

OCTOBER 2000 VOLUME 16 NUMBER 10

PPCUG

NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

Monday October 16, 2000

Intel

Jackie Saunders

Learn about current and upcoming Intel microprocessors, cameras, microscope and networking products.

At

Lawrence Library

Meeting Rooms 1 & 2

US 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 implies endorsement of its programs*

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Scott Vincent demonstrating a simple local area network (LAN) at the SeptemberGeneral Monthly Meeting.

Digital Photo by: Ed Weiss

About PPCUG

General Meetings

Second Monday of the month at the Lawrenceville Library.
Route 1 and Darrah Lane.
7:00-7:45 PM: Social Time / Tech Corner
7:45 PM: Meeting Comes to Order
8 PM: Featured Presentation

Board Meetings

Third Monday of the Month
8 PM at Lawrenceville Library.
Board meetings are open to All.

Board Members

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TBA
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Program Coordinator:
Sol Libes 609-520-9024
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Jon Abolins 609-883-8126

Voice Mail System

For information about, meetings, etc. call 908-281-3107 to leave a message.

Web Site

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

Annual Dues Rates

Normal dues rate is \$25 per year.

New Members Only: after February, the rate is \$2 per month times the number of months remaining in the year.

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Coming Events

November 13, 2000 - Vic Laurie is Back!!!

Unsafe Surfing & Evil E-Mail: Pitfalls on the Internet and How to Avoid Them.

December 11, 2000 - Holiday Party & Elections!

January 8, 2001 - Microsoft Corporation

John Stroiney will present Windows ME along with some exciting new entertainment products.

February 12, 2001 - Upgrading your PC

Tom Canavan & Paul Kurivchack will show you the inner workings of your PC and how to do simple upgrades from memory to hard drives.



Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

There is still time to throw your hat into the ring and become an officer of the PPCUG. I know I have threatened, begged, pleaded for help. Well I am happy to say that at least one person is interested in helping out and joining the board. Now if one or two more people will raise their hands to join us, you will find that it is not that hard working for your group. The 2000 slate of officers will be posted in the November newsletter for the upcoming elections in December.

Speaking of elections, one item that we will vote on is the raising of the dues from \$25 to \$30 per year. Not a big increase, but a necessary one. As you all know, we are in desperate need of a new video projector. Our 640 x 480 just does not cut it. We need to move up to a minimum 800 x 600 projector, but starting prices are around \$2500 for a low-end model. I am not expecting the dues increase to cover the full cost but we will be in better financial health with it than not. I will discuss this at both the October and November meetings and look forward to all comments.

The Linux SIG was an outstanding success. Thanks to Jon Abolins for his hard work in putting the first meeting together. There was a total of ten members plus the board. In fact that it worked so well and with the holidays fast approaching, Jon agreed to hold another SIG meeting on October 23. Jon has not decided if he will have the time in November or December but it is open. Jon will be e-mailing updates and schedules to all members that attended the first meeting. If you are interested, drop Jon an e-mail and be added to his mailing list. Again, Thanks to Jon and all the PPCUG members who came out.

Lastly, thanks to Scott Vincent for his presentation on home networking. I hope that all in attendance learned what they need to do to wire up their home and be connected.



Windows Tips: Keeping Track Part II

By: Vic Laurie - PPCUG

Last month I discussed ways of keeping track of the constant changes in the Windows operating system. I want to continue along this line and in this article consider ways of monitoring changes that occur to your own system files. These changes may be due to any variety of reasons- the installation of new software, crashes, mistakes, what have you. Whatever the source, changes in system files occur more often than many users realize. Often the changes are undesirable. It is a worthwhile practice to keep track of what is on your system and to have the option of restoring the system to a previous state. Regular backups of your whole system are one way of achieving this and are an essential part of any good routine of system maintenance. However, backups are global and time consuming and it is a good idea to supplement backups with quicker methods aimed at specific files or functions.

Unwanted File Changes

Unwanted changes in system files can occur for obvious reasons such as inadvertent or mistaken deletions and/or changes made by the user. They can occur for less obvious reasons such as electric power fluctuations (there are ways around these, but that is another story) or hard drive problems. Or they can occur for no discernible reason at all (cosmic rays?)

One of the most frustrating sources of change, however, comes from software installations. The Windows operating system has a large library of often-used functions, most of them present in the \Windows\ or \Windows\System\ folders as files with the extension DLL (dynamic link library). The very sensible idea is that different software programs can make use of a common pool of available functions, instead of each one having to provide its own, unnecessary duplicate version. That was the idea. Unfortunately, many programs (many of them from Microsoft itself) insist on their own, slightly different version of certain key DLL files so they install *their* version instead of the one you already have. These slightly different versions are not always compatible with other programs. Even one Microsoft application may not be compatible with another Microsoft application. So many problems arise that the term "DLL hell" has been coined. See, for example, articles by Brian Livingston at <http://www.infoworld.com/pageone/opinions/livingst/bllist.htm>

In the latest consumer Windows OS just out (Windows Me), the system no longer allows the over-writing of system files, but in the meantime those of us with Windows 9X need to take some precautions to avoid problems like "DLL hell".

System File Checker

One improvement Microsoft made in going from Windows 95 to Windows 98 was the addition of some very useful system tools. One of these is System File Checker (SFC), which I urge everyone to make use of. (Incidentally, according to postings in the Newsgroups Microsoft.public.Win98.*, SFC can be used in Win-

dows 95 systems by copying the Windows 98 files *sfc.exe* and *sfc.dll* to the \Windows\System\ folder. As far as I know, Microsoft has raised no objections but they can be touchy about the copying of files from one system to another.) SFC provides a way to keep a log of all the changes and deletions to your system files, as well as an easy way to restore corrupted or changed files. It goes a long way toward dealing with the problem of software that changes critical system files.

You can access SFC the tedious way by going to Start | Programs | Accessories | System | System Information and then opening the Tools menu. Or you can open it the easy way by entering (without quotes) "sfc" in the Start | Run box. When you first open it, be sure to click the Settings button and then place a check by "Check for changed files" and by "Check for deleted files". For whatever reason, the default setting has these unchecked, which disables important functionality. To set up a database of your files, run a "Scan for altered files." (One caveat is to be careful about messages mentioning possible corruption in files the first time you run. See <http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q192/8/32.asp>.) To guard against "DLL hell", always run a scan with SFC before and after installing new software. In that way you will have a record of any system files that may have been changed during the installation. SFC will allow you to restore any altered file with a copy from the installation CD (or the folder \Windows\Options\ on many OEM systems) or any other place where you have a backup copy. It will also let you keep a backup copy of whatever file the software put in just in case you decide you want it after all.

It is not possible to give all the details of how to use SFC in this limited space, but I have a PowerPoint presentation on Windows Tools at <http://www.nerc.com/~srnet1//Win98Tools/sld001.htm>. Also, there are details on using SFC at these sites:

<http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/periodic/period99/filechecker.htm>
<http://www.windows-help.net/windows98/start-142.shtml>
http://compguystechweb.com/troubleshooting/windows/system_tools.html

File Image

A little-known but nifty utility available for free download from Microsoft is FileImage or FileImg.exe. It is applicable to both Windows 95 and 98. It is described and a download link is given at <http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q243/4/24.ASP>.

To quote, "FileImg.exe is an unsupported utility that takes snapshots of the entire contents of any directory on your machine. It displays important information about all files and subdirectories such as version, size, date, and attributes. It also lets you compare two images to determine how the files in a target directory have changed." (I find it amusing that the author of this Mi-

Windows Tips continued on page 5

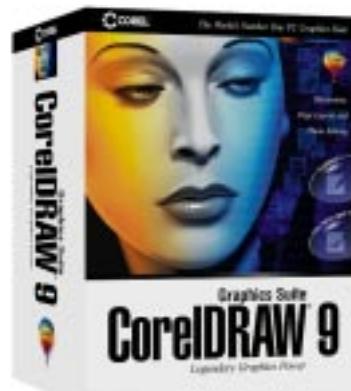
CorelDRAW 9

Software Review

By: Paul Kurivchack - PPCUG

It is quite amazing how over the years CorelDRAW has changed while remaining the same. I started out using CorelDRAW 3.0, thinking, what a great product this is in comparison to what was available back in those days. I moved to CorelDRAW 5 and felt that while it was still a good product, it became excessively complex for the casual user with the floating roll up tool bars and such. Now finally moving up to CorelDRAW 9, I see the simplicity of CorelDRAW 3 with the power to create anything from simple line drawings to complex works of art without spending days learning the product.

I place a lot of value on the intuitiveness of a product and ease of use. It is one thing if you are a graphic designer and spend all day working with only a couple of applications. For many of us, we probably have 50 or more applications loaded on our PC's and when the time comes to use a product with the depth of CorelDRAW, can we remember how to even draw a straight line. The answer is yes with CorelDRAW 9. It is easy and fun to use, includes creative tools that allow even the most uncreative to produce good-looking work.



The Product

CorelDRAW 9 Graphics Suite includes CorelDRAW 9, Photo-Paint 9 (to be reviewed next month), Corel Texture, Corel-Trace 9, Corel Capture, 25,000 clipart images, 1000 high-rez photos, 1000 True Type & Type 1 fonts and a number of utilities for managing digital media and fonts.

Hardware requirements are a modest Pentium 133 MHz with 32 MB RAM running Windows 95, 98 or NT 4.0. The evaluation and testing was done on a Pentium III 450 MHz with 256 MB RAM running Windows 98 2nd Edition, so screen refresh was quite fast. I did notice that running some of the image enhancement tools even the 450 MHz seem slow, taking 30 to 60 seconds to do the enhancement. I can just imagine the time to do that on a 133 MHz PC.

I have become a true believer in using the Custom Install when available. Not that I change much, but more to be nosy and see exactly what is being installed. To conserve space I left out the tutorials and some filters I will never use. Only one hang up occurred during the install. It was with the fonts. I already have 591 fonts installed and CorelDRAW generated an error statement that I was well over the 500 font recommended maximum limit so I could not install any additional fonts. At 591 I am not sure that I am missing too many. Therefore, without any further problems CorelDRAW 9 installed completely and is very stable.

The Interface

CorelDRAW 9 starts out with an array of tool bars positioned around the perimeter of the workspace. No floating tool bars! I spend as much time in PageMaker moving the floating tool bars around as I do actual work. CorelDRAW has the standard windows tool bar menus at the top, the drawing tools on the left and the color bar to the right and lastly a Properties tool bar. Everything is laid out for easy access and precise drawing control.

For any of the special menu items such as Arrange, Effects, Text or Tools, selected from the standard tool bar, once selected another window appears on the right side providing a whole host of features and options for easy selection. One thing that is interesting when working in this area is a list of Last Used tools. This is quite handy if you are experimenting with the tools and stumble on a technique that is nice, it remembers it for use later in the drawing. No longer do you have to try to remember how that was done. It is there in the Last Used window. Again, everything is very intuitive.

If the tool has additional options, which is indicated by arrow in the lower right corner, simply left mouse clicking on the tool icon, a popup menu appears with the options and it stays open after releasing the mouse. It just does not disappear like in most windows applications (something borrowed from the MAC).

The Properties Tool Bar is by far the most interesting and powerful that I have seen. It changes on the fly to provide precise X-Y coordinates, object size in measurement and as a percent plus a host of other control functions for an object or text. If precision is a requirement in creating a document, all the tools needed are at your fingertips.

The Tools

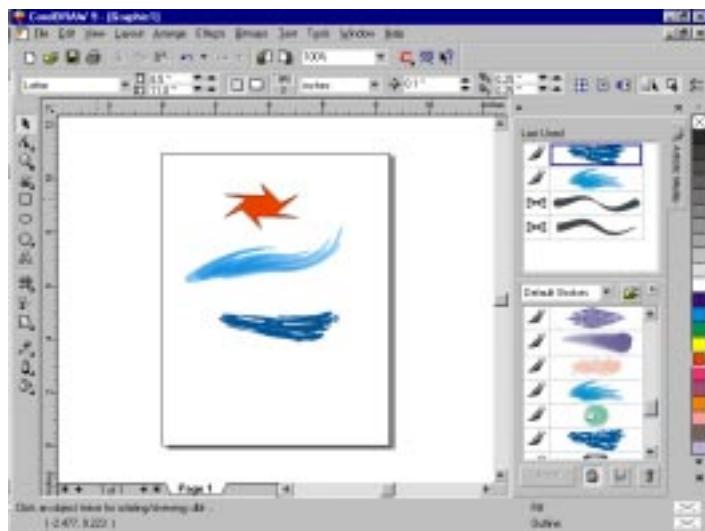
Standard tools include the Pick, for selecting objects and manipulating them, the shape tool for performing further detailed manipulation. The Artistic Media tool, for drawing lines, includes straight, bezier curves, to auto connection lines for Org Charts. Drawing a line has never been easier. I remember trying to draw smooth curved lines in earlier versions and no matter how hard I tried to control the mouse it was no use. With CorelDRAW 9, drawing curves is a breeze.

The Rectangle, Ellipse and Polygon tools do exactly what their name indicates, allow you to draw squares, circles and multisided objects. With a little practice, these simple elements can become very exotic objects just using the Pick or Shape tools. If you add the Interactive Mesh or Distortion tools, the possibilities are endless.

Add color to the objects using the color palette with the multitude of colors, fill patterns and transparencies and the sky is the limit to the possibilities. A few years back, when black and white printing was the norm, color was not as important as it is

today. Even if you publish a newsletter in B&W, if it is being placed on a web site, color brings a completely new meeting to the document and CorelDRAW 9 gives you the needed tools.

Text handling is vastly improved over earlier versions. The standard text frame is still used and editing is on screen as compared to an editing window. Font manipulation is performed either from the Properties tool bar or by the Tools menu. Once the menu is selected, a pop up window appears with the text options of Font, Align, Space, Tabs, Frames & Columns, and



Effects. This is one of the few times a independent pop up window appears, but if you are fortunate to be running Windows 98 or 2000 with multiple monitors, the window can be dragged off to the second monitor away from the drawing page and all adjustments can be made in real time. If you only have one monitor, well now you have to play, move the floating window out of the way (If you are doing any serious graphics work, a

crosoft document forgot that "directory" has become "folder". I do that all the time.)

This format of the files that this utility creates is like a Windows Explorer details view. The files do not take long to create and are relatively small. A snapshot of my entire Windows folder with all the sub-folders (almost 8000 files in 360 folders not counting temp files) is about 800 KB. Thus it could fit on a 1.44 MB diskette if desired. Comparison between folders on different computers is thus easy if that is desired. To compare two snapshots, a difference file is created which lists all the files that have changed, also in an Explorer list type of view. Changed files can be displayed one at a time in a single pane. The characteristics of both versions are shown with changes highlighted in red. I create snapshots of my Windows folder at periodic intervals and thus I can see at a glance what files are different at different times.

I find these files easier to use than the log file from SFC, which

twomonitor system is a must). This is an area that was very weak in earlier versions and it is nice to see a major improvement.

Image Editing

CorelDRAW 9 includes an arm length list of image editing and enhancement tools. The standard photo sharpening, noise, blur are they are along with some real interesting effect such as 3-D, Art Strokes (Convert to crayon or charcoal plus others), color transform, creative and a bunch more. As part of the CorelDRAW 9 package is Corel Photo-Paint, photo-editing application (To be reviewed next month), to Corel Trace, for making line tracings of bitmapped images.

Conclusion

As I stated in the beginning, I have been using CorelDRAW products for a very long time. CorelDRAW 9 is a wonderful drawing application. It provides the right mix of tools in an easy to use format. Granted, CorelDRAW 9 is a high-end software application aimed at the professional graphic designer, but even us amateurs can find CorelDRAW 9 easy and fun to use.

Visit <http://www.corel.com> for additional information and pricing for CorelDraw 9 and all the other Corel products.

A special thank you to Laura McElwain, User Group Programs Manager for her support of the Princeton PC Users Group and providing this evaluation copy of CorelDRAW 9.

I also keep. The SFC log is a chronological text file showing changes as they are recorded. It is a valuable record and can be configured to automatically update every time you do a scan with SFC but it is more cumbersome to read.

Rollback Software

It is outside the scope of this column to review commercial software but I should mention that there are several programs that allow for a type of backup known as "rollback". A snapshot of the contents of your entire hard disk (or individual partitions) is made at specified times. If you wish, you can then restore your computer to the state it was in at those particular times with a few simple steps. These programs also allow for specific files to be restored. The programs named GoBack and SecondChance are the most common examples.

The new Windows Me includes a limited version of a rollback utility. As I understand it, however, it includes only system files and not program files.

Minutes for the General Meeting

September 11, 2000

By: Ed Weiss

The general meeting held at the Lawrenceville Branch of the Mercer Library was opened at 08:00 PM by the President Paul Kurivchack. Some announcements were made concerning:

- Program for October - Intel Corporation here to present and demonstrate
- The Month of December is Election of officers & board members, and the annual Christmas Party.
- John Abolins has volunteered to host a "Linux SIG" that will meet, starting next Monday (9/18) here at the Library, and is currently expected to meet every other month on the Third Monday.
- Board Meeting scheduled for the 18'th as well.
- If you haven't picked up your "Cue Cat" from Radio Shack, do so soon.

At 08:13 PM, Paul turned the meeting over to Scott Vincent for tonight's presentation "Home Networking" Scott proceed-

ed to explain and demonstrate some of the pieces that are needed to set up the network on your systems. He also explained how to set up the network interfaces

on each of the computers as far as selecting the IP numbers, the netmasks, and subnetting..

He had a demonstration showing how to network between two laptops. There was also mention about running a proxy server and how to access an internet connection on system thru the network.

At 09:10 PM, Scott started answering some of the many questions from the floor.

By 09:25 Scott had finished up, and Paul closed the meeting.

NOTE: Scott Vincent's notes for the material presented tonight can be found at:

<http://www.scottsville.net/lansetup.htm>

Also a couple kind words to all the members that help to set-up and cleanup the meeting room on the night of the meeting. It is greatly appreciated. Please be aware that there are trash cans provided for your refuse by the doors leading out of the meeting room.

Minutes for the Board Meeting

September 18, 2000

By: Ed Weiss

In attendance for the board meeting of 09/18 were: Paul Kurivchack, Bill Hawryluk, Tom Canavan, Kim Goldenberg, and Ed Weiss. Also worth mentioning, is that the first meeting of the Linux SIG was meeting in the same room as the general meeting, with about 10 people in attendance.

Items discussed:

- The insurance payment was due on the liability policy.
- Intel Corporation is expected for the October Presentation
- Possibly a hardware demo scheduled for the Nov. general meeting.
- Microsoft will be presenting in January.

- The October General meeting is on the 3rd Monday, not the 2nd as usual.

- Paul is to invoice "The Shortlist" for the link provided in the clubs web pages.

- Current club membership - 89.

· Discussion on raising the membership dues from \$25 to \$30. This is necessary in part to help defray some of the new equipment needed to draw in presenters/speakers.

At 09:20 PM, Paul closed the board meeting, and the room was cleaned up. Several of the board

members retired to the other conference room to see & listen to the Linux SIG meeting that was still continuing, and the other members retired to their own computers..

Inkjet Printer Tips

Manufacturers of ink jet printers caution users to use the power switch on the printer to turn it on and off. Do not use the switch on a power strip to power down. The printer relies on its internal circuitry to properly position the print heads. Shutting the power off at a source outside of the printer may be detrimental to the print heads/ink cartridge. Paper makes a difference in how your document looks. Whether it is text or a graphic the quality of the paper you put into your printer is important. Copy paper is made for copiers. It has surface qualities appropriate for the electrostatic process copiers use to place the toner on the paper. Inkjet printers require a better grade of paper with a surface that will capture and hold the ink that is sprayed from the nozzles. Inkjet papers will also have a smoother surface and contribute less "fuzz" to clog up your printer. Spend a little more for inkjet paper. You will see a difference in the quality of your output.

Inkjet printers can adjust the quantity of ink used to form the characters or figures. They use terms like "Econofast", "Normal" or "Best" to differentiate the quality of output. When you are in the "Print" dialog box, look for a button marked "Properties", click on that and you will find the area where you can choose which mode to use. "Econofast" will save ink and be quite a bit faster. "Best" will lay down a lot more ink and will be much slower. The "Best" mode, combined with photo grade papers in newer printers, gets pretty close to what you are used to seeing when you get your film back from a photo processor.



PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

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

PPCUG Member E-mail Directory

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(Last Update: October 2, 2000)

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Consultants Corner

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Consultants Corner

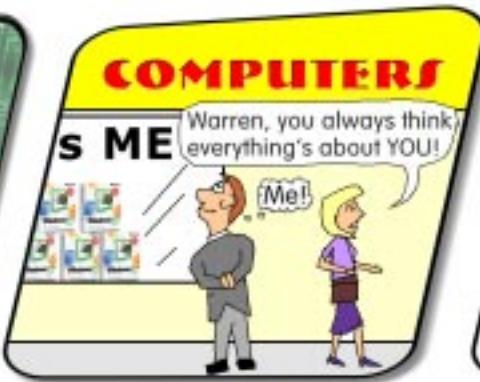
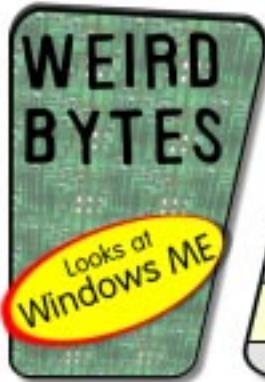
You can advertise your consulting business for \$25 per year in addition to your normal membership fee. The text space is your or your company's name plus five lines.

NEW MEMBERS

John Maruska

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN
2000!

WELCOME TO THE USERS GROUP



by J.D. Abolins

<http://www.meydabbs.com/weirdbytes/>

Directions To Our Meeting:

The Lawrence Library is at the corner of Business Route 1 South and Darrah Lane.

From Princeton and North: Take US Route 1 South, past the Quaker Bridge / Mercer Shopping Centers. Continue on approximately 1 3/4 mile past I295 to the Route 1 split, stay to the right to Business Route 1(Brunswick Pike). First traffic light is Darrah Lane. Library is on right side. Park in lot towards Route 1 and to the rear. Enter Library at main entrance in front. Meeting rooms A & B are located through glass door on Route 1 side of building.

From Trenton and South: Take I295 North to US Route 1 South. Library is approximately 1 3/4 miles south of I295. Continue south to Business Route 1(Brunswick Pike). First traffic light is Darrah Lane. Library is on right side. Park in lot towards Route 1 and to the rear. Enter Library at main entrance in front. Meeting rooms A & B are located through glass door on Route 1 side of building.

For additional information visit <http://www.ppcug-nj.org>

