

THE PRINTER

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello again everyone. Welcome to the latest edition of The Printer. Now that the weather is cooling off, many people will rediscover their computers. And hopefully, rediscover the Chesapeake PC Users Group meetings as well. We have a full agenda for the remainder of the calendar year and it's a little bit for everyone.

October Meeting

At our October 13 general meeting, Jen Clausen from *Smart Computing* magazine will be stopping by to discuss her companies' publications. This should be a great presentation! Here is a little more information on what to expect.

Smart Computing is a monthly magazine devoted to helping users improve their productivity with personal computers. The magazine, founded in 1990 as PC Novice, emphasizes tutorial articles and plain-English writing that defines technical terminology.

Smart Computing is more than just another periodical for its readers; the magazine becomes a valuable part of many readers' computing reference libraries. Popular regular features include a Q&A section, which answers readers' questions; PC Operating Instructions, which focuses on the fundamental skills of using various operating systems; and Quick Studies, which contains how-to articles explaining a single feature of major applications such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, WordPerfect, and Quicken. Other sections cover the Internet, computing basics, upgrading components, troubleshooting, and more.

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Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Emoticons (Smilies)

by

Fran Damratowski

As I said in previous issues of the Printer, because there are thousand of abbreviations used only selected abbreviations and symbols will be presented here. For those who haven't seen earlier issues, an emoticon is a way of expressing emotions when sending e-mail, an emotional icon (look at them sideways). If I missed an important or favorite abbreviation, acronym or emoticon between A and R send it to me fdamratowski@comcast.net. I will include it in the final list. We will continue with the letter

R

RAM - Random Access Memory . The most common type of computer memory; where the CPU stores software, programs, and data currently being used. RAM is usually volatile memory, meaning that when the computer is turned off, crashes, or loses power, the contents of the memory are lost. A large amount of RAM usually offers faster manipulation or faster background processing.

Rangefinder - The viewfinder on most cameras is a separate viewing device that is independent of the lens. Often mounted above and to the right or left of the lens. It exhibits a problem known as parallax when trying to frame subjects closer than five feet from the camera so it is advisable to use the color LCD when shooting closeups for this very reason.

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President's Corner - cont'd

Each monthly issue also includes hardware and software reviews packed with common-sense buying advice based on the needs of real buyers, rather than just technical test results. These straight-talking reviews provide insight on the latest and best hardware and software.

November Meeting

At the November meeting we will see a demonstration of the Apple iPod. This is a portable music player that is all the rage with many people, especially the younger crowd. This meeting will be an introduction to the device and I think that everyone will enjoy this topic. This will be just in time to buy one and give it as a Christmas gift. For more information visit:

<http://www.ipod.com>

VOTE!

This is probably the last newsletter until the election so I just want to urge everyone to get out there November 2nd and Vote! This is one of your most important rights and Americans, and I think that it is very important to vote in every election.

See You At A Meeting,

Michael Young



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OpenOffice.org

by

Fran Damratowski

Last month's program presentation was an introduction to OpenOffice.org (this really is its name). This is an office suite that uses the source code written for Staroffice a SUN Microsystems product. It is compatible with Microsoft Office. In this case, compatibility means a file created in one program can be opened, read, and changed by the other.

Although compatible with Microsoft Office, it does not contain an Outlook equivalent, Publisher, or Access which are included in various Microsoft Office Editions, but it does allow database functions. Its crowning glory is its ability to export documents as **.pdf files**, which cannot be done with Microsoft Office. Adobe Reader (another free program) will open these **.pdf files**.

When loading OpenOffice.org, you are given the choice of five programs to open. Text Document (Writer) is a word processor. HTM is a page used to create HTML. Presentation (Impress in Staroffice) is a presentation program similar to Microsoft PowerPoint. Its shortcoming is the lack of multiple design templates as it only provides two templates. Spreadsheet (Calc in Staroffice) performs spreadsheet functions. Drawing consists of rudimentary drawing tools.

As with any office suite, the user will find that the functions will be located under different menus. A neat thing about OpenOffice.org is the ease to switch to another program. When you click on File, then New, instead of a blank page for the program you are currently using, you have the choice of a blank page for any of the five programs.

The best thing about OpenOffice.org is that it is free. How can they do that, easy, it is an open source program. Its website is, guess what, OpenOffice.org. It is a large file so when downloading it save it to your desktop. Then unzip it to install it. If you do not have a file to unzip it go to <http://www.pkware.com/downloads/> where you can download a free zip reader.

If you are interested in more information about open source programs go to <http://www.opensource.org/>

More Web Surfers Abandoning the Good Ship Internet Explorer

Microsoft's web browser, Internet Explorer, is continuing its slow but steady slide in market share.

According to fresh numbers from web metrics firm Websidestory, IE's share has slipped 1.8 per cent in the last three months.

While still far and away the market leader, the browser now has a 93.7 per cent share, compared to 95.5 percent in June.

At the same time, the alternative, open-source browser family of Netscape, Mozilla and Firefox have offered lifeboats to those abandoning the good ship IE, with the three together expanding their market share by 1.7 percent.

Alternative commercial browser Opera and Apple's Safari together moved up 0.1 per cent against IE.

Meanwhile this week, the Mozilla Foundation launched a preview of version 1.0 of its Firefox browser for download, with additional features such as an embedded RSS reader and plug-in installer. The full

R - cont'd

RAW - RAW files store the unprocessed image data - at 12 bits per channel - from the camera's imaging chip to its memory storage device. Lossless compression is applied to reduce file size slightly without compromising any quality. RAW image files must be processed with special software before they can be viewed or printed. The advantage is that you have the ability to alter the white balance, exposure value, color values, contrast, brightness and sharpness as you see fit before you convert this data into the standard JPEG or TIFF format. Professional digi-photographers import RAW image data directly into photo-editing programs like Photoshop CS (which comes with a Camera Raw import module that works with most popular RAW formats.)

Red-Eye - An effect caused by an electronic flash reflecting off of the human eye and making it look red. Compact cameras with the flash located close to the lens suffer the worst from this problem. Pro photographers use a bracket to hold an external flash unit above and off to the side of the lens to eliminate red-eye.

Red-Eye Reduction Mode - A special flash mode whereby a pre-flash or a series of low-powered flashes are emitted before the main flash goes off to expose the picture. This causes the pupil in the human eye to close and helps eliminate red-eye.

Render - The final step of an image transformation or three-dimensional scene through which a new image is refreshed on the screen.

Resize - Usually means to take a large image and downsize it to a smaller one. Most graphic viewing and editing programs offer a Resize option for this purpose.

Resolution - The quality of any digital image, whether printed or displayed on a screen, depends in part on its resolution—the number of pixels used to create the

- **Optical Resolution** is an absolute number that the camera's image sensor can physically record.

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- **Interpolated Resolution** adds pixels to the image using complex software algorithms to determine what color they should be. It is important to note that interpolation doesn't add any new information to the image - it just makes it bigger!

Camera makers often specify the resolution as: QVGA (320 x 240), VGA (640 x 480), SVGA (800 x 600), XGA (1024 x 768) or UXGA (1600 x 1200)

RF - Range Finder - a type of camera viewfinder that uses one lens to frame your subject and another lens to capture the image. See "SLR" for the other type.

RGB - Means Red, Green and Blue - the primary colors from which all other colors are derived. The additive reproduction process mixes various amounts of red, green and blue to produce other colors. Combining one of these additive colors primary colors with another produces the additive secondary colors cyan, magenta and yellow. Combining all three produces white.

RS-232 - Standard type of serial data interconnection available on most PC type computers. It's the slowest way to transfer image data from a camera. Most digicams made after 2001 do not use serial ports, they

<http://www.acronyms.ch/>

http://www.steves-digicams.com/digi_dictionary.html

Toshiba Glossary

*Don't miss the next exciting and
breathtaking installment of*
**Abbreviations,
Acronyms, and Emoti-
cons (Smilies)**

Investment Education Sources

by Len Lindenmeyer - Investment SIG

Here are four sources of information and education to improve your investing skills. Each of these can be accessed relatively easily and conveniently. They are:

- 1) Fidelity or T. Rowe Price web sites,
- 2) Morningstar's Education series accessed via the Web
- 3) Motley Fool's web site and courses offered on a regular basis
- 4) NAIC investment education via the Web and Better Investing magazine.

Both T. Rowe Price and Fidelity offer a wealth of information and education including articles, calculators, and planning tools at their respective web sites. Many of the services and information are free and do not require that you be using their services or be invested in one of their funds. Both also offer among the best in mutual funds if you choose to invest with them. There are also regular articles in the Sunday Sun on topics that may be of interest to investors. Retirement planning is but one of many topics that can be explored at these sources.

Morningstar runs an investment class at their web site www.morningstar.com from time to time. Some are good, but many are very basic. Click on the University tab at the main menu. I recommend that you sample one or two for about \$35 before signing up for something more expensive. Be organized in your approach and file the information that you print in a notebook. They have both Stock as well as Mutual Fund courses so you can select the series

that is of interest. You can also select the level of training and education that you wish to pursue. It is all free. Courses start at the 100 Level and work up to the 500 Level. You decide how much or how little you want. The courses are self paced. This is also an excellent site for lots of information on investing. Morningstar has tools to aid in analysis and many good articles on stocks as well as general investing topics. Check out the Morningstar site for yourself. Much of what is available is free. Some of the more sophisticated tools and features involve a monthly charge. Start with the free stuff and work your way up.

Motley Fool - The Motley Fool periodically runs an on-line investing course which has an associated charge.

I took one of these courses about 6 months ago and found it to be quite good. You pool your efforts with those of many other people in learning about a topic. New courses are offered on a fairly regular basis. There are then Discussion Boards for questions and input with others. The Motley Fool web site offers a range of information including articles, books, Discussion boards, and associated information. Articles and discussions appear from time to time about specific stocks and industries that may be of interest. It is easy to spend hours at any of these web sites so you must be organized and disciplined when using these resources.

Finally, take a look at all of the opportunities with NAIC - National Association of Investor's Corporation. The purpose of NAIC is investment education, but it offers far more. It publishes a monthly magazine called Better Investing. If you want to take a look at some of the articles as well as their many services, go to their web site at www.better-investing.org. Their approach to investing is based on data analysis of sales, earnings, growth, and some balance sheet data. As part of the analysis, a high and low price is calculated based on historic P/E ratios. They have standard charts and forms to provide a consistent and disciplined approach to choosing investments as well as picking the appropriate purchase or sell price. I will bring a copy of Better Investing to the first meeting of the Investment SIG in October. Each month they feature several stocks with outstanding investment potential. Some of the names are not ones you typically come across because many are small cap companies.

One final source that is close to home and also free is your local library. The Severna Park library on McKinsey Road has many good sources as well as many magazines that you can read for free. They also have an excellent web service that includes access at no charge to Value Line. I use this all the time when I want to print information or read the Value Line reports. I hope these ideas and web sites help to improve your investment portfolio.

from the Secretary's Desk

Minutes of CHPCUG Board meeting on September 15, 2004

Attendees: Mike Young, Karl Richmond, Jim Quinn, Mike Regimenti, Sam Shepherd, Len Lindenmeyer, Jerry Moskowitz, Mike Delucia, Jack Gillikin.

Mike Young opened the meeting with a discussion of this years general meeting agendas. Mike said he will be unavailable for the November and December time frame because of business travel.

The October meeting will be a presentation by Jen Clausen of Smart Computing magazine. The November meeting will be a presentation by Len Lindenmeyer on Trips/Travel using the Internet. The board is looking for suggestions for the remaining meetings.

Jerry Moskowitz reviewed the status of the CRSIG move to a different location at the Crownsville site. He is looking for volunteers to help with the move. The CRSIG has completed over 800 computers. The AA Community College and AIRINC have provided large numbers of computers to the CRSIG. Karl Richmond is actively pursuing donations from companies to defray some of the costs of the move.

Len Lindenmeyer said the September Investment SIG subject will be REITS. There will not be a November meeting and the December meeting subject will be Investment Web sites.

Karl Richmond provided a Treasures report and the club is financially sound.

Club is still looking for an editor for *The PRINTER*. Mike Regimenti has been filling in and is doing a great job. A number of different concepts about newsletters were discussed and the board is looking at some of these concepts.

Jack Gillikin is giving up his position as membership chairmen and anyone interested in that position should contact a member of the board. Jack was thanked for all his good work in that position.

Jim Quinn
Secretary

ZoneAlarm v5.0.590.015

Get protection for DSL and cable connections with this free utility

If you have DSL or a cable modem, your IP address is permanent. Although this has benefits, it also carries the serious shortcoming of rendering your PC vulnerable to attacks. A firewall, in this respect, becomes not just desirable but a necessity. ZoneAlarm is a top choice, and best of all, the basic version is free.

You can block uninitiated and unwanted traffic, even while your PC is unattended or while you're not using your connection. You can also limit your exposure to attack by specifying which applications can access the Internet. The program also lets you stop e-mail-borne Visual Basic Script worms.

Note: This file is free for personal use; for business use it costs \$19.95. If you'd prefer the fully featured, professional version of this program, you can buy ZoneAlarm Pro v3 for \$49.95.

DON'T FORGET!

Guess Who's Coming To Our Next Meeting!

Smart Computing
In Plain English

Wednesday, October 13

7:00 PM

Severn River Middle School
241 Peninsula Farm Road
Arnold, Maryland



Goodie
bags for
everyone!

Door
Prizes!

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Tech Support
Searchable Article Archive
Q&A Board
My Personal Library
Customer Service
4 Magazine For The Price Of 1!

PLEASE COME & BRING A FRIEND!

Email Jen at jen-clausen@smartcomputing.com for more information!

Samsung Introduces a Lower Millisecond LCD for

by
Scott Mikules

Introduction

One of the biggest downfalls of LCD monitors is ghosting. But Samsung has kept working on it. With its latest release, the Samsung 172X, it has produced a 17" LCD pushing a response time of 12ms.

The gaming community hasn't shown great interest in LCD monitors due to the ghosting factor, but here we have a monitor capable of making gamers heads turn, and rethink the possibilities.

Lightweight and adjustable with under-front panel buttons, this monitor is probably one of the finest from Samsung we have come across. Supplied with MagicTune software, all of your configurations are saved in the monitor, another great enhancement.

Mfr. Specifications		
Panel	Type	a-si TFT/TN
	Size	17"
	Pixel Pitch	(mm) 0.294
	Brightness	(cd/m ²) 270
	Contrast Ratio	500:1
	Viewing Angle	160°/140°
	Response Time	12ms
	Interface	Analog/Digital
Frequency	Horiz. Rate	30-80 kHz
	Vertical Rate	56-75 Hz
	Bandwidth	135MHz
Resolution	Maximum (Analog)	1280 x 1024
Color	Maximum	16.2 M
Signal Input	Input Video Signal	Analog RGB, DVI Digital
	Video Level:	Analog 0.7Vp-p
	Video Level:	Digital TMD S(TM)
	Sync Type	Separate H/V, Composite H/V, SO G (optional)
	Input Connectors	15pin D-sub, DVI-D
	Included Signal Cable	VGA Cable, DVI Cable (optional)
Plug-n-Play	DDC	DDC 2B
Power	On/Working	40 Watts (Max)
Wall Mount	VESA®	75mm
Regulations	Safety	UL 1950, CE, CSA, TUV, IEC 950, NEMKO
	EMI/Emissions	FCC, DO C, CISPR22, EMI, EN500821, VCCI
	Emission Standard	TCO '99
Cabinet Color	Front/Back	Silver
Dimensions	Physical (WxHxD)	361.6mm x 363mm x 139.9mm
Weight	Net (Physical)	3.7kg
Features		UnderFront Panel Buttons Magic Tune™ Magic Bright™
Stand		Dual Hidge Stand
Warranty	Parts/Labor/Backlight	3 / 3 / 3

While some of the specifications on this monitor are a bit lower than the previous model we reviewed, the SyncMaster 193P LCD, and its size is two inches smaller, the response time makes up for it. As we have mentioned, gamers tend to turn away from LCD monitors because of the ghosting they bring. Despite being very unattractive in every sense, LCD monitors are top choice for the corporate world, which does very little gaming.

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In comparison with the last two Samsung monitors we have reviewed, you can clearly see the difference in response performance. An old saying about LCD monitors; if it ain't in the teens, don't buy it. Well, need we say more about this model? (Apparently, yes!)

The SyncMaster 172X is not multi-OS supported, either. This model only runs under PC linux/windows environments, and not under the Mac, even though it's now Unix based. This isn't a huge problem, as most Apple computers are either built-in or come with an LCD monitor.

We have been using this monitor for about two weeks, including much gaming action in our testing. In both application and gaming use, we have found the response time to be superb. In comparing the Samsung 193PLCD monitor to the Samsung 172X LCD monitor in games like Far Cry, Doom 3, and Enemy Territory, the Samsung 172X definitely beats the previous Samsung monitors we tested. Game play was a lot more enjoyable with around half the ghosting, almost comparable to standard monitors.

LCD monitors should be taken with a grain of salt by gamers looking for the ultimate in enjoyment. This type of technology does take some getting used to. But our comparison of the two LCD monitors left us quite impressed. If comparing with a CRT, though, getting used to LCD will take a bit of time.

The Overalls

The Samsung 172X SyncMaster is very lightweight, simple to adjust dual-hinge stand, and looks very stylish on anyone's desk. Because it is only 17 inches, it takes little room. It is also capable of running off graphics cards that support the digital interface - more beneficial for those in the graphics industry who need truer color out of their monitors.

Wall mounts are also included in the packaging for those interested in mounting their monitors. Both RGB and DVI cables are provided, too. Also included is the MagicBright and MagicTune software, along with Windows OS drivers for optimal performance. In all, everything needed is in the box, straight from

Samsung.

While the software gives the end user the ability to control the monitor from a GUI control panel within the operating system, this particular LCD monitor also has OSD buttons for quick adjustments if needed. These buttons come in handy when applications or games are being used and the MagicTune software is not accessible. However, the OSD buttons are slightly hard to read, a bit of guesswork is needed to know which button controls which feature of the monitor—a small drawback. Power consumption on this monitor does not compete with the previous version we reviewed. The Samsung SyncMaster 172X consumes the same amount of power as the Samsung SyncMaster 193P, which is a 19" LCD monitor. In any event, the power usage is much less than the common CRT monitors available on the market.

Conclusion

Samsung once again shows off its ability to produce yet another grand LCD monitor, only this time we have a bit more performance with its fast millisecond response time. Another bonus feature is the MagicTune software that allows end-users to make adjustments much easier, and are stored within the monitor. The price tag we've seen this monitor is around \$535.00 USD. A bit cheaper than the 19" version we've reviewed here, but a bit smaller in size, too. 17" LCD monitors still give you more viewable size than 17" CRT monitors. LCD also gives you true color and requires a bit of tolerance with response time, depending on your use of the monitor.

Because of the 12-millisecond response time on this LCD monitor, gamers will definitely enjoy its clarity and performance. We personally do not have any real complaints, and highly recommend it to any gamer



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

on Wednesday,

November 10th, 2004

**Meeting will be held in the large meeting
room.**

**It starts at 7:00 PM with club business
and a short discussion period.**

There will be a Presentation on the

Apple iPod

**Members and their friends are welcome to
come, ask questions and be 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 parts south, take Rte 2 (Ritchie Highway) north about 3 miles from the intersection of Rte 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 the main entrance. Signs will be posted to direct you to the **Large Group Room** where we will be meeting.

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

The meetings are held at the SRMS in the Library.



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Annapolis, MD 21401

FIRST CLASS

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