Bring Your Family Album to Life

Steven Kieley

Monday, January 9, 2006

Ever wanted to share your treasured photos with family and friends without going through the hassle of passing around a scrapbook?

See your still photos come to life with custom text, notes, graphics and even sound. Package them in a format easily presentable to your family and friends either over the internet, on your computer or on your TV. Make a slide show that includes the voices of your grandchildren with music, sound effects and even videos. Come and see how easy it is to do this using programs such as PowerPoint at the January 2006 meeting of the Princeton PC Users Group.

Steven Kieley has been an instructor for about 18 months at the Ewing SeniorNet Computer Literacy Center (www.ewingsnet.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.*

In this issue:

Coming Schedule

February 14—Verizon—Fiber Optic Access and Consumer Choice
March 13—TBA
April 10—TBA
May 8—TBA

Minutes of the December Meeting

Clarke interrupted the Holiday Party at 8:00 p.m. to hold elections for the next year.

The following officers were elected unanimously:

2006 Officers

President	**Clarke Walker**
Vice President	**Tom Carman**
Secretary	**vacant**
Treasurer	**Houston Landis**
Board Members-At-Large	
	Al Axelrod
	Kim Goldenberg
	Paul Kurivchack
	Vic Laurie
	Sol Libes

As you can see we are still looking for a Secretary.

We then sat in a semicircle discussing the changes to computing over the years. At least we are young enough to still remember, in other words our core memory is still intact.

Several members commented that they like the semicircle layout so we will try this again as we start our meetings.

Minutes of the December Board Meeting

At around 9:00 p.m. after the membership meeting was completed the Officers and Board met to make appointments for the new year. They are:

2006 "Chairpersons"

Hospitality	**Bill Hawryluk**
Newsletter Editor	**Clarke Walker**
Web Master	**Joe Budelis**
Members Records	**Paul Kurivchack**
Program Coordinator	**Sol Libes**

The Board also agreed to keep the membership dues the same , $40 (new members $3.25 per month) with a printed and mailed newsletter and $20 ($1.75) with electronic access to the newsletter.

- Submitted by Clarke Walker

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President's Message

It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone.

Thanks to Bill Hawryluk for bringing the refreshments at the December Holiday meeting.

I've started to shop around for a new computer system. I bought my current one in February 2001. At the time it was close to the state of the art. But it is having trouble keeping up with my demands to do video processing. A lot has changed over the years. Since then WindowXP has come out. USB is now USB high speed 2.0, Firewire is now IEEE 1384b (800), SATA drives have been born and the parallel ATA drives are getting harder to find. Everyone is using wireless networks of some sort. Back then the common disk drive size was 120 Gbytes and now 300 Gbytes is common. Well brace yourself for there will be more changes by the end of the year when Microsoft may be releasing a new operating system code named Vista.

Because Monday February 13, 2006 is Lincoln's birthday the library will be closed. Thus we will meet the next day, Tuesday, February 14th.

We are seeking presenters for our Winter and Spring meetings. Please contact Sol Libes (sol@libes.com) if you wish to make a presentation or have a topic and/or speaker to suggest.

- Clarke Walker

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Treasurer's Report

Expense	2005 Totals
Newsletter Printing	$45.53
Newsletter Postage	$40.70
Hospitality	$156.16
Capital Exp	$0.00
NJ Treasurer Report	$25.00
TCF Parcel Pickup	$0.00
Insurance	$69.00
Post Office Box	$44.00
Misc. Postage	$0.00
Misc. Exp	$57.78
Misc Printing	$0.00
APCUG Dues	$0.00
Group Sponsor Dues	$0.00
	$438.17

Income		
Dues	$	1,457.50
TCF Parcel Pickup	$	384.22
		$1,841.72

Income vs. Expenses	*$*	*1,403.55*

Summary
Bank Of America Checking Account
Opening Balance January 1, 2005 $ 4,529.55
Closing Balance December 31, 2005 $ 5,933.10

Difference $ 1,403.55

Submitted by Paul Kurivchack

Link of the Month

Last month we had a web link that would let you "know everything". Now here is a web site that will let you know about everyone:

http://www.ussearch.com/

At the last meeting a member asked about improving the type on their screen. Here is a link to Microsoft's Cleartype tuner:

http://www.microsoft.com/typography/cleartype/tuner/Step1.aspx

Have you discovered a useful link? Then share it with the members of the P PC UG.

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Tips for Using Outlook Express

by Vic Laurie., http://vlaurie.com
Member of the Princeton PC Users Group

Outlook Express (OE), which is bundled with the Windows operating system, is probably the email client most commonly used by the average home PC user (AOL subscribers not included). Nonetheless, many users of OE don't pay much attention to how OE works and are often puzzled by some of its quirks. In this article I will give some tips on how OE works and how to use it better. Some of this material was previously given in my blog at http://tips.vlaurie.com/
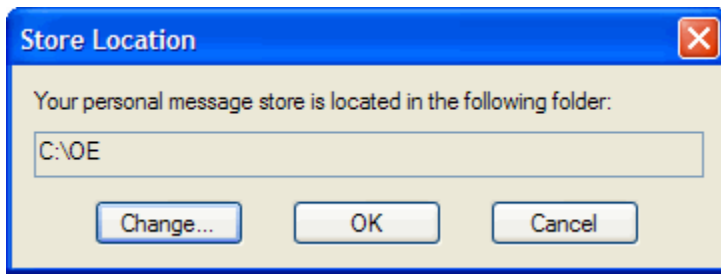
How Outlook Express stores mail

A peculiarity of OE that many are not aware of is the proprietary way that email is stored. OE is organized with folders such as "Inbox", "Outbox", "Sent", and "Deleted". Rather than store individual messages as separate files, OE stores the contents of each folder in one proprietary binary file with the extension DBX. Thus there is a file *Inbox.dbx*, a file *Outbox.dbx*, a file *Sent.dbx*, and so forth. These files cannot be read by simply clicking on them. All of these files are kept in a hidden folder called "Outlook Express" that is buried deep down in the *Documents and Settings* folder with a very long and arcane path. Each user account has its own folder. Also, if you use more than one identity, each identity will have its own folder. Identities are assigned a long hexadecimal name (a GUID or Globally Unique Identifier). Here is an example of a path:

C:\Documents and Settings\UserName\Local Settings\Application Data\Identities
{ACEF249B-0C16-491C-B19E-347F8295C81C}\Microsoft\Outlook Express

A more convenient place for Outlook Express mail

For many PC users, some of the most important personal data on their computers are their saved email messages. If you ever want to back up or copy the files where they are stored, you may have a hard time finding them because of the complicated path discussed above. The easiest way to find where your Outlook Express mail is stored is to open Outlook Express, go to the **Tools-Options** menu and click the "Maintenance" tab. There will be a button "Store Folder". If you click that, a dialog box "Store Location" will open. It will list where your mail is currently being kept. Use the "Change" button to move where you keep mail to a more accessible location. Choose a new location by typing in the box or use the Browse function. The figure below shows the "Store Location" box with a changed location.

Store Location

Your personal message store is located in the following folder:

C:\OE

[Change...] [OK] [Cancel]

How to add special characters to email

Did you ever want to put a special character like the cent sign (¢) or the British pound sign (£) into an email? Or use the correct symbols for Spanish or other languages? Regular users of word processing programs like Microsoft Word probably already know how to do this but many average PC users are not aware that two easy methods of inserting special characters are readily available. The first and more comprehensive way is to use the Windows accessory called *Windows Character Map*. On most XP machines this can be found either in **All Programs-Accessories-System Tools** or in **All Pro-grams-Accessories**. I give the details of how to use the program at this link, http://vlaurie.com/computers2/Articles/charset.htm.

Another method makes use of the Numeric Keypad. That is the section on the right of many keyboards that is ignored by a lot of PC users. It actually has some functions and here is one of them. First, make sure the "Num Lock' light is on. This function is toggled by the "Num Lock" key. Now you can enter special characters into Word documents, Outlook Express messages, and other documents by holding down the *Alt* key and entering a number code for a variety of special characters, and then releasing the *Alt* key. For example, to enter the cent sign (¢) hold down the *Alt* key, enter the numbers 0162 into the Numeric Keyboard, and then release the *Alt* key. I have put up a table of numbers for commonly used symbols on my Web-site at http://www.vlaurie.com/computers2/Articles/specchar.htm.

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Product Review: Hawking HWL2
Professional Wi-Fi Detector/Adapter

by Lewis A. Edge, Jr., http://www.lewisedge.com/

Member of the Princeton PC Users Group

Anyone who has dealt with a weak, sketchy Wi-Fi signal for Internet access knows what a frustrating experience it is to have the data stream repeatedly interrupted. Hawking's HWL2 Professional Wi-Fi detector and adapter is designed to help road warriors track down signals they can use to access the Internet.

Virtually all new notebook computers come with built-in Wi-Fi adapters, but the user must first boot the computer to see if a signal is available. Even then, if the built-in adapter doesn't have a strong antenna and receiver, a weak signal might be missed or unreliable.

Resembling a clamshell type cell phone, the HWL2 has a built-in battery and works independently of any computer to detect Wi-Fi B/G hot spots and determine whether or not the signal is encrypted. Just flip it open like a phone and press a button. LEDs light up indicating how many signals are available, how strong they are, whether they are G or B and if they're en-crypted. Once a usable signal is detected this device can be connected to the USB port of a computer and used as a high-gain Wi-Fi B/G receiver. While it's plugged into the computer the HWL2's battery automatically recharges.

Being frustrated with dropped signals and poor performance with weak signals on my laptop's built-in Wi-Fi detector, I bought one of these Hawking units about three months ago and have been delighted with its performance. When I'm work-ing in my remote office in downtown Princeton, the Hawking HWL2 makes the difference between receiving "low" signal with frequent drop-outs from my notebook computer's built-in Wi-Fi and a "very good" signal that is rock-steady using the

Hawking.

While traveling, this Hawking device often makes the difference between my being able to access the Internet or not. During the recent Thanksgiving weekend I stayed at a bed & breakfast in Cleveland, Ohio that claimed, on its Website, to have "*limited Wi-Fi*" availability. When I arrived to check in they told me at the front desk that their Wi-Fi signal was "limited" to the front lobby area.

When I got to my room, I cranked up my trusty HWL2. There was no signal from the hotel, but I found several decent signals from Case Western Reserve University, which was about a block away, that were obviously intended for their campus visitors. I locked into the strongest one and had reliable, fast Internet access during my stay. My laptop's built-in Wi-Fi adapter found no signals. Without my Hawking adapter, I would have had no Internet access from my room.

The included software and configuration utility is much more flexible than using my Windows-XP configuration software. The case is cheap looking and somewhat flimsy. I keep it closed with a rubber band, but the performance is first-rate. Its directional antenna helps me to pinpoint a signal source. Hawking tech support is difficult to contact and slow to respond. The Hawking HWL2 Professional model is currently selling on the Internet for between $64 and $99. There is also a model made especially for Apple Macintosh computers called the HWL2A.

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What Comes After You Have Your Pictures in Tip Top Shape?

by Donald Cummins., labash@spcug.org
APCUG Representative, Fresno Personal Computer Users Group, California

Paper and ink are a team – one without the other is just paper or ink. Paper is one of the least understood or overlooked items.

Paper should be used with care. A wedding picture may be a total loss if you put it on the incorrect type of paper. If the picture is taken on the soft side (not very sharp) and printed on very glossy paper, it will make it look out of focus. It would be much better if it is printed on less glossy paper or, even better, on a matte-finish paper. Many of the wedding photos may need to be printed on a number of different types of paper to find the best results. At the same time, the ink cartridges may need to be changed from one group of photos to another.

Some people feel you should use only one brand of paper that is made for your brand of printer; e.g. Epson printer should only use Epson paper and Epson original ink cartridges. They say do not "mix and match." Others say stick with one brand of paper or ink and know everything about them. This can be a huge effort at the beginning but may pay off later. Each photo should be and must be looked upon as being unique unto itself.

Now this is where ink comes into play. There are two types of ink dye and pigment. Dye inks produce somewhat brighter colors and are prone to fading. They now may last 10 years or longer. Pigment inks are less bright and last longer than dye ink on photos.

Some feel that the larger number of dots per inch is one of the biggest things that will enhance the finished photo. The other side says 1440 dpi is all you really need. The droplet size may be the finishing touch to the photo if your printer can put down a droplet size of four picoliters and/or smaller; this is too small for our eyes to see. Some printers are even putting down droplets as small as 1.5 picoliters.

Does the ink bleed through or run or take forever to dry and cause the paper to cup up? Some will lay down the ink in a number of passes and others may lay the ink down in one pass. One may require the paper to move through a number of rollers and others will pass straight through.

One item which can affect the finished photo is how thick the paper is. You need to check how the paper moves through the printer because the way it moves will control how thick the paper can be.

Printers now have many more capabilities than four or five years ago. They have more ink colors, ink placement size, and

speed than ever before.

For detailed printer information, check the following websites for their information on printers, ink and paper information:

Epson – www.epson.com
Canon – www.canon.com
Hewlett-Packard – www.hp.com

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Pictures of the Holiday Meeting

by Bud Lewis, budnorth@att.net
Member of the Princeton PC Users Group

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Help Wanted
Secretary
The group is in need of a Secretary to take minutes of the meetings. Also to read and respond to club email. See Joe Budelis for more information.
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