

Chesapeake PC Users Group, THE PRINTER

Celebrating 25 Years of Users Helping Users



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This month we will have a celebration of our 25th Anniversary! A lot has changed with technology in the past 25 years, but one thing that has remained consistent is that the Chesapeake PC Users Group still believes in Users Helping Users. We are on solid ground financially now, but you will hear stories of passing the hat at early meetings to purchase supplies needed to make it from month to month. It's ironic that if you hung onto some of those same supplies, you could win a prize at the meeting.

Inclement weather warning

It's that time of the year when weather could play a role in our meetings. As a reminder, we use the Anne Arundel County School guidelines for holding out meetings. If the schools are closed, our meeting is canceled.

December 9th Meeting - Party, Party, Party!

If perhaps you missed the blue banner, Chesapeake PC Users Group is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Leo Kotschenreuther has graciously volunteered to spearhead the festivities. We will be asking for other volunteers to assist

Leo. Dust off your oldest "working" piece of computer hardware to bring to the meeting.

Another contest, bring the oldest copy of 'The Printer' with you. It would be great if someone actually had the very first issue, but that may be asking a lot.

January 13th Meeting – Office 2010 (beta)

Microsoft has a new version of their Office productivity suite on the way. At the meeting in January, we will show the beta release of this suite. More details are to come in the January newsletter.

February 10th Meeting – Windows 7 Tips & Tricks

Folks will start to have new computers with the Windows 7 operating system. This will be a kick off for the upcoming Windows 7 course that we hope to offer in the spring.

Happy Holidays to all!

**I hope 2010 will be a great year
for you and yours!**

Michael

25th Anniversary Celebration

The December 2009 meeting will be primarily about our 25th anniversary. Please bring old working hardware and software. We will rem-

inisce and remember old friends. Refreshments will be served. If you have an up-to-date address for any of the following, please invite them:

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25th Anniversary - cont'd

William Aherne

George Brungot

Vince Castelli

Dale Krueger

Wyatt Mendicus

Steve Smith

Susan Vik

There will be prizes for the “best” working hardware, software and the oldest copy of “*The Printer*”.

See you there!

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*Celebrating 25 Years of
Users Helping Users*

Converting Slides to Digital Images

by

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*Author's Note: This article best appreciated if read while listening to Paul Simon's **Kodachrome**.*

By my estimate, over the last 40 or so years, I have taken about 6,000 slides. Topics include such things as family get-togethers, Formula 1 and Can-Am races at Watkins Glen, SCCA races at Lime Rock Park, bike tours in Vermont, the U.K, Western Europe, and steam locomotives in Colorado, Vermont, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. For all of these I much prefer the color fidelity and permanence of slides over prints.

Unfortunately, slides also require either setting up a projector and screen or using a hand-held viewer, and don't easily lend themselves to sharing. Years ago I had a Polaroid SprintScan 35 film scanner, but it required a SCSI adapter card and Polaroid went under without delivering drivers for Windows 2000 or XP. It was also somewhat slow taking about 2 minutes per scan. I will grant you that it delivered high quality images. My brother in law has scanned a few slides using a flatbed scanner with a light box cover, but the resolution was not great. It was acceptable for distributing by e-mail or posting on a web page, but not satisfactory for full screen viewing.

A few months ago I discovered Ion Audio's "Slides 2 PC" 35 mm Slide and Film Scanner. It is a nifty compact device that consists of housing containing a fixed-focus USB 2.0 camera, a white-balanced light source and a pair of carriers – one that can hold 3 mounted 35 mm slides, the other for 6-exposure 35 mm negative strips. System requirements are minimal – Windows XP or Vista, and a USB 2 port. *(If you only have USB 1.1 you*

will need to add a USB 2 card to your desktop or get a USB 2 PCMCIA card for your notebook. I tried it on my old notebook and the driver refused flatly stating that it needed USB 2.)

Slides 2 PC comes bundled with ArcSoft's Photo Impressions 6, a consumer-friendly image capture/editing/cataloging program commonly bundled with digital scanners and cameras. The scanner appears as a TWAIN device, I happen to prefer the free (for personal use) IrfanView as I have used IrfanView for years. <http://www.irfan-view.com/> One thing I disliked about the ArcSoft package was its insistence upon loading an always resident module.

I don't know if the device will work with a Mac – next time Scott is around with his Mac we'll see if it recognizes it. Since it is a TWAIN device there is a good chance as long as your bring your own software.

Operation is simple; I'll describe the process when using IrfanView. Select the TWAIN source from the FILE menu, and then select ACQUIRE/BATCH. The first dialog box asks for a target folder, a root filename, the starting number and the number of digits. I created folder "\My Documents\My Pictures\VBT Tours\1972" as the folder, "VBT_" as the filename root, 1 as the starting number, and 3 as the number of digits. I clicked OK and the scanner loaded with a real-

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time preview. In this case of a blank white area since I hadn't loaded a slide. Note that since it is a video camera rather than a moving scanner mechanism there are essentially no moving parts within that can get out of calibration.

The carrier is hinged along the long side – open it, place 3 slides in the slide carrier or a film strip in the film carrier and close it. Slide the carrier into the scanner until you feel it click at the first positioning notch. In about a half second the image will appear, then reappear once the auto-exposure kicks in. Tap the top of the scanner and the image is captured to memory. A thumbnail appears above the preview image. Slide the carrier to the next notch and repeat the process. Reload and repeat until you have up to 12 thumbnails. Click on the first, shift-click on the last one to select them all, then click on the 'Transfer' button on the screen and they will be written to disk. Resultant JPEG images are 2592x1680, 24 bit color depth. They average about 2.5MB in size.

If you use Photo Impressions 6 as part of start up you get a configuration screen for the scanner where you may select image size, color depth, JPEG or TIFF, and specify whether you are scanning transparencies (slides), color or B/W negatives. IrfanView just uses the defaults of JPEG at 24 bit color depth.

As far as speed is concerned, on this lazy Sunday afternoon I scanned 60 slides in 33 minutes without rushing. This included taking the slides out of the Bell & Howell 'Slide Cube' and reloading them. I have yet to go into the JPEGs to rotate the images that need to be turned from landscape to portrait orientation – IrfanView can do that with a single key-press.

For those who like spec sheets:

- 5 mega-pixel scanner
- USB 2.0 interface
- f/6.0 four element glass lens
- Fixed focus, auto-exposure and color balance

More information at <http://www.ionaudio.com/slides2pc>

Sources – I did a little web searching while wrapping up this article. The average eBay auction over the last 60 days closed at \$85 including shipping. J&R has it for \$79.99 plus shipping which I suspect will put it right about \$85. If you like rolling the dice, from time to time a factory refurb shows up on eBay at about \$65.

If you have many slides or negatives that you'd like to convert to digital, give this unit some thought. I'm very happy with it.

Registry Cleaning

by

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Perhaps the greatest necessary evil in the Windows operating system is the registry. It was designed by a cyber-masochist as the brain behind

all versions of Windows that controls their every function. Regardless of what procedure you undertake in Windows, it is almost certain that there

are numerous entries, often coded or otherwise illegible, residing in this huge database that makes it possible or not to accomplish. From earliest startup to final shutdown, Windows is completely dependent on the integrity and proper functioning of the registry.

From this introduction it is clearly evident that the registry is nothing to be toyed with lightly by mere mortals. Yet every computer owner is constantly using, modifying and often tainting its contents in some way. It is little wonder that, in time, the registry can easily become a source of computerized grief. A contaminated, corrupted registry is perhaps the most common cause of a computer's slowdown, errors, or malfunction.

Now you would think that Microsoft, having designed this masterpiece, would have figured a way to keep it continuously in tune. No such luck! Fighting the battle of the registry is a task left to 99.5% of computer owners who know less about the registry than the secrets of the Universe.

Capitalizing on the economic opportunities in demystifying the necessary cleaning and tuning of this mystical database are a bevy of software designers and publishers that promise to easily and quickly do the job that no mere mortal is either capable or desirous of accomplishing. It is not surprising that the result is a very mixed bag of success, with many registry cleaners making the cure considerably worse than the disease.

How then is one to choose from among the vast array of registry cleaning software to select a product whose functions are way outside the proper scrutiny of which most computer owners are capable. Chance and luck unfortunately play a large role in choosing. Another is by recommendation, experience and common sense, a little of

which I can perhaps, respectfully, offer.

In the course of several weeks or months, I install, uninstall and try lots of different software. Why not? A free trial version of almost everything is commonly available today. The result is that in time my registry is likely to become more of a mess than yours (without discounting the mess that is more than likely to already exist in yours).

I have looked at a sizeable number of trial versions of commonly available registry cleaners. Over a period of years and experience I have selected the same one consistently as my choice..... Registry First Aid, from Rose City Software (rosecitysoftware.com). The most important reason is that it does the job thoroughly, and very much most compelling, *safely!*

Most of the registry cleaners I examined were very fast, finding a sizable list of registry errors in just a few minutes. Registry First Aid (RFA) is slower than many of the others largely because it's the *safest!* It is the only one I have seen that not only produces a categorized list of registry errors that need, it also provides an accurate reason for having selected each and every error. I have spent many hours looking into the validity of its reasons for hundreds of its selections and I have yet to find one that was incorrect. I am satisfied that RFA is right on the money with each and every one of its suggested corrections.

RFA offers to scan 11 different categories of registry components. Some frequently turn up little to no problems, while others (especially "invalid application paths") found more than 2,800 errors in my registry on my last scan. The errors are carefully sorted and color coded as either completely safe to remove, remove with caution,

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Registry Cleaning - cont'd

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or confront with extreme caution. The reason for each is explained with every item, something no other registry cleaner I have seen does.

In some cases errors are listed for incorrect paths or locations, and RFA offers to put them in a properly valid placement, also something I have seen only in RFA.

After presenting its list of discovered errors and their suggested corrections, RFA permits you to select those errors you wish to have it correct. It also permits you to view any error directly in the registry itself if you wish. Before making corrections, RFA will back up the registry in case you wish to later undo and restore its condition prior to corrections. Talk about safety, these are all virtues I have not seen offered fully in any other registry cleaner.

RFA also provides a number of other very useful registry-related functions. A registry search feature will quickly find any reference you offer, perhaps to leftovers of uninstalled software. A registry defragment feature will permit your computer to run faster and more efficiently. A variety of plug-ins are offered, and registry backup jobs are safely stored for possible use at your selection.

I have offered an explanation of why registry cleaning is important and why my selection to do the job is RFA. I recommend a visit to the Rose City Software website where you can download a fully functional trial copy of RFA 7.0. If you select to purchase, you will find the cost very reasonable. If you have a previous version, you will find the latest filled with many nuances (including a great new interface) listed on their website that make the upgrade more than worthwhile.

A word of wisdom is possibly in order. There is almost nothing that you can do with your computer from the moment you turn it on that does not bring some degree of risk or ignores the necessity for caution. Merely receiving email can provide unseen dangers. Any procedure that modifies your operating system in any way can particularly present a serious problem. Registry cleaning is such a procedure. While *not* doing registry cleaning when necessary can seriously effect and degrade computer performance, the cleaning itself is also not without risks. Although I have stressed the safety I have found associated with RFA, bear very much in mind that computer users need to constantly be defensive. Before undertaking registry cleaning, be sure to make a *full backup* of your computer in addition to the registry backup that RFA itself will make. Creating a system restore point prior is also a good idea. Prevention is a far sight better than repairing!



Create PDF Files for Free with Tese Utilities

by

Ira Wilsker

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or your emails and favorite web sites to PDF files.” The latest version of the doPDF, version 6.3, runs on Windows XP; Vista (32 and 64); Windows 7 (32 and 64); and Microsoft Server 2000 to 2008. “doPDF 6.3 installs itself as a virtual PDF printer driver so after a successful installation it will appear in your Printers and Faxes list. To convert to PDF, you just have to print the document to doPDF, the free PDF converter. Open a document (with Microsoft Word, WordPad, NotePad or any other software), choose Print and select doPDF. It will ask you where to save the PDF file and when finished, the PDF file will be automatically opened in your default PDF viewer.” Unlike some other PDF writers, doPDF does not require GhostScript, which makes the total setup and install much smaller than its competitors. Since a third party converter is unnecessary and doPDF is written in tight code, it requires fewer system resources when converting documents to PDF. Another feature of doPDF is the selectable resolution of the saved PDF file from 72 to 2400 dpi, which influences the size of the saved file, the lower the resolution, the smaller the file. While any PDF writer can save documents or web pages written in any language, the doPDF software user interface supports 20 different languages. Kim Komando has acknowledged doPDF, and other websites have awarded doPDF their “Editor’s Choice” awards. The download site Softpedia has given doPDF its highest 5/5 rating. doPDF would be a

good choice for anyone who needs a PDF writer for personal or commercial use.

What may be the world’s most widely used free PDF creator is PrimoPDF, available from www.primopdf.com. The newly released version 5 of PrimoPDF is compatible with all versions of Windows from 98 to Windows 7, and works just like other PDF writers, in that it installs as a printer driver. PrimoPDF has some unusual features for a free PDF writer in that it can combine different documents into a single PDF document, and also password protect PDF files. Document information, including title and author, can be imbedded in the document during the creation process. The new version 5 has added a “drag and drop” feature where documents can be easily converted to PDF format by dragging the file over the PrimoPDF icon, and dropping it, which initiates the PDF conversion process. Users who need enhanced features, such as editing PDF files, may find the commercial version, Nitro PDF Professional, a full featured but economical competitor to Adobe’s products.

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Installation Requirements

- Supports Microsoft Windows 98/ME/2000/XP/2003/Vista/7 (x86/x64).
- Requires PS2PDF converter such as Ghostscript (recommended). You can get the free GPL Ghostscript 8.15 [here](#).

What's New

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from the Secretary's Desk

Minutes of CHPCUG Board meeting on November 30, 2009

Attendees: Mike Young, Mike Regimenti, Fran Damratowski, Sam Shepherd, Mike DeLuci, Kathy Walker, Bill Somers, Leo Kotschenreuther, Kris Johnson

OLD BUSINESS:

December Meeting: Holiday Party, 25th Anniversary Celebration with Leo Koschenreuther as emcee

January Meeting: Office 2010 beta by Mike Young

February Meeting: Windows 7 Tips and Tricks and officer elections

March Meeting: Photo Electronics and book making demonstration by Mike DeLucia

April Meeting: Program to be announced

SIGS: Technology: Mike Regimenti will give a presentation on Free Software at the next meeting

Treasurers: Bill Somers and Kathy Walker state that the club is doing well financially

Mid-Shore CUG: No report

CRSIG – Fran reported that she has offered 10 low-end computers free to the County School PTA for distribution to needy families. To date the Refurbishing Center has completed and delivered 1952 computers. In further business, Fran reported that the hands-on computer class given at the O'Malley Senior Center was a success and that the director has asked her to do another class in the future. On Dec. 9 a class will be given at the Arnold Senior Center.

NEW BUSINESS:

Leo asked for and received authorization from the board to procure food and goods for the Dec. meeting. Prizes for the oldest working computer, oldest newsletter, longest dues paying club member, and most interesting software will be purchased by Mike Young. Fran explained about the power point presentation she has developed for the upcoming club meeting. In preparation for the power point presentation, Mike Regimenti will make sure that office 2007 is on the club computer.

The treasurers will be refiling the tax exempt certificate for the club.

A motion to provide credit cards for the President and Vice President was passed.

A motion to provide lap top computers for the Chairpersons of CRSIG and Education was passed.

Sam Shepard reported on the **Windows 7** class that he will be giving from April 6 – May 25. Sam passed out a paper with the projected subjects that he will be covering and asked for input of any additions.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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

**Wednesday
December 9th, 2009**

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

25 Years of ChPCUG

by

Leo Kotschenreuther

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
How to Fix Your Recycle Bin
from the Secretary's Desk
... 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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