or by calling 949-830-7100, extension 2251.

Famous Quotes

A friend who is far away is sometimes much nearer than one who is at hand. Is not the mountain far more awe-inspiring and more clearly visible to one passing through the valley than to those who inhabit the mountain?

Kahlil Gibran

Product Review of Alpha Five, Version 5 Database

By Art Green

In order to fully appreciate how powerful the use of a database management system (DBMS) can be, a quick general overview of databases and their related jargon is provided. First, a database can be defined simply as an automated file cabinet. Databases contain information that has been organized into meaningful records by logically grouping and storing them. A database, sometimes called a "table" is a file containing records and fields. A record is one complete set of information for a single contact, i.e., a person, place or thing in a contact database. The fields or columns are the categories of that information.

Alpha Five is a relational database manager which allows information within its tables to be shared. As such, database users can enter data quickly, easily and more accurately. They can review data sorted by any field and see records that meet specific designated criteria. By creating a query, users can instruct Alpha Five to locate the specific record or records that meet certain established conditions. Generating custom professional reports is also easy with Alpha Five. With Alpha Five, you can track, report and manage any information. This information could be as simple as keeping track of your personal hobby collection inventory you might own or customer tracking, invoicing and billing for your business. Alpha Five has an unlimited number of genies or wizards, and more than thirty-five templates that can help you generate databases and applications painlessly and effortlessly, without any programming knowledge.

Installation of the Alpha Five software is pretty straight forward without any problems. Each Alpha Five license allows you to install the program on one primary computer and a personal secondary portable unit, not connected to the same network. To prevent piracy, Alpha Five requires the software to be activated after a 45 day grace period. There is also a 30 day free download offer. Their website, <www.alphasoftware.com/products/av5v/overview.asp> offers more information on this and other aspects for the interested buyer. System requirements are:

WIN 98 or higher, 64mb RAM (96mb or higher recommended), a 200 MHz processor (300 MHz

or higher recommended) and 800 x 600 screen resolution.

Along with the Alpha Five full version software I received for this review, I also received a manual and CD-ROM copy of "Alpha Five Made Easy", by Susan Hussey Bush. What a godsend this was. Both of these items contain step-by-step instructions and useful tips for users at all levels, as well as practice databases. This media has already proven to be an invaluable asset to me, since I consider myself a novice user. Although I have not finished all the lessons, there is no doubt that these tools will make it easier for me to become more proficient with Alpha Five. The manual, or book only is available for \$65.00 and the CD only sells for \$55.00. A combination offer for these two items can be had for \$90.00.

If you have used MS Access you will find Alpha Five able to hold its own against this product, and more importantly it is much simpler to learn and use.

Alpha Software's award winning and cutting edge product is truly the ultimate combination of speed, ease of use and power.

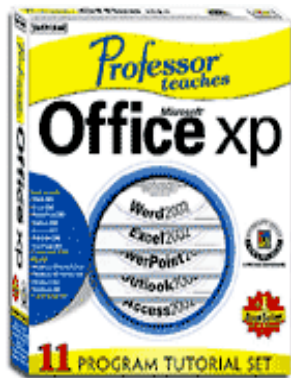
FYI, Alpha Five has a number of third party add-ons to assist you in setting up any custom application for you or your business. I was also pleased to learn that Alpha Five has both domestic and international user groups that you can lean on for help and support. They also produce a monthly newsletter to keep you updated on their product. In addition, there is an Alpha Users Forum message board that you can use for technical support.

I could not find the Alpha Five Version 5 software available at any of the local computer stores. However, a single user copy can be obtained from Alpha Software for \$349.00, as well as licenses for multiple users. Alpha Five is an ideal product for small businesses, departments of larger companies and the Small Office Home Office (SOHO) personal data management applications. A comparative analysis of the seven major databases available in the marketplace, including Alpha Five, was recently published in the January 2003 issue of "PC Magazine" and is well worth reading.

Software Product Review

By Jerry Moore

Professor Teaches Windows XP and Office XP by Individual Software Incorporated



The nice folks at Individual Software Incorporated were kind enough to send our club evaluation copies of two of their unique software products for learning Windows XP and Office XP.

The Windows XP product consists of four CD-ROM disks organized into the following categories:

- XP Home Edition & Professional
- Digital Media
- Networking Home & Small Office
- Internet Explorer 6.0

When you insert the first CD it loads automatically and presents you with menu choices to install lessons for XP Home or XP Pro, install answers or visit the <www.IndividualSoftware.com> website. One little glitch I noticed at this point was that after each choice the program terminates and you must re-insert the CD to get back to the menu choices.

Upon starting the program for XP Home, you are presented with a menu grouping the lessons into eight logical groups:

1. Windows XP Basics
2. Customizing and Using the Desktop
3. Working with Files and Folders
4. Managing Your Computer
5. Printing and Networking
6. Exploring the Internet
7. E-Mail and Instant Messaging
8. Mastering Media

Selecting any one of the groups will take you to a page that summarizes the lesson objectives, identifies the number of pages in the lesson and an estimate of the time required for completing this lesson.

Another nice feature of this software is that you can stop at any time and when you re-start, the program will remember who you are and where you left off. This means that several people can take lessons on the same computer, each proceeding at his or her own pace.

The user interface when navigating through the lessons is very well designed. On each page of the lesson you have a small window used for navigation and options and a large window that represents what you would generally see on your computer screen during this phase of the lesson. The small window also gives you the option to turn on and off both sound and text according to your preferences. Another nice feature of the small window is that it will reposition itself on the screen so it will not obscure the Windows feature that you are trying to learn.

These are not passive lessons where you just watch, listen and click. To learn basic features and capabilities, the lesson software will prompt you to perform functions in exactly the same manner as you would if you had Windows XP loaded on your computer.

Yes – That’s right! You don’t need to have Windows or Office XP loaded on your computer to use these lessons. The Professor software will run on any PC with Windows 98 or higher. This means you have the opportunity to take these lessons and become familiar with the software applications being taught before you purchase the actual programs.

Another feature I really like about the Professor software is that each progressive lesson builds upon what you have previously learned, but without giving you too much new information to digest at one time.

As with just about any software these days, the program is not perfect and a few minor flaws still exist. There was a page in the middle of the Windows XP Basics lesson where I was supposed to click on a scroll bar and then select a specific entry. No matter what I tried, the program kept politely telling me to try again until I skipped to the next lesson.

Over the course of the last several years, I have had occasion to evaluate dozens of computer based training programs. These Professor Teaches programs are definitely in the top 10%. For anyone who would like to learn more about Windows or Office XP, I highly recommend these products and give them a rating of ★★★★★ .

Professor Teaches Windows XP can be purchased online for \$19.95; Professor Teaches Office XP for \$29.95.

Web Surfer

By Jerry Moore

TURBO TAX

If you are one of the millions who prepare your taxes using TurboTax, you should be aware that they have implemented a product activation scheme this year to prevent unauthorized copying of their software. Here's what one unhappy customer has to say in a letter to the CEO of Intuit, the parent company:

Mr. Stephen Bennett
Intuit Inc.
PO Box 7850
Mountain View, CA 94039-7850

December 17, 2002

Dear Mr. Bennett;

I am a long time Intuit customer, previously using QuickBooks, and currently Quicken Premier Home and Business and TurboTax Premier Home and Business. I write to file a formal complaint regarding the product activation implemented in TurboTax 2002.

I have no problem with product activation, the need for it, or your inherent right to protect Intuit's intellectual property. I do have a problem with the implementation of product activation, in that TurboTax installs hidden directories on my primary drive, and installs services within WinXP, without my express permission or knowledge.

The service cannot be disabled, or removed to my knowledge. The service is installed as Macrovision RTS Service (SafeCast Windows NT), and runs continuously. The display name of the service is 'C-DillaCdaC11BA' which runs the file 'CDAC11BA.EXE'. I can disable the service and 'CDAC11BA.EXE' manually, but it restarts when I run TT2002. In my view there is no reason for 'CDAC11BA.EXE' to be running when I am not using TT2002.

My other complaint is that there is no reference in your licensing agreement to the installation, or purpose of this service. You have modified my system configuration without my express permission or knowledge. This computer belongs to me, not to you or Intuit. It is my express

belief that software that is installed under the guise of another program, in this case TT2002, constitutes spyware or malware.

I have no idea what this program does, or what it's intended to do, and would appreciate an explanation. If your program design started 'CDAC11BA.EXE', and then terminated the file when TT2002 was closed, I could probably live with that. However, having a program running constantly is annoying, especially when I don't know its purpose.

Now, I'm not going to scrap my Intuit products. For this tax year I'm tied in to Quicken and TurboTax, but I am going to start looking at available options for future purchases.

Yours truly,
/s

In response to numerous other complaints from customers, Intuit has finally released a program that will allow users to remove this hidden program after you uninstall TurboTax. This program can be downloaded by going to <www.turbotax.com> and clicking on the "C-Dilla" link; however they don't make it very easy to find.

HTTP://WWW.PALMIA.ORG

Several new items on your Computer Club website have been recently added that you may find of interest.

1. Click on GAMES and then click on the link to the MindReader game. This is a fascinating application of the Macromedia Flash player. If your web browser returns a blank page when you visit this site, go to <www.macromedia.com/downloads/> to download the free flash player.

2. One of our residents has developed a great website presenting a virtual tour of the Palmia Community. From the Computer Club home page, click on COMMUNITY and then click on one of the palm trees at the top of this page to visit this site.

3. Would you like to watch a 7-1/2 minute movie showing our war fighters at work in Afghanistan? From the Computer Club home page, click on BROADBAND and then click on the picture at the bottom of the page.

Tech Mart

Lexar's Media JumpDrive

It appears that the 3.5" floppy is on its way out. Macintosh has already eliminated the floppy drives from every new model for some time. The big deal with the original 3.5" floppy disk was it would fit inside a shirt pocket.

Now, here comes JumpDrive from Lexar <www.lexarmedia.com>. It fits anywhere - in a pocket, purse, or on a lanyard around your neck.



JumpDrive is a small, portable flash memory-based storage device. Built from the ground up using Lexar Media's proprietary high-speed controller technology, it's the sort of built-in USB connectivity that's found in all of their CompactFlash memory. The JumpDrive is available in 64MB and 128MB capacities with a manufacturer's suggested list price of \$79.99 and \$119.99, respectively. Since the 128MB model holds as much data as 90 floppy disks, the possibilities for its use are vast, allowing you to store MP3 music, PowerPoint presentations, documents, digital photographs, and more. JumpDrive has a built-in data write protection light that blinks while files are being written to or transferred from the device. It also features a recessed write-protect switch to guard against accidental data erasure. Since it's USB mass storage-compliant, the JumpDrive is a true plug-and-play device for most computer operating systems, including Microsoft Windows 2000, Me, XP, or Mac OS 8.6, 9, or X. (A driver for Windows 98 computer users can be downloaded from Lexar's website.) To use it, simply plug the JumpDrive directly into the USB port found on most recent computers and use it to copy files back and forth between your Windows and Power Macintosh computers. It takes no additional steps, and the write/copy operations are much faster than a slow floppy disk, making it the ultimate sneaker-net tool.

Samsung Electronics ITCAM-7

Samsung's "Gadget" camcorder, the ITCAM-7, is the first to use a hard drive instead of tape or optical disc. It also doubles as an MP3 player and a portable hard drive.

But it leaves one with questions, such as the obvious: Why only 1.5GB? That's about the capacity of a single-sided 3-inch DVD-RAM and more than one hour of MPEG-4 insuper fine mode, Samsung says. Still, there are far more spacious 1.8-inch drives out there. In any case, the Gadget's tiny size should help it compete, as should its low price of \$499 when it debuts in May. The Gadget comes with USB 2.0 and, weirdly, a Memory Stick slot. With the 1-inch Hitachi Global Storage Technologies (formerly IBM) Microdrive getting a revamp to 4GB this fall, wouldn't a CompactFlash slot have made more sense?



Tips and Tidbits

By Barry Robbins

Using Your Own Icons in Outlook Express

You can easily add icons and other graphics to an Outlook Express message. You can even add animated GIFs if you like. Just create a new message and then click in the message area. Choose Insert | Picture. When the Picture dialog box opens, click Browse. Now locate a picture file and double-click its icon.

You can get some interesting Icons at <www.iconbazaar.com/>

Looking for Internet Service Providers

If you're looking for a new inexpensive, or even free ISP (Internet Service Provider), a good approach is to visit a site that lists providers for every part of the country. An excellent example of such a site is All Free ISP. Just navigate to the site,

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select your state, or telephone area code, and view the list of ISPs available to you. As you'll soon learn, not all the listed ISPs are free, but those that are not are at least inexpensive.

Visit All Free ISP at www.all-free-isp.com/

AOL Messaging

Most of us know a lot of people that use AOL and set up buddy lists, etc. for online messaging. However, you may not know that you don't have to sign up for AOL to use the messaging service.

The AOL Instant Messenger allows you to chat with family and friends on the web, and to transfer files, photos or music.

Learn more about AOL Messaging at www.aim.com/index.adp

Free Wallpaper

If you like a variety of beautiful wallpaper, you need to visit Webshots. At Webshots, you can download software that will allow you to automate your wallpaper. You can download and apply new wallpaper selected by you on a regular basis.

The wallpaper selection is large and consists of a wide variety of digital photographs. Webshots registration is free. However, there is an advanced service with additional features that you may wish to consider. Visit Webshots at <http://webshots.com/homepage.html>

Adding Addresses in Outlook Express

There are several ways to enter addresses into the Address Book from Outlook Express. First, you can simply run Outlook Express and click the Address Book icon. When the Address Book opens, you can add or delete names.

To add a new address quickly to the Address Book, you can right-click a message in the message body window and then select Add to Address Book.

Getting Around in Outlook Express

There are numerous ways to speed up your Outlook Express 6 operations. We like many of the shortcut keystrokes. However, the single one that we use most often is the one that takes us immediately to the Inbox. This keystroke is simply Ctrl + I.

What To Do With That Old PC

By Don Yenche

Stop! What you are thinking of doing may be illegal. Yes, what you do with that old PC could be illegal as well as immoral. Dumping it in the trash is a definite "no-no". Disposing of your old monitor improperly in California might cost you a whopping fine of \$25,000 and jail time. The California Environmental Protection Agency began enforcing the law that prohibits improper disposal of Cathode Ray Tubes found in computer monitors and televisions. The reason is the lead contained in these tubes has the potential of leaking into landfills contaminating our precious water supply. I heard it said that a 17" monitor can contain as much as 9 pounds of lead.

What can we do with the smaller, older, and worn out monstrosities? The first thought that might come to a resident of Palmia is – give it to the Computer Club. Before you assume the Computer Club can use your old system you should call one of the officers and verify the Club's needs and their acceptance. If they cannot use your old system here are a few ideas for recycling:

- California Integrated Waste Management Board www.ciwmb.ca.gov/electronics
- Orange County hazardous-waste collection centers www.oclandfills.com/hhwcc.htm
- Nation Recycling Coalition's electronic recycling www.nrc-recycle.org/resources/electonics.policy.html
- Goodwill Computer Works of Orange County www.ocgoodwill.org/donations/computer_donations.html
- List of California organizations that accept computer donations www.microweb.com/pepsite/Recycle/California.html

This may give you a heads up on proper disposal of that old system. Consider this: most groups such as Goodwill have guidelines on what they accept. The donation must be a Pentium II processor or better. They will not accept black-and-white monitors! Let's hope you don't still have one of those.

The guide line of computer systems is as follows:

Secretary's Message

By Ali Tabikh



The meeting was opened by President Barry Robbins at 7:30 P.M..

President Barry announced that the Board of Directors is considering a proposal to e-mail the User Friendly newsletter to members to save money. The newsletter would be viewed in color and members can load the entire publication or any part of it if they so desired. One benefit of this would be lowering of membership dues since the cost of printing, which is significant, would no longer be there.

We were reminded by the President that the annual dues are due now.

He listed the classes being offered and referred members to Sandy Hapner for further information. He also gave information about the SIG programs.

Upcoming programs will be "Via Voice" to be given in April by Barry. It is a voice recognition program, you speak and it types what you say. May

will feature Lexus peripherals for computers. The June meeting will be a social dinner.

The Club bylaws need to be amended in order to conform to the Master Association constitution that nonresidents are not allowed to be members of any Palmia organization. A motion was made to that effect and was seconded. The motion passed by show of hands to delete subsection 2, of Article 4, Section A.

Ralph Lazar gave the financial report for February, 2003.

Herbert Sax presented a good overview of Turbo Tax, showing members the ease with which they can prepare their 2002 tax return. The presentation was followed by questions and answers.

Gary Gruenewald won the cash prize in the 50-50 drawing.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 P.M..

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ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE

Whenever I can find the time, I always enjoy listening to the **Jeff Levy On Computers** radio show which is currently being broadcast on KFI AM 640 from 2-5 on Saturdays and 3-5 on Sundays. Recently, a listener called in describing a problem with a virus on his computer. He couldn't understand how a virus got on his computer since he scans for viruses once a week. As it turned out, this listener had not downloaded new virus definitions for months and Jeff explained that you are not thoroughly protected unless you check for new updates at least once or twice a week. New viruses are constantly being released out on the Internet, so please remember to frequently start your Anti-Virus program and click on Live Update to be sure you have the latest virus definitions. It only takes a few minutes and can save you hours of aggravation.

So till next month, happy (and safe) surfing!

Disposing of Old Computers Continued from page 11

Pentium – 100 to 166 MHz

Pentium II – 266 to 333 MHz

Pentium III – 600 MHz to 1.26 GHz

Pentium IV – 1.1 to 2.6 GHz

You may want to use these Pentium guidelines of acceptance for the AMD processors too. Buying and owning a computer system may be easier than disposing of one.

