

Chesapeake PC Users Group, Inc.

THE PRINTER



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

February 11 meeting - Virtual PC for the Masses

I've mentioned virtual computing from time to time at our meetings. In February, Kathy Walker and Mike Young will demonstrate the free Microsoft product, Virtual PC. We will try to keep this as simple as possible, on a topic that can get very complex. I hope that you find this helpful and useful in your day to day computing. For those unfamiliar with what Virtual PC is used for: *Use Microsoft Virtual PC 2007 to run multiple operating systems at the same time on the same physical computer. Switch between virtual machines with the click of a button. Use virtual machines to run legacy applications, provide support, train users, and enhance quality assurance. Virtual PC lets you create separate virtual machines on your Windows desktop, each of which virtualizes the hardware of a complete physical computer. Use virtual machines to run operating systems such as MS-DOS, Windows, and OS/2. You can run multiple operating systems at once on a single physical computer and switch between them as easily as switching applications—instant-*

ly, with a mouse click. Virtual PC is perfect for any scenario in which you need to support multiple operating systems, whether you use it for tech support, legacy application support, training, or just for consolidating physical computers.

March 11 meeting - Windows 7 beta **CONFIRMED**

Sure enough, Microsoft has released a beta copy of Windows 7. I have started to work with it and, by the time the March 11 meeting rolls around, will be prepared to demonstrate the operating system. If you are interested in giving it a try yourself, I sent an e-mail on the members Yahoo Groups list with a link for everyone to download the beta software. I hope you took advantage of this, because it was a limited time offer for the masses, but is still available to TechNet subscribers.

April 8 meeting-Digital Photography

The details are still being worked out, but this meeting will have something to do with digital photography. As the date gets closer we will have more details.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER - Cont'd

Thumb drive member appreciation gifts

I hope that everyone who received a thumb drive at the January meeting finds a lot of use with the drives. Those who could not make the January meeting, we will have more thumb drives available to members in good standing at the February meeting.

I hope the meeting topics are interesting to everyone. So, please join us for as many meetings as possible.

Also, I hope that you can participate in the meetings as well. Everyone has their favorite software or hardware and we love for you to share it with the group

Michael

Editor: Web Address - Please take note of our new web site address - www.chpcug.org/. The old address is still good, I just got tired of all that typing. Eventually, all of the group email addresses will be migrated over to that domain.

Inclement weather - Remember to check the Anne Arundel County Public School website - www.aacps.org/ - for school closings at the first signs of the dreaded and much feared snow.

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XP SP3-Access Denied

by

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I tried installing the Windows XP SP3 upgrade several times and, after talking with Microsoft reps, I shut off my antivirus, updated my BIOS, but nothing seemed to work. Then I decided to do a search and found "Access Denied" information and over 340,000 other people had used this same area. For some reason a changeable entry in the Register is locked and will not allow SP3 to change it.

First, do a right click on "My Computer" icon and select "Properties" to see if it has been installed.

Here is what you need to do, if the Error message read "Access Denied" or "Service Pack Installation Did Not Complete". First read your **Svcpack.log**, located under the Windows folder in case you forgot what the error message said, it should be at the bottom of the log.

Next Backup your Register, then download and install "**Subinacl.exe**" from www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=e8ba3e56-4a91-93cf-ed698Se3927b&displaylang=en

Start Notepad, then enter the following text:

```
cd /d "%ProgramFiles%\Windows Resource Kits\Tools"
subinacl /subkeyreg HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE /grant=administrators=f /grant=system=f
subinacl /subkeyreg HKEY_CURRENT_USER /grant=administrators=f /grant=system=f
subinacl /subkeyreg HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT /grant=administrators=f /grant=system=f
subinacl /subdirectories %SystemDrive% /grant=administrators=f /grant=system=f
subinacl /subdirectories %windir%\*.*/grant=administrators=f /grant=system=f
secedit /configure /cfg %windir%\repair\secsetup.inf /db secsetup.sdb /verbose
```

Save As "**Reset.cmd**". Now double click on this file. It will take a while to complete its job.

Reboot your computer, you are now ready to install Win 'XP SP3. Go to windows update if you need to find SP3 update.

Music Tagging with ID3

by

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MP3 is a compressed music format that can be used to fit a track of

music that would normally occupy hundreds of megabytes on a Compact Disc into four or five megabytes. While some of the data is lost in this compression, it is data that cannot normally be heard in the rendering of the music file. In compressing music files this way, we can fit more music onto our music appliances, such as iPods and other MP3 players.

While the process of compressing music files is interesting for techies, it is not something we normally have to concern ourselves with, because often the music files are already in MP3 format when we acquire them. Double-click on the MP3 file and PRESTO, the song plays.

What is interesting and really required of digital music collectors is that we must keep our music organized. Since there are obviously many ways in which one can name a file of music, this is really not a very good way to keep a library organized, unless you have complete control over how a song is named.

Think of a given song. There are some obvious metrics on which the song could be organized. For starters, we have the name of the piece, the recording artist and label, the name of the band

or orchestra, the genre of music, and so forth. There are dozens of less obvious metrics, such as the length of the song, when it was recorded – even who borrowed it from you and when!

These little pieces of information about a given track are known as “meta-data” or “meta-information.” This set of information is literally, data about data, because the music file itself is a kind of digital data.

The music industry has adopted a standard, known as ID3 that provides for meta-information to be included with an MP3 file. You might think of ID3 as the *wrapper* that an MP3 file comes surrounded in.

To view and edit this information, Windows supports ID3 by allowing you to right-click on an MP3 file and see & change all of the meta-information. You can also see a limited set of the metadata about a song by simply hovering your mouse over a music file. Here I have right-clicked on a piano piece called *Impromptu in B Flat*, written by Franz Schubert. Remember when you right-click to get a context menu, it's a *single* right-click, not a double click.



Review – Roxio Creator 2009

by

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Roxio, a division and brand of Sonic Solutions, continues as the premiere must have CD/DVD burning suite. This product is a collection of key applications bundled into an attractive launching interface. Key applications provided are CD/DVD burning tools, Audio, Photo, and Video tools, and more. The Roxio suite provides support applications necessary to effectively use your computer just like Microsoft Office suite provides key office software.

When I reviewed Easy Media Creator Version 10 earlier this year I was impressed with how clean the interface was for the multitude of applications within the suite. The latest version further simplifies the application selection process with the use of pleasing colors and descriptive icons. It also provides a direct link to online tutorials and other information. The only distraction from the clean interface is the "Learn More" window that connects to the Roxio website to promote the sale of additional products.

The application interface Home Page presents the core tasks for most users. The tasks include burning and labeling discs, ripping audio, copy and converting DVD video and backing up files. Selecting one of the primary applications will quickly open the application and you are ready to start. There was some initial confusion of how to return to the previous page because the new page did not have a cancel button. If you closed the page with the standard "x" selection it would close the whole product. After a short examination I realized that the left set of

icons were still available to select and return to home or another application. Although further review disclosed inconsistencies in returning to the home page depending upon which application you opened. So some applications you must close using the "x" and others if you use the "x" you will close everything down and have to reopen the whole product. This area needs better consistency.

When you select an application group using the left icons (Data-copy, Video- Movies, Music-Audio, Photo, and Online) a clean screen opens up with sub grouping to further home in on your desired application. The Data-Copy screen provides three groupings of Create, Copy, and Backup. Each grouping contains subtasks to further refine your application selection. There are nine defined tasks associated with Data-Copy. The long time favorite Roxio Creator Classic is now disguised as "Burn Data Disc – Advanced" but it still opens the original application and still reflects the original name. It appears that this popular tool is still the same with a different entry skin. The application was always sound so the fact that it is still there in its original attire is not a problem other than the interface name.

The Video-Movies group, Music-Audio group, and Photo group all contain four subgroups (Import, Edit, Create, Enjoy) with eleven to sixteen subtasks each. The names are very generic which in my opinion keeps concepts familiar. Executing a generic name launches a familiar Roxio application.

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In addition to the icon selections there are three pull down windows, File, Tools, and Help. The file and help selections are pretty standard. The Tools pull down provides a couple of ease of access clicks like ejecting and closing the drive tray, getting disc information and some alternate ways to jump to a few selected applications. There is an extensive Options choice to configure user defaults.

The latest Roxio Creator 2009 version does provide some new tools like the ability to capture High Definition (HD) video and burn it onto standard DVDs. There is now an Audiobook Creator that makes it easy to convert and enjoy books on iTunes, iPod, iPhone or other portable players. There is an audio beatmatching tool to produce studio like fades and mixes. I found the new SyncIt desktop gadget tool cool but short on instructions. It converts and sends digital media directly to your portable device. Since I don't own a portable device I couldn't appreciate its value. You can now share photos and slideshows on line including uploading directly to YouTube.

I tested this version of Roxio on my new Vista 64bit system with an AMD Quad-Core processor and 5 GB of memory. I didn't experience any installation problems but it was disconcerting that some applications did not load crisp and fast as expected even though my system is clean and devoid of startup programs.

Okay, what is the bottom line on this latest version? If you don't already own a Roxio suite then I highly recommend you give serious consideration to purchasing this since it will serve as a primary computer application suite. If you presently own Easy Media Creator version 9 or 10 and it meets your immediate requirements then you can afford to wait if the new features and enhancements are not important to you.



Show Schedules

Date	Venue	City	St
February 07-08	Prince George's Community College.	Largo	MD
February 14-15	The Showplace.	Richmond	VA
February 21-22	Dulles Expo Center.	Chantilly	VA
February 28-01	Maryland National Guard - Annapolis.	Annapolis	MD

As a service to our members, I will attempt to publish the current schedule for computer shows in our immediate area. For additional information & to print the \$\$ OFF coupon go to:

<http://www.marketproshows.com/computershows/citySearch.php>

Review - Wacom Intuos.3 Writing Tablet

by

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Tabula rasa (blank slate) has new meaning when you hold a pen to a writing tablet. Your creativity expands. After the stilted motions of a mouse you get free flowing precision to transfer your thoughts to the screen when you use a writing tablet and pen. For graphic work and photo editing the writing tablet is as invaluable as the palette is to an artist.

Writing tablets, aka digitizing, drawing, or graphic tablet have been around since 1888 when the Telautograph was patented. They have come a long way since then with one manufacturer carving out its own market niche. That manufacturer is Wacom. Wacom created and patented passive tablets that use electromagnetic induction technology. This technology uses horizontal and vertical wires that transmit and receive electromagnetic signals between the tablet and a pen or mouse. For the non-scientists amongst us that means the wires let the tablet know where the pen is on or above the tablet and translates that to the screen. The pens are equipped with pressure sensitive technology as well. This allows you to adjust what you do on the screen just by how hard and the angle by which you use the pen. Electromagnetic power also eliminates the need for a battery for the pen.

Wacom patents prevent competitors from using its technology. That has kept Wacom the premier tablet company for artists, graphic designers, architects, and, well . . . anyone wanting to use a graphic tablet. Other technology for tablets

include Active Tablets, that use a battery energized battery to transmit a stylus's signal to the tablet, Optical Tablets, that use a small digital camera in a pen that matches patterns on paper, (watch future newsletters for an article on this emerging technology for note-takers), and Capacitive Signal Tablets, that use electrostatic signals. Touch screens are also similar to graphic tablets but you don't get the high level of precision a touch screen gives you. None of these other technologies are as popular as the electromagnetic tablets that Wacom offers.

When buying a writing tablet you have choices depending on your budget and needs. Budget considerations may over ride your actual needs but this is not a time to save. Wacom's basic or amateur level tablets used to be Graphire technology but Wacom has since introduced a new basic tablet and called it Bamboo. The Graphire line is only available now as a reworked Bluetooth wireless tablet. Between my own research and what I have discussed with others who use graphic tablets you don't want to buy the entry level Bamboo unless you want to quickly be frustrated by its restrictions. Intuos is much more sensitive allowing precision detail in your work that is sorely missing in the Bamboo level tablet. I'm not saying that the Bamboo is a bad product for the money. It just isn't enough for most user's needs. You will pay almost double for the Intuos over the Bamboo. It is worth it.

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Part of the value in buying a writing tablet is the bundled software that usually comes with your purchase. Wacom offers Adobe Photoshop Elements, Corel Painter Essential, Nik Color Efex. and Wacom Brushes with the Intuos tablet. Separately these softwares would cost you some \$200.00. They come free with your Wacom tablet. Adobe Photoshop Elements is the basic level version of the well-known digital photo editing software.

Corel Painter is used to turn your photos into paintings and Nik Color Efex applies lighting filters to your photos. Wacom Brushes customizes the brushes used with Photoshop. When I researched purchasing a tablet I found a wide difference in what was being bundled with the offered tablet depending on the seller. Be careful what you are buying as what seems like a good deal could be a reseller offering older product with outdated software.

As you can see in the table at right the Wacom tablet comes in a variety of sizes. Wacom provided me with the 6"x11" size tablet (about \$370.00) to review based on my working with dual monitors. When buying a tablet you want to buy the largest one that fits your budget. Stretching your budget for a bigger size will benefit you greatly later. The tablet space translates to the work you are doing. Precision is made easier when you are working on a larger tablet that understands minute motions. You can adapt a smaller tablet to work in tighter areas but that requires extra work which gets tedious. If you are working with only one monitor the 6x8 tablet is your best buy.

The tablet itself defaults as matching your monitor screen for size. When you reach the edge of the tablet surface you are also at the edge of

the monitor. For dual monitors the tablet moves smoothly across the monitors as if they are one. The tablet divides itself in half so you work on both monitors like one big surface. The only problem I had with this was that my main monitor sits directly in front of me with the second monitor off to my left and up against the main monitor. This meant the tablet area that I mostly worked on was furthest from me when I worked with the tablet to the side of the keyboard. I found it easier to switch the tablet to work with just one monitor when I was doing quick photo fixes. The tablet comes with two sets of programmable hot keys to make the switch from one monitor to two relatively easy. When I wanted to work in depth with the tablet I found the extra sized tablet came in handy and made editing easier. The tablet is also light and sturdy enough to sit comfortably in your lap for those long editing sessions.

The tablet's installation is mostly plug and play, easy and quick. I say mostly because of the learning curve on the bundled software. The tablet itself is almost instantly understandable and useable. The software bundle is where the learning curve comes in. You'll have to do a lot of experimenting and manual reading to get the most out of the tablet software.

You will also want to experiment with the 1024 levels of tip and erasure pressure sensitivity that you get in the Intuos Grip Pen. As mentioned before the Intuos pen is battery free. That lightens the pen and avoids problems with using a pen with weak batteries. I found the pen easy to hold and maneuver around the tablet. The pen comes with a holder that allows you to keep track of where you put it between uses. It also includes a handy electronic eraser for easy fixes. I have not used the pen long enough to notice but other reviews I read indicate that the nibs on the pen do

Wacom Intuos.3 - cont'd

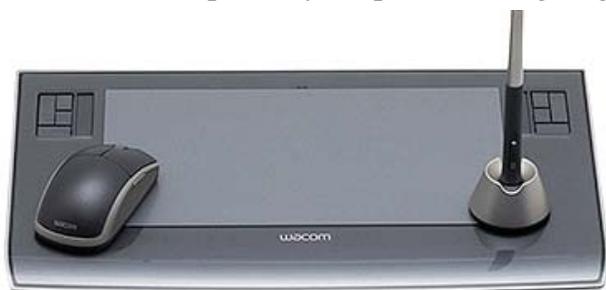
cont'd from page 8

wear down with use. The pen nibs are replaceable. The pen is so sensitive that it has tilt sensitivity like a real pen or brush.

A nice touch to the tablet are the 2 touch strips placed strategically on the tablets. They made it easy to scroll and zoom the work for easier editing. The tablet also comes with a five button scrolling mouse that is ball and optics free. It works off the tablet's surface so no additional USB plugs are used for the mouse base. I did find it somewhat annoying using the tablet mouse as my sole mouse. You are restricted to the active tablet surface with the tablet mouse. I often found myself with a mouse that was not reacting to my motions when I went outside the tablet sensitivity surface. The tablet surface has a large non sensitive area that provides a great hand rest when working but no mouse control. It was distracting when doing general computer work, like writing this article, and using the tablet's mouse. For this reason I keep my old mouse handy for non-tablet work.

When buying an Intuos level writing tablet you may find it necessary to go to the stores website to find your tablet. Retailers can not afford to stock a wide variety of tablets in each of its stores. You probably won't even find a store display tablet for you to try out before you buy. Your research is going to mostly based on the reviews you find of which there are many.

All in all I found the Wacom Intuos3 tablet to be a great addition to my computer repertoire. As regular readers know I love making home videos and mixing up photos with my PowerPoint presentations. The tablet makes my prep work easier and more comfortable. I definitely recommend the Wacom Intuos tablet as part of your photo editing or graphic work solution.



Review - magicJack (as seen on TV)

by

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Do any of you recall the poem by Rosemary and Stephen Vincent Benet, stating that no place on earth is more than 60 hours away? The authors were awed by the idea that distance was no longer measured in months but in hours. What would they think now that people have circled the world in space-

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Review - magicJack - cont'd

ships and repaired orbiting space stations? On the other hand, my friends who boarded the plane last month found that it can take 60 hours and more to arrive at a destination in our own hemisphere -- if it happens to be Bolivia!

What does travel have to do with computers? Most trips begin with a call to a travel agent or visiting a travel web site to check prices and availability of flights. Then a flight is booked and paid online either by the purchaser or an agent. An e-ticket is sent to the traveler who then checks in via a computer terminal at the airport. Computerized controls are used to guide the plane.

Computers, computers everywhere. Great when they work. Annoying when they don't! They are here to stay and will be performing more and more of our communications. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could travel internationally and communicate with folk back home without paying those ridiculous international calling fees! How about staying in touch with friends who do not live in the USA? Guess what! You CAN!!

Several of us in CAMUG have phone service using VOIP (voice over Internet Protocol). Last week I ordered something immediately after hearing about it. I have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to test it and now I can hardly wait to share it. Perhaps some of you have seen the ads for the magicJack. What is it? Well, let me quote



from PC Magazine online: "So simple it's almost perfect, the magic-Jack is the

best home voice-over-IP gadget I've seen to date. Excellent call quality, a workable set of calling features, and an amazing price make this little box the VoIP wonder to beat."

Yes, in two minutes a little USB device about 2 inches by 1 inch by 5/8 inches that I plugged into the powered hub that I run through my USB port was giving me the capability of placing my calls via the Internet. I called Canada and Colorado, spending about 1/12 hours on the phone.

It worked well except when I looked up information on the internet at the same time.

I talked to customer service and they said I can connect to the powered hub that runs directly to my router. I will have to restart the modem, most likely. That means that I don't have to have the computer turned on to make calls, just like my current VoIP service. This is great.

What do I like about the magicJack?

- The price. The gadget is \$40, and that includes one year of service! The renewal service price is \$20! Not \$200. Just \$20. In fact, we paid \$60 for five years!
- The price. Calls are free to US & Canada and reasonable to other parts of the world. Bolivia ranges from 12-14 cents. Guatemala was a little less. I didn't check farther.
- The price. Register your magicJack with a US phone number and travel anywhere in the world. Place calls back to the US or Canada and the call is free!

Review - magicJack - cont'd

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Purchase a magicJack and register it with a number in the USA, send it to your friends elsewhere in the world, and they can call to any place in the US or Canada for free -- almost. Remember, you receive one year of service with the device.

- Convenience. You can use the magicJack with any computer, not just the one you registered.
- Convenience. The magicJack is so small that it will travel extremely easily.
- Convenience. You can use the magicJack to place calls over Wi-Fi, cable, or DSL. Even light high speed is fine as it requires only 80 kbps of bandwidth.
- Services. You get all of them: voicemail delivered to you via email and also
- Convenience. You can use the magicJack with any computer, not just the one you registered.
- Convenience. The magicJack is so small that it will travel extremely easily.
- Convenience. You can use the magicJack to place calls over Wi-Fi, cable, or DSL. Even light high speed is fine as it requires only 80 kbps of bandwidth.
- Services. You get all of them: voicemail delivered to you via email and also available by calling your number and entering your pass code, conference calling, 3-way calling, caller ID, do not disturb – have I forgotten anything?
- Quality. The quality compares with other VoIP services. The calls pass over a private network.
- Customer Service. Customer service was good, but busy. The online chat took a little time as the service person moved between customers. But it was good. He didn't have time to tell me about the Outlook add-on, so I am still waiting to discover what that is. Customer service apparently is improving, based on evaluations I read.



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

Wednesday
February 14th, 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

Virtual PC

by
Kathy Walker
&
Mike Young

Members and their friends are welcome to

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 on to 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.



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FIRST CLASS

INSIDE THIS VERY ISSUE!

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... 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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