

November 2004 Volume 20 Number 11

PPCUG NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

What Everybody Should Know About the Windows Registry Monday, November 8, 2004 Vic Laurie

The Registry is a crucial component of the Windows operating system. What the Registry does and what the average PC user should know about it will be presented. Simple ways to back up and restore the Registry will be discussed. How to use the large number of REG files available on the Internet for useful system tweaks will be shown.

Vic is a retired chemistry professor who is a volunteer instructor of computer classes at the SeniorNet Learning Center in Ewing, NJ, and a PPCUG board member. He is a regular contributor to the PPCUG newsletter and a frequent presenter at our meetings. More information is available at his web sites: <http://www.vlaurie.com> and <http://surfthenetsafely.com>

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 no way imply endorsement of its programs.*

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Coming Events:

December 13, 2004 - Holiday Party and Elections
January 10, 2005 - Single-disk Linux by Kim Goldenberg
February 14, 2005 - Google by Joel May

Nominations for PPCUG 2005 officers will be accepted at the November 8 meeting. This is your chance to help direct the club and give something back for the many programs that you have enjoyed. The Secretary is not returning but all other officers have agreed to continue. Additional candidates are welcome!

About PPCUG

General Meetings

Second Monday of the month at the Lawrenceville Library, Alternate Route 1 and Darrah Lane.
7:00 PM: Social Time / Tech Corner
7:30 PM: Meeting comes to Order
7:45 PM: Featured presentation

For information about upcoming meetings or joining PPCUG, see:

<http://www.ppcug-nj.org>

or email us at:

ppcug@njcc.com (Please include "OK" in the subject line.)

Board Meetings

Board meetings are open to all members. Notice of an upcoming meeting will be posted on the web site.

Board Members

President:

Clarke Walker 609-883-5262

Vice-President:

Tom Carman 732-828-6055

Secretary:

Don Arrowsmith 609-883-9874

Treasurer:

Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778

Members-At-Large:

Al Axelrod 609-737-2827

Vic Laurie 609-924-1220

Kim Goldenberg 609-631-9140

Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Chairpersons

Hospitality:

Bill Hawryluk 609-655-0923

Member Records:

Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778

Newsletter Editor:

Don Arrowsmith 609-883-9874

Program Coordinator:

Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Web Master:

Don Arrowsmith 609-883-9874

2005 Annual Dues

Dues are \$40 per calendar year with a mailed newsletter or \$20 per year with online access to the newsletter. New members pay \$3.25 or \$1.75 per month times the number of months remaining in the current year.

President's Message

Clarke Walker

It has been a while since I wrote a "President's Letter" so I want to start by thanking the volunteers who make our club work so well. In particular the Board members and the parcel pickup volunteers at the Trenton Computer Festival (TCF).

This year TCF will be in our backyard, literally. And they are expecting more talks than in the last few years. Hopefully more of our members will volunteer as speakers so we get greater notice. The dates this time are April 16 and 17, 2005 and it will be at The College of New Jersey, formerly Trenton State College.

When you get this newsletter it will probably be after Election Day. I hope you voted and that there were no computer problems at the polling places. It will soon be time for our Club elections. In November we will accept nominations and in December do the actual vote. The current officers are listed on the Newsletter's masthead.

As I said in an October email, Don Arrowsmith will be moving from the area. Therefore we will need a new Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Web Master. If necessary we could split the jobs up, but having one person do all three has been convenient. (Don has also been my chauffeur when I was recuperating from heart surgery.)

Invite a friend to the November 8th meeting.



Minutes of the October Meeting

Clarke opened the meeting at 7:30 with a request for someone to assume all or some of the duties that Don Arrowsmith has been doing: Secretary, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor, Yahoo! Group moderator. Topics for the Q&A portion included: Double clicking a .DOC file opens Wordpad instead of Word. Can't reset the association. Suggestions: Reinstall Word/Office, Run Chkdsk; Existing Word document has a date field that resets to the current date whenever the document is opened; WinXP SP2 was installed but the user continues to be reminded to install it; A VirusScan message appears whenever Excel is started; User with AT&T as ISP keeps getting his browser home page reset to a URL he doesn't want. Suggestion: Run a spyware checker such as AdAware. The recently released beta of Google Desktop Search was recommended. Microsoft provided several CDs with Windows XP SP2.

Bill Machrone started the main presentation at 7:56. He claims that his introduction to computers was through a class on microcomputer interfacing in 1976 that was taught by our own Sol Libes. One of Bill's current projects is testing MP3 players, and he brought several brands to demonstrate: Rave, iPod, Rio, Dell DJ, iRiver and Archos. He also showed how he uses a Real Time Analyzer software program from YMEC which functions as a Signal generator, Peak level meter, Power spectrum analyzer, 1/3 octave analysis, 3D graph (TEF), and Oscilloscope. This provides a compact and repeatable tool for checking the audio characteristics of the MP3 players. He used an external USB audio card connected to his portable PC. Bill also gave a short run through of Band in a Box (<http://www.pgmusic.com/bandbox.htm>) which he uses to provide accompaniment for his singing gigs. Bill also brought along two t-shirts which were raffled.



Highlights of the October 6th Board Meeting

The board meeting was held at the home of Sol Libes with all members present. The Treasurer's report noted \$4878 in the checking account with about \$1000 net income to date for 2004. We are currently carrying a \$2M liability insurance policy with an annual cost of \$398.

Tentative programs for next few months were selected: November - Sol on Roxio Easy Media Creator v7 [note - postponed because software not received in time]; December - Holiday Party and Elections; January - Kim Goldenberg on using single disk Linux distributions (e.g. Knoppix); February - Joel May on using Google; March - Paul Kurivchack on hard disk recovery using OnTrack's software; May - Vic Laurie



on Short Reviews of his Six Favorite Programs.

Dues for 2005 will remain at \$20 for electronic delivery of newsletter but will increase to \$40 for printed copies. We're currently received an average of 32 emails per day at the ppcug@njcc.com address. Less than .1% are not Spam! Don proposed changing Domain registrars at renewal time. Verisign provides nothing extra and charges \$35 per year. Others are cheaper and have valuable extras included. E.g., GoDaddy charges \$8.95 per year and includes web forwarding and 50 email forwards. We can stop using the existing club email which will stop the Spam deluge. We can then set a new address which uses our own domain name (like info@ppcug-nj.org) and forward that to either a new mailbox or an existing officer's mailbox. We can also set forwarding of the officers (e.g. President@ppcug-nj.org to Clarke's email).

TCF 2005 will return to TCNJ! All board members except the Secretary agreed to stand for reelection for next year. Elections will be held during the December meeting.



Computer Professionals of Center City

is a new group for IT people in Philadelphia. For more info check their web site at <http://cpcentercity.com/index.htm>.



New Jersey Institute of Technology

is hosting the First Annual Symposium: Pioneers Of Computing on Monday, November 8th, 2004 from 10:15 - 4:00 at their Newark, NJ location. Speakers will be researchers with an impressive contribution of lasting effect in the field of computing. This year's speakers are: Amir Pnueli of NYU and Weizman Institute of Science and winner of ACM Turing Award (1996); David S. Johnson of AT&T and winner of Lanchester Prize of the Operations Research Society of America (1979); and George Miller of Princeton University and winner of National Medal of Science (1991). More information can be found at: <http://web.njit.edu/~geller/symposium05.html>.



Web Link of the Month

We previously listed Microsoft's web site to order Windows XP SP2 on CD for free. MS also makes available all service packs for Office 2000, XP and 2003 on CD for free at: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/FX010383631033.aspx>.



Do you have trouble reading the PPCUG Newsletter Online?

I have had two people email me that they were unable to access the PPCUG newsletter from the web site. In both cases I suggested that they make sure that they had the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. They didn't, and updating solved the problem for both of them.

The latest version is 6.02. You can learn your version by

starting Acrobat Reader and then clicking Help - About Acrobat Reader; the version is listed in a box. If you need to update, here's how to get it: If don't have any version of Acrobat Reader, go to <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html> to get version 6.01. After installing v6.01, start AR and click Help - Updates.... Version 6.02 should be listed on the Available block on the left side. Highlight it, click Add, click Update.

Also concerning AR: Adobe Reader SpeedUp is a free utility that claims to reduce the time it takes to start AR by removing many unused add-ins. From their web site: "Adobe Reader SpeedUp is a simple application that was created to help make the loading time of Adobe's Acrobat/Reader software bearable for everyday use. AR SpeedUp only needs to be used once (a process taking only a few seconds) and then your 'Reader will be transformed forever. There are also some tweaking options available. "w00t!", as the young kids say." I have not used it and therefore cannot vouch for it. You can get it at <http://www.tnk-bootblock.co.uk/prods/misc/>.



Recycling and Reusing Computers

Vic Laurie, PPCUG

All of us who are regular users of computers eventually come to the point where we replace what we are using with a new machine. We are then faced with the question of what to do with the old system. Here are some ways to make sure that good use is made of whatever potential is left in the old computer.

What to do with Fully Functional PCs

If it is an obsolete but perfectly serviceable machine that is being considered, there are a variety of possible dispositions to consider.

Some may choose to fill up a closet or other storage area with their old machines with the idea of using them as backup. That was my rationale for keeping an old 400 MHz machine in my closet for a year. Actually I had a better backup with an external hard drive, and my laptop was available if my new desktop had failed, so the PC in the closet was a bit of a waste. (Also, my wife frowned on the idea since we don't have all that much room anyway.) The more ambitious can take the old machine out of the closet and put it to work several ways. Those who have home networks can set up an old machine as a file server. Another use might be to provide a high-security firewall, perhaps using Linux.

All in all, however, the typical home PC user is probably going to want to find a way to usefully dispose of an old machine. Some may want to consider selling the system. However, prices for brand new systems have come down to the point where I do not personally think the bother of selling is worth the small amount of money involved. If you are interested in selling, go to Ebay and see what your type of system is bringing. Another option is to give the PC to a relative or friend who is willing to accept hand-me-downs. Even quite old machines are capable of doing most, if not

all, applications that the average person uses. However, new machines are sufficiently inexpensive that using obsolete equipment is not as attractive as it once was. I know that my grandchildren would feel put upon if they did not get a new Dell or new HP or new something. There are, however, many less fortunate people who would be happy to receive an older machine and here are some ways to donate an obsolete but still functional machine to a place that will make good use of it.

Where to Donate Computers

Giving a computer to a good cause is a triple-play. The environment benefits from getting the extra use from the machine, somebody who couldn't otherwise afford it gets a computer, and you get a tax break. Perhaps you know a local organization or charity where you can take your old computer (I give mine to SeniorNet). Otherwise, there are a number of organizations that will help you get your computer to some deserving recipient. Some of these are given below (in no particular order).

Share the Technology - <http://www.sharetechnology.org/donate.html> Provides a database for matching potential donors with local schools, nonprofit organizations and people with disabilities. Donors can check who needs what in their local area.

Nonprofit Recycling & Reuse Network - <http://www.recycles.org/> A worldwide network of non-profit recyclers, donors, volunteers, and other interested parties. Has a collection of links and organizations seeking computers.

World Computer Exchange - <http://www.worldcomputerexchange.org/> International educational nonprofit focused on helping the world's poorest youth. Provides computers to underdeveloped countries. There are a number of drop-off centers or you can ship your computer to them.

The Computers for Schools Program - <http://pcsforschools.org/howhlp/howtodon.html> Refurbishes donated equipment and sends to schools. Has collection sites around the country.

TechSoup - <http://www.techsoup.org/> Has a comprehensive body of information on computer recycling and reuse. Resources for those who would like to donate hardware, those who would like to acquire recycled hardware, and refurbishers.

CompuMentor - <http://www.compumentor.org/> Nonprofit organization specializing in technology assistance for community-based organizations and schools. Participant in the Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR) Donation Program.

National Technology Recycling Project - <http://www.ntrp.org/state1.html> Recyclers listed by state

National Cristina Foundation - <http://www.cristina.org/> Provides computers for people with disabilities, students at risk and economically disadvantaged persons.

Article by Lee Hudspeth - <http://www.thenakedpc.com/>

[articles/v05/04/0504-03.html](http://www.thenakedpc.com/articles/v05/04/0504-03.html) Tips on how to find places in your locality for donating computers.

Guidelines for Giving Away a Computer

As a rough rule, any computer much over five years old will probably not interest many possible recipients. Most require a Pentium or Pentium II or the equivalent. Old 486s are probably destined to be scrapped. Generally, a complete system is desired so all the peripherals such as keyboard and mouse should be included. If available, include all the manuals and instruction sheets that came with the computer.

There are some tricky points about the operating system and software on any system that you give away. Be aware of software licensing rules. Microsoft in particular takes a very hard line on enforcing its EULA although they do have a program (<https://www.techsoup.org/mar/Default.asp>) for providing non-profit refurbishers with copies of Windows 98 or Windows 2000. The operating system and any other installed software that stays on the computer should be accompanied by the installation disks and manuals. Keeping copies for your own use probably violates the licensing agreement. Check to see if your computer is going to be used as is or is going to be refurbished. Many organizations reformat the hard drive and install their own software, in which case it's possible that you retain the software licenses. OEM licensing can be murky, however, and can be permanently tied to one particular system.

Make sure that any confidential files or personal information is removed. There are many stories about people who have obtained used computers and found the hard drive to be full of sensitive information about the previous owner. Even if the machine is going to a refurbisher, the safest thing is to remove anything personal. My procedure is to reformat the disk and then, if needed, reinstall the operating system and any other software. If your data are especially sensitive, there are more drastic measures. A low-level format or use of a utility like Norton *Wipe Info* will overwrite the disk. More information on cleaning up can be found at <http://www.thenakedpc.com/articles/v04/21/0421-04.html>.

Scrapping a computer

If a computer is not functional or is too old to be of interest to a charity or other organization, there are services that will dispose of it in an environmentally safe way. Your local community may provide a service or there may be scrap dealers in your area. Here are some sites that have databases for finding dealers:

Global Scrap Dealers - <http://grn.com/grn/index.html>

Electronics Recycling - <http://www.electronicsrecycling.org/>

List of US Computer Scrap Companies - <http://sharetechnology.org/resources/showdetail.asp?detail=26&orgnum=1>

Open Directory List of Dealers - http://dmoz.org/Business/Energy_and_Environment/Waste_Management/Recycling/Electronics/



Smart Tags:

What they are, How to use them**

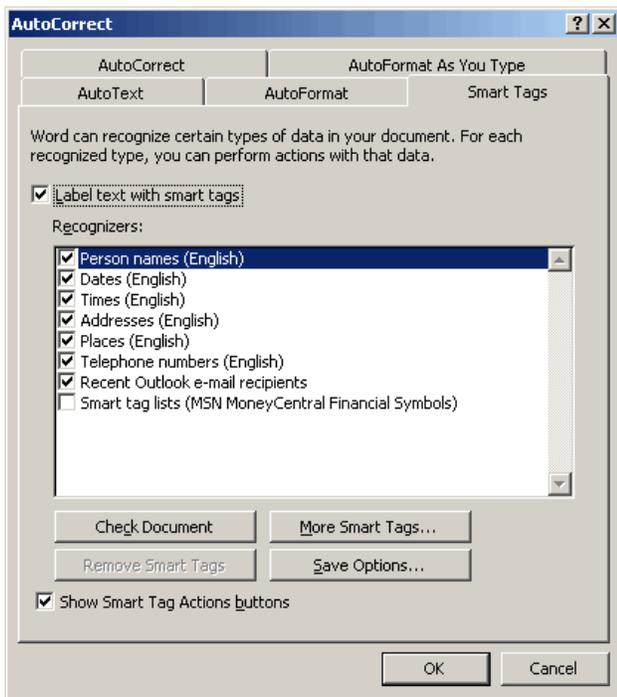
Linda Gonse, Editor,

Orange County IBM PC Users' Group

To some, Smart Tags may be a valuable tool. To others, they are a pain in the index finger.

If you've never seen Smart Tags before, you may not know what they are, or how they work. Smart Tags seemingly pop up when you least expect them in a Word 2003 or XP document.

Briefly, Smart Tags are prompted by seven types of information, called "recognizers": People's names, dates, times, addresses, places, phone numbers, and recent email recipients in Outlook. Word uses the recognizers to bring you additional choices related to them.



Smart Tags and the options for using them are located on your tool bar, under Tools. Click on AutoCorrect, and the Smart Tags tab to access them. You can check or uncheck certain "recognizers," such as people's names, to customize the tags for your style of use and needs.

Depending on which recognizer you type, two things happen. First, a small, yellow text box - similar to a tool tip when your cursor hovers over toolbar buttons - appears over a partially-typed recognizer and offers to auto-complete it. You can accept the offer by pressing Enter, or if you continue to type, the text box will disappear.

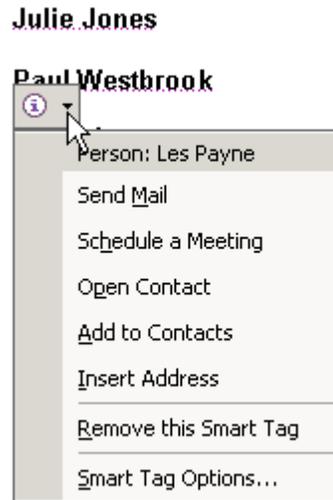
February (Press ENTER to Insert)
Febr

Secondly, after you have typed a recognizer, a small box

with a down arrow will appear above the entry. Clicking on the down arrow triggers a submenu to open, offering you specific options for the information. The tags were designed to help you do your work faster by bringing relevant choices to you, instead of you taking time to locate them.

This is where the conflict arises between the helped and the helper. Similar to ClipIt and the other Office Assistants, Smart Tags can be distracting and interrupt your work flow. And, they can obscure other text you may want to see. Take it from me, a couple of helpful Smart Tags in one paragraph can incite you to "page rage" pretty fast!

But, suppose you need all the help you can get and let's say you've just typed a person's name in your document. If the box was checked on the Smart Tags tab, the name would be recognized by Word and a Smart Tag would appear next to it. You can take your pick from a list of whether to Send Mail, Schedule a Meeting, Open or Add to Outlook Contacts, and Insert Address.



Smart Tag help is probably like a glass of frosty tea on a hot day to people who have trouble spelling. Just spell the first four letters of a month, for instance, and a Smart Tag will be there like a flash spelling the entire word for you.

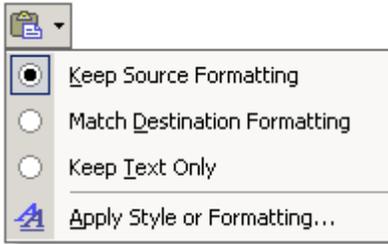
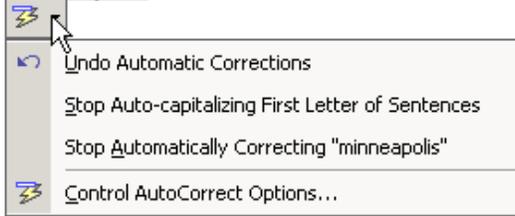
How many times have you been startled in the middle of typing a word by seeing the previous word suddenly capitalized? Suppose you didn't want it AutoCorrected? Smart Tags will give you a chance to quickly change it back to lower case with a tag that has a picture of a lightning bolt on it. On the other hand, you may decide to go to Tools, AutoCorrect, and take that check mark off of Capitalize the First Letter of a Sentence, and be done with this situation henceforth and forever.

Smart Tags also include a box with a picture of a clipboard that appears under text that you have pasted. This gives you choices on your pasted selection. This may not be a bad idea. Even nicer, is that the Paste Options box doesn't cover your pasted text, unlike other Smart Tags.

New York, New York

Los Angeles, California

Minneapolis, Minnesota



If you want to have the Smart Tags, but not the yellow text labels, go to the Smart Tags tab and deselect "Label text with Smart Tags." You'll still have the popup Smart Tags with context menus.

But, you can limit these to appear without some of the recognizers by unchecking the boxes next to them. Or, you can turn them off completely by deselecting the box at the bottom of the tab, "Show Smart Tag Actions Buttons."



Interestingly, the Smart Tags themselves have a button at the bottom of their context menus called "Smart Tag Options." Click on this menu item and a Smart Tag tab allows you to make similar tweaks, including turning Smart Tags off.

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All unattributed articles are solely the fault of the editor.

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