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PPCUG*NEWS*

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

Monday, October 20, 2003

The Microsoft Pocket PC Operating System
Rich Catena

Microsoft Pocket PC powered devices are made by HP, Dell, Toshiba, and ViewSonic. The best known are the iPAQ series originally from Compaq which is now HP. Rich Catena is an expert in personal computers and in wired and wireless networks. A graduate of Stevens Institute of Technology, he works in the Personal Systems Group of Hewlett-Packard Company.

At:
Lawrence Library
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2
US Alternate Route 1 South & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, NJ

Meetings of an organization at any of the facilities of the Mercer County Library System

In this issue

Meeting times are changing!
The meetings will now come to order at 7:30 with the program starting about 7:45. **Don't be late!**

Coming Events:
November 10, 2003 - Recycling Inkjet Cartridges
December 8, 2003 - Annual Meeting and Party

President's Message
Clarke Walker

On Wednesday, September 24th we held a Board Meeting to plan for the rest of this year and the beginning of 2004. Please look for the minutes elsewhere in this issue for all the details but I would like to highlight three important decisions that were made at the meeting:

1. We will start the business portion of the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The speaker will be starting around 7:45 p.m. This will let us end the meeting around 9:00 p.m.

2. Most of the ongoing expense is the printing and mailing of the Newsletter. We will offer a discount to members who agree to forgo receiving mailed newsletters. When the monthly newsletter is ready and posted on the web, all members will get an e-mail with a link to the Newsletter at our web site. Online only members will then be able to read and/or print the PDF file from our web site. We will test the new procedure in November and December. The discount will be available for 2004 renewals.

3. The Board feels that our programs would be enhanced if we had Internet access. The MC Library will not let us on their network so we are starting to look for a new meeting site where we can get access to the Internet. If you know of such a location, please let me or any other Board member know. In the meantime we will continue to meet at the Lawrence Library.

We are also looking for topics and speakers for next year. I can't believe 2004 is getting near. So if you have any suggestions please drop me an e-mail. As a service to our members, we are trying to attract speakers who are associated with software providers that may help us get a discount.

Apparently I should have sent my daughter a copy of my President's Message from September on protecting your computer. A few days later I got a call from her. It wasn't for money but "Dad my computer has a virus!" Fortunately her cousin works for the Rutgers Computer Center and was able to eradicate the virus.

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September Meeting Minutes

The meeting came to order at 7:45 with a Q&A. Some of the topics were: Dealing with too many programs listed in your Start button listing; Why MS Word generates an undeletable, empty page after a paste operation; Power supply failure rates.

At 8PM, Blanche Sneath began her presentation on genealogy. Using the club's portable computer, she detailed the features of the Family Tree Maker program. She showed how to start a new data file from scratch but then switched to her own family file for the balance of the evening. FTM is one of several genealogy programs available but most of them can interchange data by way of the GEDCOM file format. Most of the different types of reports, charts, and books were shown. FTM allows you to include pictures of people listed as well as pro-

viding background photos for many of the charts. Blanche recommended buying the minimum version of FTM as she doesn't think you will benefit mcuh from any extra CDs. For more info see familytreemaker.genealogy.com.

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Prevent E-mail & Invasive Intruders from Harming Your Computer
Victor Laurie

Simple steps to protect your personal computer from malicious programs and e-mail with viruses, worms, and Trojan horses. Defensive measures such as anti-virus programs, firewalls, and spyware removers will be discussed.

This lecture will be given at the Ewing Computer Literacy Center on Tuesday, October 7, 2003 at 2:00PM. The Center is at the Ewing Senior Center, 320 Hollowbrook Drive, Ewing NJ, 2nd floor. Directions are at http://www.ewingsnet.com - click directions button. Free and open to the public.

Victor Laurie is a retired Princeton University Professor and teaches courses at the Ewing SeniorNet Computer Literacy Center. He can be reached at URL:http://www.vlaur.com Email: victor@vlaur.com.

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Some More Windows XP Tweaks
Vic Laurie, PPCUG

It's time to talk some more about the many possible tweaks to Windows XP, continuing the series begun with the previous articles http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/xptweak.htm and http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/xptweak2.htm.

Kill the messenger

The messenger referred to here is not to be confused with MSN messenger or other instant messaging services. Unfortunately, XP has two kinds of "Windows Messenger" which have almost the same name. One is an instant messaging application similar to other IM software such as AIM and ICQ. That messenger is the one that you use to chat back and forth with your buddies. The second one is what we will be discussing here and is the so-called "messenger service." This is a built-in service normally running in the background that is intended to allow systems administrators to send pop-up messages concerning maintenance and the like to the users on a local area network. Although this "messenger service" is of no particular use on a stand-alone computer or to most home users, it runs by default. Spammers have discovered that they can use this service to send pop-up messages to computers that are connected to the Internet. Judging from the number of complaints that I have seen, the practice is pretty wide-spread. The spammers have computers that rapidly scan large numbers of Internet IP

addresses and whenever they happen upon someone with an open XP system, a spam message is sent via the messenger service. The hapless PC user suddenly sees a pop-up window intruding on the screen with some sort of unwanted message, usually advertising. The pop-up windows can be identified by the name "Messenger Service" in the title bar. Since pornographic sites are among the active spammers, children may get inappropriate material. An example of a pop-up window is shown in Figure 1.
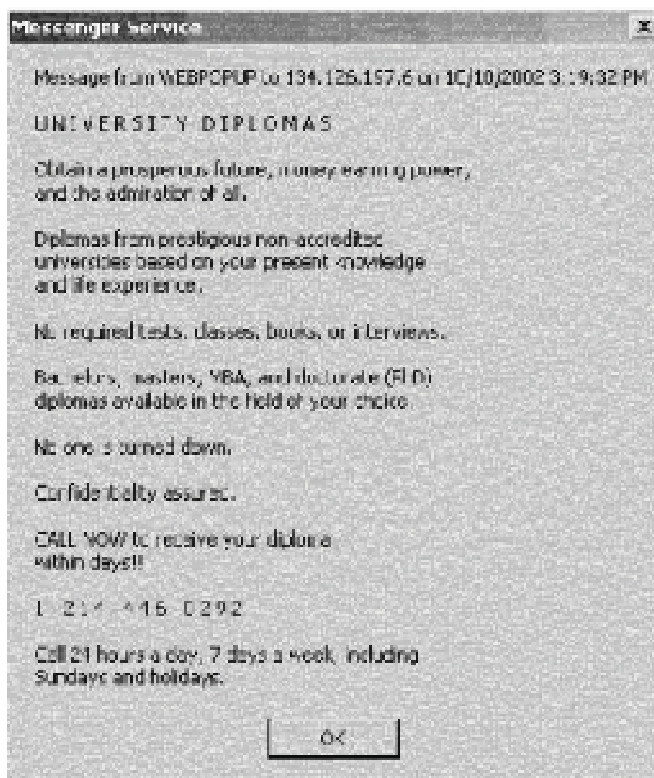

Figure 1. Example of messenger spam

Most typical home users do not need the messenger service, and it is easily turned off. As is usually true in Windows, there are several different ways but here is probably the quickest. Go to **Start|Run** and enter "services.msc" without the quotes. (Figure 2)
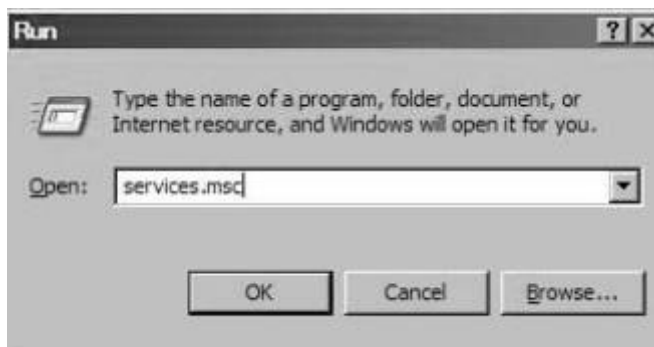

Figure 2. Opening services module

The Services module will open, listing all the services (Figure 3). Scroll to "Messenger", highlight it, and then right-click to obtain the context menu. Choose "Properties" (Figure 4) and then in "Startup type" choose "Disabled". Click "Stop" and "OK". Of course, you have to be using an account with administrator privileges (not normally a problem with the Home edition of XP)

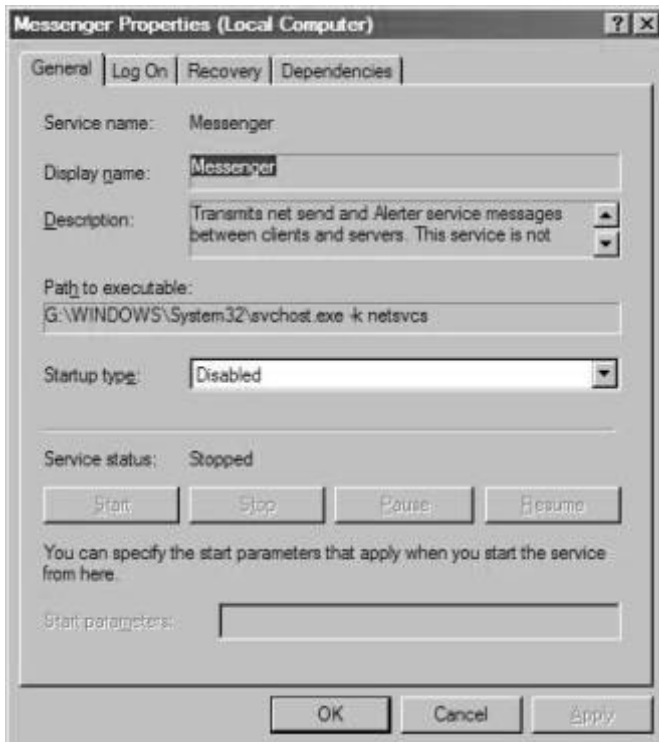

Figure 3. Services module

Figure 4. Properties sheet for Messenger Service

There are numerous references on the Internet about the messenger spam problem. Here are two that pretty much cover the problem:
http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/using/howto/communicate/stopspam.asp
http://www.updatexp.com/messenger_service_spam.html

If you prefer a different route, Steve Gibson has written a little program to allow messenger service to be easily turned on and off. The free download and a discussion of the messenger problem is at
http://grc.com/stm/shootthemessenger.htm

To conclude, here is a word about the *other* Windows messenger, the one that is an instant messaging program. I do not use it but apparently those who do have also encountered spam or unwanted visitors there as well. To prevent messages from unknown users, go to the "Tools" menu of this program, choose "Options" and make sure that "All Others" is selected in the Block List.

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**ACM SIGGRAPH - PRINCETON CHAPTER
PRINCETON ACM / IEEE COMPUTER
SOCIETY CHAPTERS
OCTOBER 2003 JOINT MEETING**
(joint meeting with the Princeton Chapter of the
Media Communications Association)
**COMPUTER GRAPHICS FILM SHOW: SIG-
GRAPH VIDEO REVIEW
Hosted by Jeff Posdamer, CACI**

For the twenty-fourth year in a row, we are kicking off our season of meetings with the very popular computer graphics film show. This will also be the eighth year for our current graphics speaker, Jeff Posdamer. Jeff will be showing some of the latest and greatest computer generated animated films from the most recent ACM SIGGRAPH computer graphics conference.

Jeff will show a variety of technologies: scientific visualization graphics, commercial graphics used in television and movies, and some examples of current computer graphics research. The films include everything from state-of-the-art supercomputer technology to graphics that can be done with today's personal computers. Come see why this is the best attended meeting we have all year.

Princeton ACM / IEEE Computer Society meeting are open to the public. Students and their parents are welcome. There is no admission charge, and refreshments are served.

Date: Thursday, October 23, 2003, 8:00 PM
Location: Auditorium, Sarnoff Corporation, 201 Washington Road (Rt 571 1/4 mile south of US 1), Princeton, NJ
More Info: http://www.acm.org/chapters/princetonacm/mtg0310.html

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Tablet PCs: The Portable Computing Trend of the Future

The tablet PC is the missing link between a PDA device and laptop computer, offering unprecedented ease of use, data capture, voice recognition and information management. Ed Brzyski of CommNet International will demonstrate how the tablet PC is a major technology achievement and is changing the way we enter and manage data. With built-in wireless capability, you have the ability to work and retrieve information when you want it and where you want it. Ed Bryzski was a Senior Systems Analyst for Texas Instruments for 18 years, spent four years with Acer America in its mobile computing division, and is with CommNet International as a Business Development Executive focusing on mobile and wireless computing solutions and distance learning in educational and corporate environments.

Date: Tuesday, Oct. 7, 7 p.m.
Location: Princeton Public Library, 301 North Harrison Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540
More Info: http://www.princeton.lib.nj.us/programs/adultprograms.html

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Board Minutes

The PPCUG Board of Trustees met on 9/24/03 at Sol Libes' home. The meeting began at about 7:15 with JD Abolins, Don Arrowsmith, Al Axelrod, Paul Kurivchak, Vic Laurie, Sol Libes, and Clarke Walker present.

1. Officers for 2004 - All of the current officers agreed to continue for next year. Additional nominations will be requested at the October meeting or by mail. A list of candidates will be announced at the November meeting and elections will be held at the December meeting.

2. The Yahoo! Groups mailing list was discussed relative to the recent thread about a member's Windows problem. The sense was that the extra emails from this were not a problem yet. Members will be requested to add a line to any message they may post that asks to have replies sent to them directly rather than to the group. If too many mailings become a problem, the existing list will be closed to member

postings and another, open list created.

3. Scheduling for 2004 will be coordinated by the President with recommendations by the board and any members with special help from Sol. Sol will be out of the area for the period of mid-December through the end of March. All email regarding programs should be directed to the entire board to keep everyone informed to avoid last year's problems. Some tentative program topics for the first quarter of next year were suggested. A Member's Night may be scheduled where, perhaps, four different members will each provide a 15-minute description of one of their favorite programs. The intent is to get more members involved and perhaps cultivate a longer presentation at a later time after the member gains confidence in his abilities.

4. Next year's member renewals will be given the choice of paying $30 and retaining a printed newsletter or paying $20 and reading the newsletter from the PPCUG web site. The difference of $10 almost exactly reflects the cost to the club of one person's newsletter costs for a year. The benefits to the club of having a majority of the members select online delivery will be the reduced efforts in copying and preparing each issue for mailing. Members will benefit by reducing their dues, getting the newsletter 'delivered' earlier and eliminating damage or loss by the Postal Service. All members will receive a message indicating that the next issue is ready for viewing and will contain a direct hyperlink to it.

5. The Board is unanimous in feeling that having an Internet connection available during the meetings would greatly increase the quality and choice of our programs. Several efforts in the past to obtain access at the current meeting location by either telephone or by a direct or wireless connection to the library's network have failed. Don agreed to research possible meeting locations and report within a month. Factors to be considered are available nights, size of the room, allowance of food, any rental cost, and insurance requirements (We currently pay $286 per year for $2 Million coverage). Initial sites to be considered are MCCC, TCNJ, Rider, and local schools.

6. Clarke received a selection of five books from O'Reilly Co. regarding Windows XP at no charge with the provision that we publish a review of each. The titles are Windows XP Hacks, Windows XP Unwired, Windows XP Pocket Reference, Windows XP Pro: The Missing Manual, and Windows XP Annoyances. Don will research the street prices of each on the Internet. The October newsletter will solicit reviewers from the group with the following arrangement: The reviewer will provide a deposit of about the street price of the title he will review. Upon receipt of his review, his deposit will be returned and the review will be published in the next newsletter.

7. O'Reilly also included a 20% discount coupon when ordering directly from them. The October newsletter will announce this.

8. Al offered to serve as a Greeter at the next two meetings. He will sit at the table facing the door and ask attendees to sign in. If the person is a visitor he will welcome them, ask how they heard about the group, give them a newsletter and a membership form, and perhaps introduce them to another member. We want visitors to know that we are glad to have them and would be very glad if they would join.

9. Photos from the last meeting and this board meeting will appear in the October newsletter.

10. Paul was requested to change the APCUG profile to reflect the current newsletter editor. This will make the AP-CUG-provided filler articles available at an earlier date.

11. Clarke suggested that starting time for regular meetings be moved up to 7:30 to allow more time for presentations and to finish the meetings earlier.

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Nominations for 2004 Officers

Election of officers for 2004 will be held at the December meeting. Candidates will be announced at the November meeting. If you would like to nominate a member for an office, make it known at the October meeting or email it to an officer prior to the November meeting.

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Windows XP Books For Free!

Would you like a brand new book about Windows XP from O'Reilly Press for free? The club has one copy each of Windows XP Hacks, Windows XP Unwired, Windows XP Pocket Reference, Windows XP Pro: The Missing Manual, and Windows XP Annoyances to give away. What's the catch? Well, you do have to write a review (500-1000 words) for this newsletter, but that's not much of a catch, is it? Let Clarke know which book you'd like. We'll collect a deposit of about 70% of the list price and give you the book. When you turn in your review, we'll return the deposit and you get to keep the book.

O'Reilly is also making a 20% discount available to all club members when ordering directly from them. Use the discount code DSUG for online orders at www.oreilly.com or phone orders at 800-998-9938.

Paper copies of their current catalog and flyers describing the discount will be available at our October meeting.