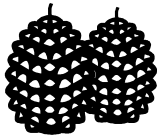
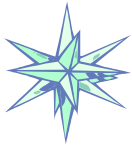


PPCUG

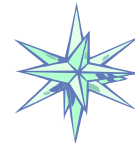
NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

Monday December 11, 2000



Elections & Holiday Party



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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Digital Photo by: Ed Weiss

Vic Laurie presenting the pitfalls of Unsafe Surfing and evil E-mail at the November General Monthly Meeting.



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

For information about upcoming meetings or joining PPCUG call 908-218-0778 to leave a message.

Board Meetings

Third Monday of the Month
8 PM at Lawrenceville Library.

Board meetings are open to All.

Board Members

President:

Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778

Vice-President:

TBA

Secretary:

Ed Weiss 609-586-1395

Treasurer:

Tom Canavan 732-422-9055

Members-At-Large:

Jon Abolins 609-883-8126

Vic Laurie 609-924-1220

Kim Goldenberg 609-671-9188

Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Chairpersons

Disk Library:

Tom Canavan 732-422-9055

Hospitality:

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Member Records:

Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778

Newsletter Editor:

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Program Coordinator:

Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Web Master:

Jon Abolins 609-883-8126

Web Site

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

Annual Dues Rates

Normal dues rate is \$30 per year.

New Members Only: after February, the rate is \$2.50 per month times the number of months remaining in the year.

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Coming Events

January 8, 2001 - Microsoft Corporation

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

February 5, 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.

March 12, 2001 - To Be Announced



Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

As the famous year, Y2K comes to a close I look back over the past twelve months and wonder where the time has gone. It seems that I just finish one newsletter and another one is ready to start, or the next meeting is just around the corner. We'll finish the year with our elections and traditional holiday party (finally some time so I can chat with many of you) and no formal presentation, just a Q&A session. This year it will be a time of well wishes to outgoing secretary Ed Weiss and a hearty welcome aboard to Don Arrowsmith our new secretary. It is time to thank Vic Laurie for his numerous (monthly) articles and topical presentations (Vic presented twice this year), Sol Libes for his always having a speaker for our meetings, Tom Canavan for keeping our finances in order and lastly to Jon Abolins for his efforts with our web site and for taking the bull by the horns and getting the Linux SIG off the ground. Without these dedicated members of our group helping me out every month, I know that the PPCUG would not be here today. Thanks guys for all the hard work.

In the year 2000 we learned how to control devices with PC's, do your taxes on-line, getting something for nothing, using video cameras, to editing digital photographs, The Everyday Web, creating your own web page, how to buy & sell on the web, how to install a SOHO LAN, to Intel Inside, and finally how to be careful when surfing the web. Quite an array of topics that were covered the past eleven months including the numerous articles written for our newsletter, hopefully there is something for everyone.

So, as we get ready for year 2001 and my sixth year as President, we are still looking for topics of interest for upcoming presentations, a Vice President, and articles for the newsletter. If you are interested in our group at all, please give us a hand.

Please take note of the announcement right below my Presidents Message about the new membership dues for 2001 of \$30.00 per year. It is a modest increase of \$5.00 but it will help us fund the new 800 x 600 LCD projector needed so badly.

To all the members and friends of the Princeton PC Users Group, I wish you and your family all the best for this holiday season.



Important!

Dues are Due for 2001

The board has approved the increase of the yearly dues to \$30.00 for new and renewing members.

Please see Tom Canavan for the new membership / renewal form.

Windows Tips: Extension Course

By: Vic Laurie - PPCUG

Although I have discussed this topic previously (for example, in the August, 1998 PPCUG newsletter) the issue of file extensions and associations is so fundamental and comes up so often in my discussions with computer users that I feel it deserves another article. No end of problems can arise when users are unaware of how Windows manages files or of the role played by the extension in a file name. And Microsoft certainly does not help by hiding extensions in the default setting for Windows Explorer and My Computer.

What Are Extensions and What Do They Do?

You will recall that most files have names with the format *filename.ext* where *.ext* is the extension. An extension is not required but most files have one in their name. Extensions are usually, but not necessarily, three characters. Their function is to tell the computer what the file type is and what is to be done with the file when it is opened or double-clicked or otherwise invoked one way or the other. When the operating system is presented with a file for action (e.g., when you double-click it), the Registry is consulted where a list of file types and their extensions is kept. (For those interested in such things, it is in HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT). The list contains what actions are possible for that particular file, which software is supposed to carry out the action, and where on the computer that software is located (the path).

By being aware of the role of an extension, a user can make intelligent decisions about how (or whether) to use a file. For example, certain e-mail viruses are spread by means of attachments with the extension *.vbs* or *.shs*. An informed user will be able to recognize the danger in indiscriminately opening such attachments and will be prepared to take appropriate action.

Unless you change the settings, Windows Explorer or My Computer will not show the extensions of filenames in the listings of files. Presumably Microsoft thinks users need to be protected from themselves in this way. However, a lot of people think it is a dumb idea for the default setting. Be that as it may, the setting is easily changed. Go to My Computer and open the View menu. Then open **Folder Options** | **View**. In the list of settings that appears, uncheck the box by the entry, "Hide file extensions for known file types." (Fig. 1) Personally, I think everyone should make this change.



Figure 1

Information About Extensions

Table I lists a few of the most common extensions and a little information about them. There are several thousand extensions, however, and a downloadable database can be found at <http://www.crosswinds.net/~jom/filex/>. Other sites with large lists and descriptions are:

- <http://thereference.com/computer/filext.html>
- <http://www.computronics.be/courses/append/fileext.html>
- <http://www.jozy.nl/index.html>
- <http://www.crosswinds.net/~jom/filex/extensionio.htm>
- <http://www.cknow.com/ckinfo/acronyms/fileextensions.htm>

You can do a search for file extensions at <http://kresch.com/exts/index.shtml>

Table 1. A few common file extensions

Ext.	Description	Comments
jpg	Graphics, pictures	Opened by default browser or by graphics program
gif	Graphics, pictures	Opened by default browser or by graphics program
bmp	(Bulky) graphics	Opened by Paint or by graphics program
doc	Word processing file	Opened by WordPad or Word (several formats)
txt	Text file	Opened by Notepad or text editor or Word, etc.
pdf	Portable document file	Opened by Adobe software
htm, html	Web pages, etc.	Viewed in browser, code edited in text editor
wav	Sound clip	Opened by Windows Media Player
avi	Video clip	Open by Windows Media Player
rm	Video clip	Opened by RealPlayer
dll	Dynamic link library	Used by software in a variety of functions
exe	Executable file*	File that actually runs software (also type of ZIP)
zip	Compressed file	Opened by WinZip, PKZip, etc.

*Never open unless you know what it does.

Being cognizant of file extensions and associations can be very important in avoiding viruses, in properly and efficiently managing files, and in many other ways.

Associations

The software that is assigned to do some action with or to a file is said to be *associated*. More than one program may be associated with a given extension, each carrying out a different (or at least differently named) action. For example, *.html* or *.htm* files can have Internet Explorer associated to open (i.e., display) the file and Notepad or FrontPage associated to edit the file. To see the list of file types and their associations for your own computer go to My Computer | View | Folder Options | File Types.

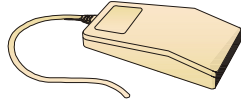
Editing and changing file associations is a separate topic in itself. Some discussion was given previously in the August, 1998 newsletter in the article, "File Facts." Because of the importance of understanding file associations, I will be devoting a future article to the subject. In the meantime, you can take a look at the Microsoft *article*, "Understanding Windows File Associations," that can be found at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/win98/assoc.asp>

Trackball vs. Trackball - Mechanical or Optical?

Hardware Review

By: Paul Kurivchack - PPCUG

As long as we have had personal computers, we have had a variety of pointing devices. The Macintosh introduced the world to the mouse, a very cute and useful pointing device used with graphical operating systems. As time went along the mouse served us well except for those of us who tired of moving the mouse around or having to pick it up when we ran out of mouse pad or desk space. Then the great ideas came along, what if we turned the mouse over and just move the ball to position the pointer, thus the Trackball.



I have been a fan and long time user of trackballs starting back in the early 90's with a Kraft Trackball. A rather boxy, two button model that was not all that uncomfortable to use, but one that had it limitations but I lived with it for many years. Surprisingly enough, trackball design did not change for many years. They remained boxy devices with a large ball in the center and a couple of buttons. Only during the last couple of years has comfort and ease of use become a factor, hence this article, a comparison of the Microsoft Trackball offerings.

The Microsoft IntelliMouse

About two years ago, I acquired the new Microsoft IntelliMouse Trackball. It featured a comfortable contoured design that was ergonomically correct (?) two-button trackball with the addition of the new Scroll-Wheel Button. Once you use the Scroll-Wheel Button for scrolling up and down the page, you wonder how you used a mouse or trackball without this feature. Most windows applications support the Scroll-Wheel Button including all web browsers. I used this device extensively on my home PC and enjoyed the fact that my hand did not tire with its use. The ball was moved with the first two fingers of the right hand and the left and right buttons activated with the thumb. The ring finger worked the Scroll-Wheel Button. Once you rested your hand on the trackball, all the controls are easily accessible and comfortable.



The major complaint I had with the IntelliMouse Trackball was with the basic design of the ball sensing mechanism; it skipped or did not move at all once it became dirty. Despite the cool design, Microsoft and all other manufactures of trackballs used the same little rubber rollers to sense the ball movement. Look inside your mouse and see two rubber rollers on a shaft attached to optical detector (A LED, a Chopper Wheel and detector) that detect the X and Y motion. No matter how hard you try, your hands perspire; pick up oil from your skin or foods you touch (such as potato chips) and are transferred to the ball and then onto the rubber rollers. Once on the rollers, the ball will have a tendency to skip or slip and will have to be cleaned. Not that cleaning the rollers is such a big deal, but it is a pain to do. I have found the best way to do it is with a sharp X-Acto

knife and carefully scrape the crud build-up off the rollers. Isopropyl alcohol alone isn't enough. A pair of sharp, pointy tweezers to remove any hair or lint the also accumulates inside is useful also in bringing the trackball back to good working order.

The Microsoft Trackball Explorer

I just received the new Trackball Explorer from Microsoft, which incorporates the IntelliEye™ Optical Technology that Microsoft introduced last year in a line of mice. While the Explorer is shaped slightly differently than the IntelliMouse trackball, it took a day to get use to it. The Explorer works exceedingly better, with less effort than the older mechanical trackball.



To start out, the days of "Plain Jane" colors are over. The Explorer is sliver with gray buttons (four), Wheel Button and a bright red ball. In fact it unit glows in the dark with the red LED's shining bright. That is the optical sensor reflecting off the glass smooth red ball. The ball looks like a golf ball (about the same size) with all the little dimples but they are all under the clear coating. The optics read the dimples and determines where the ball is going with a much higher degree of accuracy than the mechanical type mechanisms. The ball glides effortlessly using the first two fingers and best of all, the ball does not come out. No need to as there is nothing to clean inside or out.

The four buttons, two on the left side, with the Scroll-Wheel Button between the two left buttons and two on the right. All are programmable using the Microsoft IntelliPoint software. With the addition of two extra buttons, default is set as Forward and Back keys used in a web browser, but there are forty-six different selections to choose from. It is a shame that Microsoft has not yet thought of customizing the trackball buttons for specific applications where the two buttons could be Cut and Paste in Word, Tab in Excel or some of the other selections and as you open an application, the mouse controls would be set automatically. Maybe a future feature.

I do like the position of the Scroll-Wheel Button between the two left side buttons. Using my thumb seems to take less effort and feels more natural than on the IntelliMouse trackball. My only complaint about the Explorer is the position of the left click button. It could have been moved a bit farther forward for my hand, but I am adjusting.

Which One For You?

With the two different shapes and button layout of the Microsoft Trackballs, my suggestion is to visit a retailer who has them both on display. Only then can you determine if it will be a good fit for your hand and that the buttons are positioned for

Trackball continued on page 6



2001 ELECTIONS

PRESIDENT----- PAUL KURIVCHACK
 VICE PRESIDENT----- OPEN
 SECRETARY ----- DON ARROWSMITH
 TREASURER ----- TOM CANAVAN
 MEMBER-AT-LARGE ----- JON ABOLINS
 MEMBER-AT-LARGE ----- KIM GOLDENBERG
 MEMBER-AT-LARGE ----- VIC LAURIE
 MEMBER-AT-LARGE ----- SOL LIBES

General Monthly Meeting Schedule for 2001

January 8, 2001 – Monday
 February 5, 2001 – Monday* - First Monday
 March 12, 2001 – Monday
 April 9, 2001 – Monday
 May 14, 2001 – Monday
 June 11, 2001 – Monday
 July 9, 2001 – Monday
 August 13, 2001 – Monday
 September 10, 2001 – Monday
 October 15, 2001 – Monday* - Third Monday
 November 12, 2001 – Monday
 December 10, 2001 – Monday

Note: All dates are for the second Monday of the Month except for February (Library Closed) and October (Columbus Day) falling on the second Mondays.



An Electronic Voting Information Web Site

By J.D. Abolins – PPCUG

The 2000 national elections tangle has stirre3d up calls for replacing various voting systems with an electronic one. Should computers vote, so to say?

Rebecca Mercuri, a member of Bryn Mawr College's computer science department and the president of Notable Software, Inc. of Lawrenceville, New Jersey, has studied electronic voting for over 10 years. She recently spoke about electronic voting at the Princeton ACM/IEEE chapter meeting.

Her Web site provides an overview of the challenges facing electronic voting. It is a good starting point for examining the issues raised by the 2000 election.

The Electronic Voting Page: <http://www.seas.upenn.edu:8080/~mercuri/evote.html>

ACM/IEEE Online Privacy Presentation Site

By J.D. Abolins – PPCUG

Lorrie Faith Cranor of AT&T Labs-Research will be speaking about "Online Privacy: What are People So Concerned About and What is Being Done About it?" in December. The presentation will be given at the December 2000 joint meeting of the Princeton ACM / IEEE Computer Society chapters.

Date: Thursday, December 14, 2000, 8:00 PM
Location: Auditorium, Sarnoff Corporation, 201 Washington Road (Rt 571 1/4 mile south of US 1), Princeton, NJ

There is no admission charge, and refreshments are served.
Additional Information: recorded info (609) 924-8704, Dennis Mancl (908) 582-7086, or David Soll (215) 854-3461
URL: <http://www.acm.org/chapters/princetonacm>
E-mail: princetonacm@acm.org

For more information about Ms. Cranors' work, please see her home page at <http://www.research.att.com/~lorrie/>

Minutes for the General Meeting November 13, 2000

By: Ed Weiss

At 7:45 PM, Paul opened the meeting. The items discussed prior to the speaker included:

- Dues are going up to \$30.00 per year beginning in 2001.
- We only have November and December left to find a place to hold the Linux SIG meetings, because of the change in policy here at the Library.
- John Abolins asked if any of the members had contacts at Rider or MCCC that would allow the SIG to meet there?
- December is the month when we hold the annual Party. Lots of door prizes etc.
- There will be a board meeting this month.
- Cascade Media is closing down our answering service after all these years.

Paul then turned the meeting over to John Hooker of Eastern Service Workers who presented a very short description of their need for used equipment and volunteers. At 20:05, after the presentation by the ESW group, Paul turned the meeting over to our own Vic Laurie, with his presentation of "How To Safely Cruise The Web". Vic description of the different ways that intruders and other mischievous programs can interfere with our web surfing proved to be a very enjoyable lecture. There were a number of questions, and good participation by the attending members. At 9:10, Vic ended his presentation. There was a crowd that gathered to talk to Vic in the front of the room, while other members gathered up the chairs and helped clean up the room.

Minutes for the Board Meeting November 20, 2000

By: Ed Weiss

In attendance: Bill Hawryluk, Paul Kurivchack, Tom Canavan, Kim Goldenberg, and Ed Weiss.

The meeting started in Room 1 at the Library, but we quickly moved to the outer area as the members for the Linux SIG filled the room. Tom Canavan passed around a new copy of the club bulletin for approval, showing the new dues, and more accurate description of the club.

At this time, it was noted that several paragraphs would already need changing due to the change in SIG meeting locations, and the club phone service. The attending members discussed the schedule for the presentations at the up coming General Meetings. Paul mentioned that he had acquired about 8 or

9 gifts that would be used as door prizes at the December General Meeting. The next topic of discussion was the projector, to which little had been accomplished to date. Paul mentioned that Polaroid had one that seemed to meet the general requirements that the club was looking for, but had not had time to look into it in any detail. The next item mentioned was that Tom Canavan had made contact with some one at the Kendall Park rescue squad in reference to being able to use that facility for the SIG meetings, but did not know the individual, so no results were obtained. At 9:50 PM, the board meeting ended, and several of the board members left, while some went into the Linux SIG meeting.

Trackball continued from page 4

comfortable use. Trackballs are not really a one-size-fits-all as a standard mouse is. I found this out when switching from the IntelliMouse to the Explorer. I like the Explorer for the precision and smooth effortless feel, but still like the shape of the IntelliMouse. You'll have to decide for yourself. But, if you are in the market for a new pointing device and are right handed (No left hand models yet), you may want to switch to a trackball as the ease of use and the added features that can be incorporated into the larger footprint of the trackball are most welcome.

While Microsoft may be a little late to market with the Optical Trackballs (MS has the Explorer and a second optical trackball model available), they seem to be coming out with solid and comfortable designs, great features and competitive prices. For more information visit: <http://www.microsoft.com/mouse/>.





PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

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

PPCUG Member E-mail Directory

Name Last	First	E-Mail Address	Name Last	First	E-Mail Address
Abolins	John D.	jda-ir@njcc.com	Landis	Houston E.	judge@alumni.princeton.edu
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Arrowsmith	Donald L.	donald.arrowsmith@bigfoot.com	Lazar	Joseph	joelazar@nerc.com
Axelrod	Albert	aaxelrod@erols.com	Lewis	Lloyd N.	Budnorth@juno.com
Best	John J.	jjbest57@alum.mit.edu	Libes	Sol	sol@libes.com
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Kurivchack	Paul	kurivchack_p@compuserve.com			

(Last Update: December 4, 2000)

Send Updates to kurivchack_p@compuserve.com for inclusion in this listing.

Consultants Corner

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Belle Mead, NJ 08502-1929

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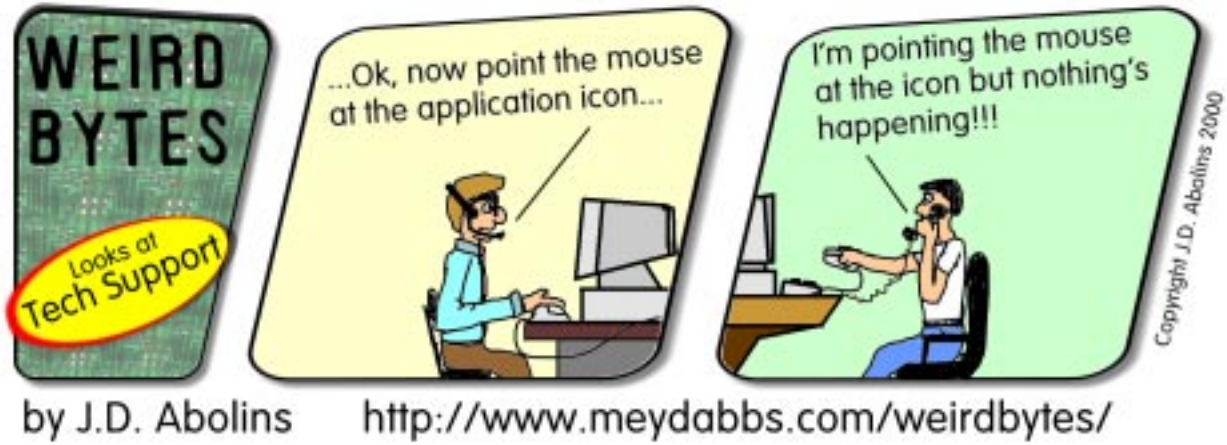
<http://www.meydabbs.com>

E-mail: jda-ir@njcc.com

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.





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>



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