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PPCUG NEWS

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Using A USB Flash Drive

Sol Libes

Monday, June 11, 2007

Low-cost USB flash drives can be used for many things. As a simple device they can just be used to backup and transfer data files. But they can also be made into "Smart" drives with personal applications with associated settings and data. You can use them on any PC without leaving any traces behind. These devices can also be password protected to secure your data.

Sol will discuss "Smart" USB flash drives. Buying tips for "Smart" drives, making a dumb USB drive "Smart", where to get free applications for your "Smart" drives, how to install applications on flash drives, and how to run applications from a flash drive.

Sol Libes is a retired Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Programming. He has a BA from the City University of New York and an MS from Rutgers University. Sol is the author of 16 books, most on Personal Computer hardware and software design. In 1976 Sol co-founded the annual Trenton Computer Festival. Sol is currently an instructor at [Ewing SeniorNet](#) teaching seniors how to get the most out of their personal computers.

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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Upcoming Schedule

July 9 -----	Michael Murphy—Office 2007, Vista Security
August 13 -----	Joel May — The Many Faces of Google
September 10 ----	Kim Goldenberg — Linux Update
October 15 -----	John LeMasney — Firefox Browser Extensions
November 5-----	Janie Hermann and Karen Klapperstuck
-----	----- — Social Software: Hype vs. Reality

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.nj (at) gmail.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.

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Clarke Walker 609-883-5262

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2007 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.

Minutes of the May Meeting



At 7:30 p.m. Clarke started the Meeting.

Gabriel Goldberg from The Association of PC User Groups talked about the Association and then demonstrated some useful electronic gadgets.

More info at www.apcug.net and www.compukiss.com

Gabe Goldberg by Clarke Walker

- Submitted by Clarke Walker



Pictures from the May Meeting

by Clarke Walker, [Clarke.Walker \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:Clarke.Walker@yahoo.com)

President of the Princeton PC Users Group





President's Message

It was great having Gabe Goldberg who is an Advisor to APCUG give his presentation at our meeting.

This month we have one of our favorite speakers and member Sol Libes. Sol is going to talk about Flash Drives and some of the applications that use them.

- Clarke Walker



Link of the Month

Tom Cosmos has suggested:

http://h30187.www3.hp.com/?jumpid=reg_R1002_USEN

Which has free on-line computer classes from the HP Learning Center.

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



Beware of Web Pages Bearing Gifts

By Vic Laurie

Member of Princeton PC User Group

With holidays just past, many people reading this article from AARP's Web site will need techno-wisdom for dealing with gifts received by family, friends, and themselves. But with conflicting suggestions from mailing lists, Web sites, stores, and manufacturers all around us, a trusted guidebook is valuable.

These days Web pages are full of ads offering all sorts of amazing free stuff like Toshiba laptops and copies of Windows Vista Ultimate. (Incidentally, a lot of these originate from Google AdSense.) Obviously, there's a catch somewhere and I decided to find out what it is. So I set out to get a free copy of the full edition of Vista Ultimate, a \$399 item.

I created a throwaway email address and I clicked on one of the ubiquitous offers. The first page asked me to enter my zip code to see if the offer were valid in my area. I'm not sure why an offer would depend on area but perhaps some states have stricter laws than others or maybe the citizens of some areas are more gullible than others. Anyway, I put in a NJ code that fit the false address I was going to use and that seemed to qualify. Then I got a page that asked me to give the address where my free Vista would be shipped, my telephone number, and my email address. There were also some marketing questions. Using a false identity, I filled in the required information. (Incidentally, they accepted 609-555-1212 for the telephone number.) The next page assured me I was almost done (a misleading statement if there ever was one) but it said I needed to complete their page of other free offers first. I had to check "yes" or "no" by 16 different offers, some of which were already checked "yes" and had to be changed to "no". I submitted the page and another page of offers appeared that again had to be checked "no" one by one in many places. And then another page of offers appeared and then another and then another. It was tiresome but in the interests of research I plowed on.

Then things got stickier. All of a sudden the offer of a free copy of Vista Ultimate turned into a free Vista Business edition, a drop in value of \$100. There was no indication of why or what I could do about it. Further, although the first group of offers let me say "no" to everything, now I got page after page where I was required to accept at least one offer. And these were not free offers but all required an actual purchase and a credit card number. At this point I decided I had seen enough so I decided to get on with my life and gave up. I have no idea how long the charade would have gone on but I imagine that very few people who start the process ever finish, let alone collect the free copy of Vista or whatever the bait is. Among the small print of the initial page was the statement that "delivery may be delayed due to shortage of supply." In other words, you may have a long wait before you get your supposed free reward. No doubt the company behind this "free" offer collects a lot of marketing information and snares a lot of hopeful suckers into trying some of their various products without ever having to actually give away very many (if any) copies of Vista or Toshiba laptops or whatever.

And of course the email address that you give to them immediately starts getting spam. I checked it while I was in the middle of the process and there were spam messages within a few minutes after I filled out the first form. At the end I gleefully discarded the address.

So once more the old adage, "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch", holds true.



Renew the Artist in You: ArtRage 2

by Rob Rice, [articles \(at\) isp.com](mailto:articles(at)isp.com)

Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, <http://www.ccokc.org>



Spring is a season of light, color and renewal; it is a season that can bring out the artist in all of us. When I look at a product like *ArtRage 2*, by *Ambient Design*, I can feel some of that same renewal that spring offers right there on my computer screen. A clean, well behaved and very intuitive product, the free version of ArtRage 2 is about as difficult as finger painting.

Coded in the low stress environment of a New Zealand forest, just outside of Auckland, ArtRage is a nice blend of a simple user interface with the power to create high quality work. I say that ArtRage is about as difficult as finger painting and I mean that, but do not think that it shares finger painting's limitations. One look at some of those samples on this page (From the Ambient Design website) should be obvious.

Since its initial release by former MetaCreations Corporation employees Andy Bearsley and Matt Fox-Wilson in 2004 as a free product, ArtRage has been steadily polished and improved. Available in English, French and German versions, for both Windows and MacOSX, a new edition for the UltraMobile PC is also available.

A recipient of many awards, ArtRage comes with a good user's manual and several helpful tutorials are available on the Ambient Design website, such as how to paint a Macaw.

Installing and opening ArtRage 2 offers no surprises, such as ads, spyware, or pressure to buy the full version. You are greeted with a clean interface. On the lower left is your Tool Picker which contains:

- Oil Brush.
- Pencil.
- Palette Knife.
- Eyedropper.
- Felt Pen.

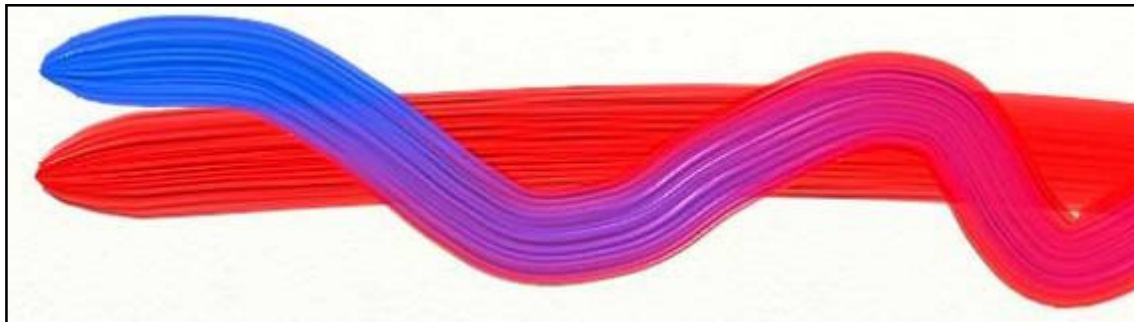
- Chalk.
- Crayon.
- Eraser

More tools are added in the full version such as Airbrush, Paint Tube, Glitter, and Paint Roller.

On the lower right is the Color Picker. At top is a menu containing such familiar options as File, Edit, Tools, and Help.



Various other menus are located at the sides which allow for brush pressure and tilt angle. One of my favorite features is the Tracing Images and References feature. With Tracing Image the original is projected on to your canvas so that you can use it as a guide while you sketch and paint. Other features include (From the Ambient Design website):



- Layers: Paint on transparent layers to build up more complex images without the paint blending with your underlying work. The texture of the underlying paint will still show through, as if it were dry on your canvas. ArtRage also provides full support for all 23 Photoshop layer blend modes.
- PSD Support: Import and export PSD files, with their layers intact.



- Custom Colours: Load and save custom colour set and colour pickers to fine tune your colour work.
- Crop & Resize: Crop and resize your paintings during work.
- Simple, Intuitive Interface: The ArtRage interface is easy to understand and doesn't get in the way of your work. In fact, it even gets out of the way while you're painting...
- Customizable Canvases: Change the grain, colour, and even metallic nature of your canvas at any time during your work.
- Canvas Positioning: Move, Scale, and Rotate the canvas to your preferred angle.
- Tablet Support: ArtRage uses your tablet's pressure and tilt support where available.
- Tool Cursors: Every tool has a cursor that tells you exactly how big the tool head is, to make it easier to see what's going to be applied.
- Multi-Monitor Support: ArtRage supports multi-monitor systems.

It appears that every effort has been made to make the painting and drawing as realistically as possible - even down to providing a water glass to clean your brush in!

Paints blend predictably or not at all, your choice. Textures, blending and smudging all appear extremely accurate.

As I mentioned earlier, there is a Full version which sells for \$19.95. It unlocks several features such as the Metallic Paint option; with this feature enabled you can paint with gold and silver oil paints, sparkling glitter, silver leaf sprays and more.

Tools can be switched to Metallic mode for a range of effects.

Checking with the forums to see what users were saying about the product, a common topic was how, after using the free version of ArtRage, they bought the full version and never looked back. After playing with the free edition, I can see why. ArtRage 2, is a terrific program and worth the money. ArtRage 2 is rare combination of a program that can do high quality work and yet make the computer fun again!

Windows: Windows XP, 2k, or Tablet PC. 800 MHz processor or faster and 256 megabytes of RAM.

Macintosh: Macintosh OS X 10.3.9 or later. G4 processor or faster and 256 megabytes of RAM. ArtRage for OS X is a universal binary.

Ambient Design, <http://www.ambientdesign.com/>
ArtRage 2 at Ambient Design, <http://www.ambientdesign.com/artrage.html>
ArtRage 2 Quick Start Guide, <http://www2.ambientdesign.com/files/quickstart.zip>



Note: The APCUG has arranged a discount for members of the Princeton PC Users Group. The checkout code will be made available only via the club's private email list. Members can get a 15% discount (\$19.95 MSRP) on the program for either Windows or Mac OSX. The code is valid until July 20th.

When a potential customer uses the online store (http://store.kagi.com/cgi-bin/store.cgi?storeID=6FCJJ_LIVE&&), they enter the platform they'd like to purchase ArtRage for (Windows or Mac OSX) and when they view their cart to enter payment details, there is a Coupon/Promotional Code entry box in which that coupon ID can be entered.



Secure Your Flash Drive Cap

by Fran Damratowski, [refurbishing \(at\) chesapeakepcusersgroup.org](mailto:refurbishing(at)chesapeakepcusersgroup.org)
Refurbishing SIG Leader, Chesapeake PC Users Group, MD, www.chesapeakepcusersgroup.org

Have you ever misplaced your flash drive cap? No need to ever do that again. Secure it with a button. You will need

- a shirt button,
- some heavy thread such as carpet thread,
- double sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam,
- double sided sticky tape, and
- some colorless nail polish.

1. Run the thread diagonally through two of the buttonholes and secure with a square knot.
2. Place the knot on the top of the button not on the flat bottom of the button.
3. Cut the thread long enough to secure it with enough play to remove the cap.
4. Cut a small piece of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam about the size of the button.
5. Remove the backing from one side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place a small piece of the double-sided sticky tape on the sticky side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam. (The double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam does not hold well without the sticky tape. The tape alone does not hold well either.)
6. Securely attach the flat side of the button to the sticky tape.

7. Trim the excess tape and foam using an x-acto knife.
8. Remove the backing from the other side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place another piece of double sided sticky tape on the foam.
9. Securely attach the button foam and tape to the flash drive cap.
10. Secure the other end of the thread to the flash drive or lanyard.
11. Leave enough play to easily remove the cap, but not get tangled.
12. Use the colorless nail polish to secure the knots so they don't become undone.

After the nail polish dries trim the thread.

OR

You could go to your local photo shop and buy a \$2+ button size lens cap keeper (or cap retainer) and modify it as needed. Most of them appear to come with elastic bands that are placed around the lens barrel as opposed to a leash that can be attached to another part of the camera.



Memorials and Memories

by *Charlie Sickels*, [wsickels \(at\) sbcglobal.net](mailto:wsickels@sbglobal.net)

Managing Editor, Hard-Copy, Chicago Computer Society, www.ccs.org

In the US, the end of May is a national time for remembering people and events, a time to recall and to honor. Some of it is public; some is personal; it is all profound and deeply felt. It is well and good that we should engage in this process. It is affirming and appropriate that we honor what is worthwhile and often bought at heavy cost. Our lives and society have been affected for good or ill by what has gone before. Some will come again and it is up to us to learn from the past and keep watch on the future.

No less profound, but with less emotional content, is the march of technological progress. This journal is concerned with many aspects of personal computing, what it does and can do, what we believe it will do if properly managed, where it will go. But this may also be a time to consider where it has been, not necessarily how it got here, just what it was like in an earlier era.

Those of us of a certain maturity and extended contact at whatever level with the world of computing can surely recall many steps along the way, glimpses both trivial and meaningful on the decades-long path we have trod. Let us try a hasty and hazy recollection of those steps and share some here. We refer to the earlier and later days of what has become both common in our lives and essential to them. We speak not of the Cray and Lord knows what other supercomputers are now extant, whether acknowledged or secret, but of the early surge in size and power, names like Burroughs, RCA, Honeywell, and the prince destined to be king, IBM.

We may all remember the Big Iron years of heavily air conditioned big rooms of big machines with rows of tape drives the size of refrigerators, all color matched in IBM Blue, IBM Red, or IBM Gray. Spinning inch-wide tape reels were the size of huge dinner plates and gave way in time to the real and early floppy disks. The machines were handled by skillful computer operators and used information digitally coded by intense computer programmers, the new elite career of the time which sheltered nerds and geniuses alike from the world of the commonplace.

Changes came. Evolution brought "distributed processing", which evolved into microcomputers still with linkage to the heavy hardware and equipped with the arcane language of DOS. Then massive increases in memory capacity enabled the Graphical User Interface, GUI, and the dam began to give way. GUI and Windows fostered independent personal computers, growing from ever increasing memory, speed, and what vendors loved to proclaim, "increased productivity". Then, being linked to the wondrous Internet made having a home computer as reasonable as having a car. Or two. Fame and fortune has shifted to the little machines spread throughout the land, their developers, their makers, and their users, In our mar-

vels of expanded access to information and communication, this can be a time to pause and honor those who made it all possible by many years of work and logical choices. Most of them are not famous and I do not know their names, but no less do them honor. Those who are famous already have what they deserve, or more.

In honoring ingenuity, I'd like to relate a lesser-known incident from the early days of Big Iron's reign. IBM was establishing new information hubs at major international cities. The Paris center was having mysterious problems with new information tapes and periodic updates. Emergency calls for replacements brought new tapes and similar though slightly different problems. They were undamaged but still faulty. Poughkeepsie sent an international systems engineering team to Paris to discover the problem's cause and find a solution. They carried a fresh set of calibrated tapes proven functional. They watched them disappear into and re-emerge from French Customs, whereupon they too proved faulty.

Careful inspection revealed that the tapes were a bit shorter. Sure enough, the suspicious French Customs officials were routinely clipping several meters from the start of every tape for later analysis. With this deduction, IBM simply moved the initialization instructions some fifty feet deeper preceded by sacrificial random data. Success was immediate. No protestations needed; no excuses received; no announcements made. We also honor enterprise.



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