

# Chesapeake PC Users Group, Inc.

# THE PRINTER

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

**Greetings everyone!**

The weather is finally starting to break and we have a lot of great meeting topics coming up. So far we don't have any meeting topics scheduled for the fall. We are open to suggestions.

### April 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting – Backup Solutions

A follow up to the system components, will be the use of backup solutions for your data. We will discuss external storage and off-site solutions. We will also discuss the terminology of backup software. My primary recommendation is that people choose a service such as Carbonite and backup their data off-site. It is simply too easy to lose data stored in your home or business.

### May 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting – Transfer your VHS video to DVD

This topic was mentioned several times and Kathy Walker has stepped up to the plate. She will demonstrate how she transfers her old VHS

video to DVD using her PC. More details will be forthcoming.

### June 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting – System Components: Video Graphics cards/GPU

In our continuous series on various systems components, we will discuss the video card. This component will make a lot of difference in the performance of your PC going forward. Windows 7 and future operating systems will take advantage of the Graphical Processing Unit (GPU) for overall system throughput. Individual programs are also taking advantage of the GPU as well. These programs include the next versions of web browsers (Internet Explorer 9 and FireFox 4) to display web video, Adobe products, and some productivity software as well. The GPU is the easiest way to increase system performance.

*I hope to see you at the upcoming meetings!*

*Michael*

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## Browser Wars Intensify With Release of IE9, Firefox 4 - Part 1

by  
*Ira Wilsker*

### WEBSITES:

<http://www.mozilla.com>

<http://www.microsoft.com/ie>

<http://www.beautyoftheweb.com>

I have made it no secret that Microsoft's Internet Explorer has not been my favorite browser. While it is integrated at the system level with all recent versions of Windows (except in Europe), Internet Explorer (IE) has had a reputation for being slow, bloated, insecure, and lacking many of the enhanced and improved features of its feisty competitors, such as Firefox, Google's Chrome, Apple's Safari (Windows developed browser known as Mosaic had a near monopoly, with Netscape appearing as a potential

*cont'd on Page 3*

## Browser Wars - cont'd

unnecessary warnings on reputable files that are downloaded, while showing severe warnings for downloads that may have a high degree of risk. The Smartscreen Filter also includes anti-malware protection that helps protect the computer from malware and other malicious software that may enter the computer through the browser. This feature is smart, in that it will either block an entire malicious website, or have a "surgical block" that can block purloined pages on an otherwise legitimate website, without blocking the entire website. Smartscreen Filter is integrated with the download manager previously mentioned, providing some protection from dangerous downloads. Based on the threat level, some downloads may be immediately blocked, while others will present the user with an appropriate alert giving the user the choice to delete, run, or save the questionable program or file.

Internet Explorer 9 is a very good choice for users of Windows 7, with its enhanced and optimized features that work with Windows 7, as well as its greatly improved performance, safety, and security features. While lacking some of the "bells and whistles" available with Windows 7, Internet Explorer 9 will offer Vista users increased performance and safety as well. Windows XP users cannot use IE9 as it is incompatible with XP, and must continue to use IE8 or an alternative browser, such as Firefox.

Next week, in Part 2, I will discuss the features and advantages of the newly released Firefox 4, and compare them to Internet Explorer 9. In a future column I will be evaluating Google's newly released Chrome 10, and Opera 11. Hold on; the browser wars are heating up as some strong contenders are in the fight.



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## Browser Wars - cont'd

competitor. Not to be left out in the cold, Microsoft decided to get into the browser business in 1995 with its Internet Explorer utilizing code licensed from Mosaic, and included with OEM versions of Windows 95, and Microsoft Plus! for Windows 95. Mosaic, which I personally used for several years, was phased out as Internet Explorer and Netscape fought it out for consumer acceptance and dominance in the browser market.

Netscape had some success becoming the dominant browser in terms of market share in the late 1990's, and then declined as Microsoft encouraged computer stores and internet service providers (ISPs) to give away countless copies of IE, while Netscape depended on sales revenue in order to survive. This behavior by Microsoft resulted in a successful antitrust suit by Netscape against Microsoft, but the decision was too late to save Netscape. It was very difficult for the commercial product Netscape, produced by the Netscape Communications Corporation, to compete against the well-financed Internet Explorer being given away for free by Microsoft. AOL purchased Netscape, but did not actively pursue its development, discontinuing it in 2007, and releasing its last security patch in 2008 (source: Wikipedia). In 1998, Netscape released most of the code base for Netscape Communicator under an open source license, meaning that anyone could develop software based on the open source code. Mozilla was a code name used by Netscape for its Netscape Communicator software in development, and that code became the basis for the now popular Firefox browser, which owes its birth to that early Mozilla code.

Now in the spring of 2011, the browser wars continue with the almost concurrent releases of Internet Explorer 9, Firefox 4, and Google's Chrome 10. Despite the clout of the powerhouse Microsoft, the alternative browsers are reducing the market share of IE. According to a recent

article in USA Today (March 16, 2011 edition), citing a report by Net Applications, Internet Explorer's market share has dropped to 57% of the browser market, with Firefox a distant second with 22%. Chrome, being heavily promoted by the giant Google and its vocal group of users is third at 11%, followed by Apple's Safari with 6%, and the feisty European product, Opera, taking 2% of the browser market. While there are some lesser known browsers in use, some of which are technically excellent, these five browsers make up about 98% of the market.

### Discover Internet Explorer 9

Internet Explorer 9 features

A more beautiful web

Fast

Performance improvements

Clean

New Tab page

Notification Bar

One Box

Pinned Sites

Tab enhancements

Web-focused browsing

Windows 7 integration

Trusted

ActiveX Filtering

Add-on Performance Adviser

Compatibility view

Cross-site scripting filter

Domain highlighting

Download Manager



All-around fast

Fast and responsive web experiences for Windows.



Focused on your websites

The new browser makes any website shine.



Seamless with Windows 7

Pinned Sites, Jump Lists, and more—it all works together.



One Box

Go to a web address or start a search—all from the same place.



Pinned Sites

Get to your favorite sites in one click.



SmartScreen Filter

Built-in protection helps keep you safer online.

Internet Explorer 9 is now being heavily promoted by Microsoft as the browser of choice optimized for Windows 7, but also runs well on Vista (not all enhanced IE9 features will work on Vista). Both 32 and 64 bit versions are available for free download from Microsoft ([microsoft.com/ie](http://microsoft.com/ie)). Sadly, Internet Explorer 9 will not run on Windows XP, and unless there is a change of heart at Microsoft, IE 8 will be the last version of Microsoft's browser that will run on the now discontinued Windows XP. According to Microsoft, there are "9 reasons to get Internet Explorer 9". The first reason for upgrading (or switching) to IE9 is speed; according to published

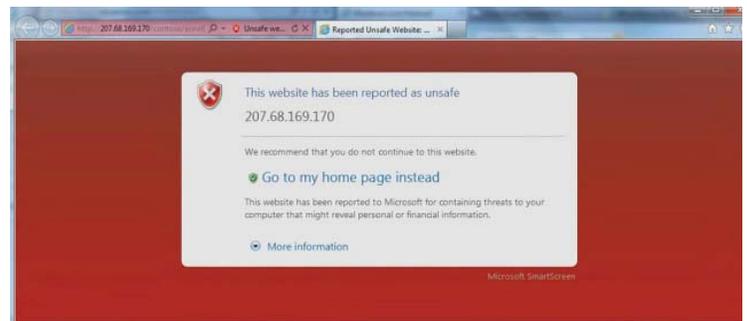
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results, IE9 is up to six times faster than IE8 because it utilizes hardware acceleration (available in most newer computers) to load and display web pages. IE9 is less cluttered and more visually appealing by minimizing the number of controls, only having the most basic controls displayed in the browser. The new version allows the user to “Pin” his favorite websites to the Windows taskbar, which will directly open (mouse click) the websites without first having to load the browser, speeding their display. The new IE9 has eliminated the separate search box on the toolbar, now combining the search and address bar into a single unit that performs both functions, the search being performed on whatever the user selected as his preferred search engine, with Microsoft’s own Bing search engine being the factory default. Combining both functions in a single place saves valuable real estate on the desktop, freeing up more space for web pages. IE was among the last of the major browsers to incorporate tabbed browsing, and has now redesigned the “New Tab” (CTRL-T is the shortcut) which provides quick access to the most visited websites. Tabs that have been closed can be reopened, including tabs closed in the previous browsing session. With personal privacy becoming a more sensitive and serious internet issue, IE9 offers something in each tab it calls “InPrivate Browsing”. According to the explanation built into IE9, “InPrivate Browsing helps prevent Internet Explorer from storing data about your browsing session. This includes cookies, temporary Internet files, history, and other data. Toolbars and extensions are disabled by default.”

One complaint that users have had about previous versions of IE was its often long time to load, primarily due to the “add-ons” selected by the user. IE9 now incorporates an “Add-on Performance Advisor” that informs the user about the performance degradation of selected add-ons, and allows the user to selectively disable or

uninstall any unnecessary add-ons. Another new feature in IE9 is called “Tracking Protection” which helps protect the user’s privacy by limiting the information that some websites collect without the knowledge of the user. One of the popular add-ons utilized in earlier versions of IE was some form of download manager, because the download manager built into IE lacked the ability to effectively pause and restart downloads. Earlier versions of IE also lacked the ability to check downloaded files for malware or other malicious content at the time of download, a function performed by many of the third-party download managers. In IE9, downloads can be paused and restarted by the integral download manager, which also notifies the user if the downloaded file could harbor malicious content or other forms of malware.



Another feature built into IE9, that is not listed by Microsoft as one of the top reasons for using IE9, but which I found especially beneficial is what IE9 calls “Smartscreen Filter”, a feature that provides protection from a variety of web born threats including anti-phishing protection, phishing being one of the most common methods of identity theft which uses counterfeit websites to trick users into disclosing personal data, typically credit card numbers, bank account numbers, ATM card numbers, PIN numbers, passwords, and other sensitive personal information, and displays the real website address rather than the spoofed web address. Another function of Smartscreen Filter is “Application Reputation” which reduces

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# Free Comic Books Online

by  
Ira Wilsker

## WEBSITES:

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/free-books-comics>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cult/buffy/ecomics>  
<http://borderwalker.com>  
[http://www.comicweb.com/goldenage\\_comics.htm](http://www.comicweb.com/goldenage_comics.htm)  
[https://read.dccomics.com/comixology/#/free\\_comics](https://read.dccomics.com/comixology/#/free_comics)  
<http://digitalcomicmuseum.com>

When I was a kid growing up in the 50's, I enjoyed buying and reading comic books. While most of them were a dime, some were expensive at a quarter. My dad acquiesced and when I with him to the drug store to buy funny comic books that he approved, such as Little Lulu. My mom gave in if I wanted to buy any of the classic comic books, which were literature transformed into a comic book format. Some of my elementary school teachers decried comic books as the ruin of my generation, and confiscated them in wholesale quantities from me and my classmates, probably to surreptitiously read in private and to trade with the other teachers for their stash of contraband. Today, with the internet, video games, and other forms of entertainment, contemporary comic books are not as popular or as widely available as in the past. For present and former comic book aficionados, there are now free online resources that allow some of us to relive our long lost juvenile days, and to also allow today's generations to experience the joys that I enjoyed decades ago.

One of the top free software information websites, Gizmo's Freeware ([techsupportalert.com](http://techsupportalert.com)) recently published a directory and reviews of the top free online comic book repositories ([techsupportalert.com/free-books-comics](http://techsupportalert.com/free-books-comics)). Gizmo made it a point that the listed sites were not pirate websites displaying illicit copies of copyrighted

content, but instead were totally legitimate websites with totally legal content.

The first listed site that I visited displayed the first issue of Action Comics, dated June, 1938, which is the issue that introduced Superman to the world. According to Gizmo, a copy of this issue sold recently for \$1.5 million, but anyone can view it online for free.

One of my adult daughters is a fan of the TV version of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer", and would probably find the 11 "e-comics" posted online by the BBC most interesting ([bbc.co.uk/cult/buffy/ecomics](http://bbc.co.uk/cult/buffy/ecomics)). BBC has also posted several of the "Dr. Who" comic series online at [www.bbc.co.uk/doctorwho/s4/misc/fiction/writerscomics](http://www.bbc.co.uk/doctorwho/s4/misc/fiction/writerscomics) for those who like the popular TV show of the same name.

"The Comic Web" at [www.comicweb.com/goldenage\\_comics.htm](http://www.comicweb.com/goldenage_comics.htm) has over 30 full-length comics from 1936 to 1955 that can be viewed online for free, and downloaded as a PDF for only a dime. Captain Marvel #1 "Captain Marvel Battles the Vampire" from 1941 started a cult classic, and can be viewed online at [www.comicweb.com/onlinecomics/captain\\_marvel\\_01\\_story.pdf](http://www.comicweb.com/onlinecomics/captain_marvel_01_story.pdf). Other Comic Web holdings include a few of the World War II series of super hero comics "Fighting Yank" where the super hero, wearing a cloak and tri-corner hat reminiscent of 1776 takes on the axis powers. On the bottom of each "Fighting Yank" page is a patriotic statement of the day, encouraging the reader to buy war bonds or to contribute to the scrap drives to defeat the axis. Considering the date of publication and the then contemporary events in the news, it is obvious how the "Fighting Yank" would appeal to the children of the day. One of the oldest comics on the Comic Web page is "Detective Picture

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Stories #1 - Bogus Bills” from 1936. “GI Joe #10” from 1950, reflects some of the sentiments from early in the Korean War, where the U.S. soldiers have to deal with the likes of an attractive female reporter while dealing with a “Russky tank”. While patriotism is a common theme of many comics of the period, what may be the epitome of a patriot super hero may be the 1941 rendition of “The Flag” who is the adopted son of a crippled war hero, and has the speed of the wind, and the strength of a hundred men. In his red, white, and blue uniform he takes on the enemies of America. In Our Flag #3, The Flag removes a flag bearing the swastika from the dome of the capitol building, and defeats the enemy who has torn down the American flag from the Capitol building; in just 16 pages, The Flag saves the country. While not as dramatic, in the 1941 comic book “Stars and Stripes #4” another super hero, the Iron Skull, saves a convoy of ships from marauding U-Boats. While historically inaccurate, comics like these can be used to demonstrate some of the popular ideas and philosophies of the day, and show how those contemporary super heroes dealt with the pressing issues facing the country.

DC Comics, one of today’s predominate comic book publishers, has been publishing comic books since 1934. In addition to producing print comic books, DC Comics has made available a large collection of free comics online at [read.dccomics.com/comixology/#/free\\_comics](http://read.dccomics.com/comixology/#/free_comics). With new titles added frequently, DC Comics has an impressive collections of comic books available. In Superman Confidential #1 (January 2007), the secrets of Kryptonite are explained; for those who may be unaware of the Superman saga, Kryptonite is a strange mineral from the defunct planet Krypton, that has the unique power of sapping Superman’s legendary strength, depriving him of his super powers. In a two-page teaser to encourage the reader to purchase the full comic, DC Comics online has “The Origin of Robin”, the super hero that becomes the famous sidekick

of Batman. Other super hero comics included on the free DC Comics website, consisting of either teasers or full editions, are the likes of Justice League of America, Wonder Woman, and the Green Lantern.

One of the largest libraries of online comic books is the Digital Comic Museum ([digitalcomicmuseum.com](http://digitalcomicmuseum.com)) which has over 6000 comic books available for free download (free registration required). On this website I found many of the comics that I enjoyed as a child. The date ranges of the comics at the Digital Comic Museum are from 1902 to 1986. Some of the larger collections sorted by publisher on this site include Charlton Comics with 650 issues; American Comics group (493); Better/Nedor/Standard/Pines Publications (410); Comics House Publications (445); Dell Comics (517); Quality Comics (1243); and Fawcett Comics (1120 issues). Many old classics are available, including such oldies as The Katzenjammer Kids and Little Orphan Annie. There is even a comic book available that was published and distributed by the U.S. Government, “Burt the Turtle Says Duck and Cover”; we were provided a copy of this exact comic book in elementary school where it was mandatory that we read it in class, and then practiced our “Duck and Cover” drills that were supposed to protect us from a Soviet nuclear missile strike. The user should be aware that many of the comic books available for free download from this website are compressed with a variety of compression methods, so that a free universal decompression utility such as PeaZip ([peazip.org](http://peazip.org)), or 7-Zip ([7-zip.org](http://7-zip.org)) may be necessary to prepare the files for viewing.

There are many other websites listed by Gizmo that have free comic books to view and download. With free resources such as these, it is easy for some of us to relive our childhood, while others may discover a forgotten but very entertaining resource.

# *More Excel and Word Tips from Sharon Parq Associates*

## **EXCEL - Copying Values**

There are many ways that you can use Excel's tools to fill out various cells in a worksheet. One of the most common tools is to copy a cell (or cells) and then paste them into other cells. The only problem with this approach is that when you copy cells, you also copy the format of the original cells into the target cells. What if you just want to copy the values from the original cells, but retain the formatting already applied in the target cells?

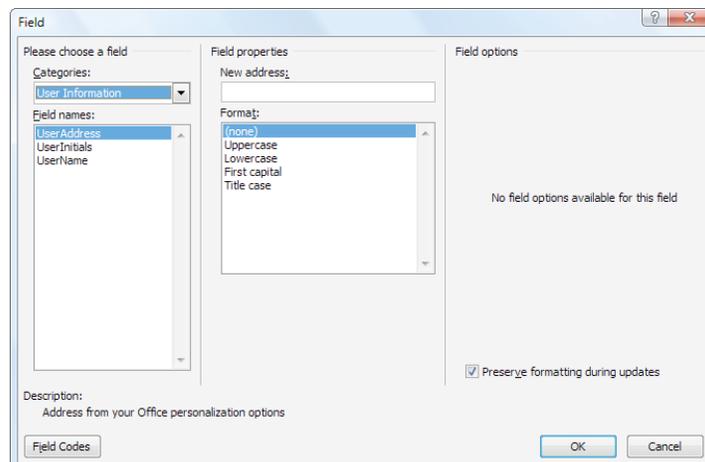
You probably already know that you can use the Paste Special option from the Home tab of the ribbon (Excel 2007 and 2010) or the Edit menu (older versions of Excel), and then choose the Values option to paste just the values. If the target cells are right next to the original cells, there is an even easier way to accomplish the same task. Simply follow these steps:

1. Select the original cells whose values you want to copy.
2. Right-click on the fill handle (at the bottom right-corner of the selection) and drag the selection to encompass the target cells. When you release the mouse button, a Context menu appears.
3. Choose the Fill Values option. Excel fills the target cells with the values from the original cells; the formatting remains unchanged.

## **WORD - Inserting the User's Address**

Word automatically maintains several items of information about you, as a user. One such item is your address, which is changed on the User Information tab of the Options dialog box. If you want to automatically insert the user address in your documents, you can follow these steps:

1. Position the insertion point where you want the address inserted.
2. Make sure the Insert tab of the ribbon is selected.
3. In the Text group, click Quick Parts. You'll see a drop-down menu.
4. Choose Field. Word displays the Field dialog box.
5. In the Categories drop-down list, choose User Information.



*The Field dialog box.*

6. In the Field Names list choose UserAddress.
7. Click on OK to close the dialog box and insert your field.

# Possible Personal Security Issue with Digital Photos

by

Ira Wilsker

## WEBSITES:

<http://abclocal.go.com/wabc/video?id=7621105>

<http://www.orcopug.org/pdf/nov2010.pdf>

<http://www.examiner.com/iphone-in-national/how-to-turn-iphone-gps-on-and-off>

<http://icanstalku.com>

<http://icanstalku.com/how.php#disable>

Disable GPS function

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exif>

<http://www.irfanview.com>

<http://www.google.com/earth>

Many of us take a lot of digital photographs. One of the many advantages of digital photography is the ease at which they can be emailed to others, and posted to social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace. What many users are unaware of is that many of the newer cell phones and digital cameras have a GPS location feature that records the precise location of the camera at the instant the photo is taken, often with an accuracy within 15 feet. While this “GeoTagging” offers the user the benefits of knowing precisely where the picture was taken, there are now cases where GeoTagged images were used for illicit purposes, such as by stalkers and pedophiles to locate targets for their illicit behavior.

New York’s WABC-TV documented the case of Adam Savage, one of the star characters of the Discovery Channel hit “MythBusters”, who posted a digital photo of his car on Twitter ([abclocal.go.com/wabc/video?id=7621105](http://abclocal.go.com/wabc/video?id=7621105)). The digital photo was taken outside of his house, and contained what is known as EXIF data embedded in the photo; if the camera or smart phone has a capable GPS in the device, it dutifully records that information into the photo. Most image viewers can display that EXIF data, and even display the precise location on a high resolution Google Earth map. In the Adam Savage case, the precise location of his home could have been used by a

stalker or other miscreant to do him harm.

Exchangeable image file format, better known as EXIF, is automatically recorded by most modern digital cameras, including dedicated units (just a standard digital camera), and the cameras built in to most of today’s cell phones and almost all smart phones. EXIF is imbedded into JPEG images, most TIFF images, and WAV files. EXIF data is not recorded in JPEG 2000, PNG, or GIF formatted images. EXIF records a lot of useful information, including the date and time the photo was taken, the make and model of the camera or digital device, the exposure, F-stop, ISO rating, dimensions of original photo, flash, focal length of lens, and other technical information about the image and the camera. If the digital device has a GPS, then the EXIF information also contains the latitude and longitude accurate to six decimal places (one-millionth of a degree). As long as the file format is one of those that support EXIF, this information is included by default, unless the user has selected to turn off all or parts of the EXIF writing function of the camera. On most cameras that support EXIF coded images, the degree of difficulty of controlling the EXIF data displayed varies by camera make and model, although many of the GPS equipped devices have the ability to turn off the GPS function. With the GPS thus disabled, the location of the camera when the image is made will not be recorded, and the remaining EXIF information is relatively innocuous, and does not pose any significant threat to the user. It is up to the user to determine if the GPS information should be recorded, and many photographers regularly use the GPS data embedded in the EXIF information to document and record the location of the image. If the user wants the GPS information embedded in the photo, leave the GPS in the device turned on; this is typically the default setting. If the user is concerned about privacy, or the potential threat that posting the location of the image may create,

*cont'd on Page 9*

then the user should check the camera or device instructions about disabling the GPS function. If the camera or other digital device offers the user the option of file formats, choosing the universally compatible GIF image format will provide a degree of safety in that a GIF formatted image generally does not contain the EXIF information.

It is amazingly simple to display the embedded latitude and longitude in a JPEG (.jpg) image if that photo was taken by a GPS equipped camera. I went to my Twitter page (which I rarely use), and opened some of the photos that were linked by my friends on Twitter. Using my internet browser, I right clicked on the image and selected "Save Image As", and saved the image to my hard drive. Using my preferred image viewer, the popular free universal viewer IrfanView ([www.irfanview.com](http://www.irfanview.com)), the EXIF information was very easy to display, if it was embedded into one of the compatible image formats. Opening the image in IrfanView obviously displayed the image, but clicking on either IMAGE - INFORMATION, or the blue circle with the lower case "i" displayed the information about the image. If there is EXIF information embedded in the photo, a radio button labeled "EXIF info" appears on the bottom right corner of the information display; clicking on this button opens the EXIF window, with all of the embedded information displayed. If there is a recorded latitude and longitude, another button appears labeled "Show in Google Earth" which will open Google Earth ([www.google.com/earth](http://www.google.com/earth)) if it is installed on the computer, and display a high resolution satellite or aircraft photo showing the precise location of the camera at the instant the photo was taken. Google Earth can link directly to Google Maps, and display a street map with the location highlighted, and then create driving directions to that precise location. If someone wanted to do harm to the subject of the photo, with this information, the potential victim may be easy to locate, especially if the photo was taken near a home, public park, or other readily accessible location. In addition to Google Earth,

IrfanView can also display the location using several other mapping utilities by clicking on the "Show in Geo-Hack Wiki". I tried this by opening a JPEG photo of my car in my driveway taken with my smart phone, clicking on the Geo-Hack Wiki, and then selecting the "OpenStreetMap" option; instantly a detailed street map appeared, with a red icon noting the location of my driveway! If I posted that photo on the web, any miscreant could easily find my house.

IrfanView is not the only image viewer that can display EXIF information, as I tried several of the image viewers that I have installed on my computer, and almost all displayed the same information. IrfanView and the other image viewers are not the problem, as they are only displaying what the camera recorded, just as they display the image taken by the camera. If the user wants that image location recorded, he should be entitled to do so, as there are many legitimate uses for that information. As can be done with many things that are legal, legitimate, and useful, they can also be abused by those with crime in their hearts. It is this risk that the user must consider if he decides to record the GPS information with his photo. If the photo is to be kept for strictly personal use, then there is no harm in using that information, but if that image is to be posted on the internet, such as on a web site or on a social network service such as Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter, then he must decide if he wants the GPS information included, which may be much the same as posting his home address on the internet along with his photos. There are several free and commercial utilities that can edit or remove EXIF data from images, and the user should search for these utilities, and consider removing or editing the EXIF data on images to be posted on the web. Likewise, there are several websites that have the instructions for deactivating the GPS feature on most smart phones and digital cameras.

The choice is strictly yours; I choose not to include my GPS data on personal images that I post on the net. Play it safe, and do the same.

# Search for Your Ancestors and Make A Family Tree

by  
*Ira Wilsker*

## WEBSITES:

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-genealogy-family-tree-software.htm>

<http://www.progenealogists.com/top50genealogy2010.htm>

<https://familysearch.org>

<http://ssdi.rootsweb.ancestry.com> (Social Security Death Index)

<http://ellisland.org> Ellis Island Immigration Records

Over the years I have dabbled in genealogy trying to create a family tree. While I have always been curious about my ancestors, my interest was piqued in pre-internet days when I encountered a gentleman in Germany with the same unusual last name as I have. We exchanged letters and photographs noting some commonality in our respective families, but could not prove a relationship. Sometime later, in the early days of the internet, I saw a reference to a British author of children's books with my last name, and we started an online correspondence in an attempt to find a common ancestor; while we still email each other, and I get regular reports of his son's football (soccer) matches, we have not found that common ancestor.

In this country I periodically see articles in some professional journals referencing lawyers, business executives, artists, and others with my last name with several of us exchanging emails trying to find that common link. Several years ago I went to Los Angeles to speak at a professional meeting, and stayed for a few days with someone with my last name who may have been a distant cousin; when he picked me up at LAX I thought someone was playing a practical joke on me, as it appeared that my brother was picking me up. After some research, we found that my paternal grandfather was his grandfather's brother. Also a few years ago I received a cryptic phone call from an individual looking for a bone marrow donor for

his daughter who had leukemia. This individual in Washington, D.C. had hired a professional genealogist to find relatives who may be potential marrow donors in an attempt to save his daughter, and the genealogist found me, my brother, my sister, and my maternal cousins. Our common genetic bond was my maternal grandmother, who was the sister of his maternal grandmother. Of my siblings I was the better match, but another relative was the best match, and she donated the marrow; in this case, genealogy was a literal life saver.

Genealogy is a popular activity that many do for religious reasons, while others do it as a hobby. A recent online news story mentioned what it called one of the best free online databases of genealogical information. Being curious, I decided to try it; the website mentioned was FamilySearch.org. While registration is not required to use the website, it is free, so I registered online. The first example of the advantages of free registration was that I could view some of the actual documents found, rather than just a detailed reference. The first name I entered was my paternal grandfather and almost had an epiphany with what was displayed on the first few screens I viewed. The 1920 census listed the residents of the household, and the names and ages of the adults were all correct as I knew them, as were the names and ages of two of my uncles; the shock was the first name listed for my dad in the census was different from the first name which he used around our family; we knew it was him because the age shown on the census matched his age on that date, and he did not have a twin brother. My late dad's listing on the Social Security Death Index ([ssdi.rootsweb.ancestry.com](http://ssdi.rootsweb.ancestry.com)) shows his first name as the one we knew him by, not the one shown on the census records.

Another startling fact that I found on FamilySearch.org that my siblings and paternal

*cont'd on Page 11*

first cousins were totally unaware of is that we had a paternal aunt; all of us only knew about the three sons of my paternal grandparents, but in 1913 they had a daughter. FamilySearch.org led me to a 1914 death certificate issued in Philadelphia that showed my grandfather and grandmother as the parents, with their address and all of their demographic information correct, but indicating that my aunt died on April 1, 1914 at the age of seven months. The cemetery where she is buried is listed on the death certificate, and that will be an obligatory visit the next time we visit Philadelphia. The cause of death listed was an archaic term, but a little online research quickly defined the cause of death; now, almost a century later and with modern medical knowledge, my wife used her medical training and experience to deduce the likely cause of death from a childhood disease that was little known in 1914, but is now well understood.

On my maternal side, I found the census listings for my maternal grandparents starting in 1920. The names and ages of the household members were all correct, except for the spelling on my maternal grandfather's first name; he passed away before I was born, and I never knew him, but the census showed his first name with a European spelling, not the more Americanized name which my family and cousins knew him by. I also found the municipal "wedding registrations" from almost 70 years ago for two pairs of my aunts and uncles with FamilySearch.org displaying the actual pages of the city wedding registry.

FamilySearch.org claims to be the largest genealogy organization in the world consisting of 4,500 family history centers in 70 countries. It is a free service provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. According to the website, "All are welcome ... We encourage all people to seek out their ancestors and preserve their family histories. Because interest in family history is not limited by culture, ethnicity, or religious faith, we welcome all who wish to

discover more about their family and their heritage."

There are many other websites that provide genealogical information, many of which are free, but some require a paid subscription. A comprehensive list of the 50 most popular genealogy websites with their respective popularity rankings is maintained by ProGenealogists at [www.progenealogists.com/top50genealogy2010.htm](http://www.progenealogists.com/top50genealogy2010.htm). ProGenealogists is the commercial research division of the most popular genealogy website, Ancestry.com. About 80% of the listed websites are free, but many of them require registration in order to make full use of their services.

For those who may want to compile their family tree information into some type of manageable database, there are several excellent free genealogy programs, as well as several commercial programs. My favorite list of the free programs is Gizmo's "Best Free Genealogy / Family Tree Software" list at [www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-genealogy-family-tree-software.htm](http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-genealogy-family-tree-software.htm). This list displays about a dozen of the top free genealogy programs, all of which have been community evaluated and rated. Links are provided to download each of the listed programs, along with some hints and tips on their use.. According to the Gizmo ratings of the free software, the free version of Legacy Standard is the top choice of the community (a commercial version is also available), followed by Gramps, and Family Tree Legends. Anyone interested in compiling family tree information will likely find one of the free genealogy programs adequate.

There are several local organizations that meet to discuss genealogy and search techniques, and they may be a worthwhile activity for those who may want to do more than they can on their own. With dozens of free genealogy websites providing genealogical information, and several free family tree software utilities, anyone interested in researching his roots may do so.

The Next Regular Meeting will be at  
The Severn River Middle School

**Wednesday**  
**April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

Meeting will be held in the large meeting room.

It starts at 7:00 P.M. with club business  
and a short discussion period.

*presentation on*

## **Backup Solutions**

*by*

**Mike Young**

Members and their friends are welcome to  
come, ask questions and become enlightened.

### **How to Find: Severn River Middle School**

SRMS is close to the Arnold, MD campus of the Anne Arundel Community College. From Annapolis and points south, take Rte 2 (Ritchie Highway) north about 3 miles from the intersection of Rt. 50, **turn right on College Parkway**. At the first light, turn left on Peninsula Farm Road. (Of course, if you are coming from points North, you would turn left onto College Parkway) about a half-mile down the road the large SRMS school building, set back off a large two level parking lot, will be visible on your right. Park here and go to the main entrance. Signs will be posted to direct you to the **Large Group Room** where we will be meeting.

**How to find: The Technology SIG, A ChPCUG Special Interest Group\*\***

The meetings are held at the SRMS in the Library.



1783 Forest Drive #285  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**FIRST CLASS**

### **INSIDE THIS VERY ISSUE!**

**President's Corner**

**Browser Wars**

**Free Comic Books**

**Excel & Word Tips**

**Family Tree**

**... and a little bit more!**

**Note:** The date above your name on the mailing label is the expiration date of your membership. Contact the Membership Chairman (page 2, column 2) to update.

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