

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

For Meeting Location, Date and Time, call 908-218-0778

Board meetings are open to All.

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<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

June 10, 2002 - Wireless Data Systems

George Feigen will discuss the latest developments of wireless data systems.

July 8, 2002 - Upgrading to Windows XP

Vic Laurie & Paul Kurivchack will cover the ins and outs of upgrading to this OS.

August 12, 2002 - Creating Digital Movies on Your PC.

Joel May will demonstrate Pinnacle Studio for creating home movies.

September 9, 2002 - Doug Dixon on DVD's!

Doug will discuss the technology behind DVD burning.

October 21, 2002 - (Third Monday) - GPS Navigation

Ted Annis will discuss the benefits of GPS navigation using CoPilot.



Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

I have totally amazed myself this month by finishing up the newsletter almost a week earlier than normal. Unfortunately you will have to wait until the June newsletter to hear all about TCF2002 and our success running the Parcel Pickup area.

The news I do have to report on is the very interesting Intergalactic15 User Group Officers Conference that Sol Libes, Tom Carman and I attended on April 20 in New York City. The conference provides a great opportunity to meet other user group officers and discuss the successes and failures the groups in the New York region are facing.

One of the items we all agreed on is that our membership is aging rapidly which will cause the demise of some groups if we can not attract enough computer user of all age groups to bolster the ranks. This seems to create a great dilemma for many groups as to how to adjust presentations that will be interesting to all including ours. Some groups have embarked on restoring old PC's to bridge the digital divide. Other groups have moved away from general meetings to just running multiple specialized training "Workshops" (New name for SIG) during the course of the month.

Nobody could come up with the perfect formula to generate excitement in working with PC's that will increase membership significantly. One thing that was agreed on is that going to the computer shows or computer stores is not the best place to advertise a PC user group. The people going there by in large already know what they need and we cannot offer them much more than an evening out. We have to become creative and promote in the Libraries, supermarkets, and events such as craft fairs or sportsman type shows with the bent on offering solutions in using their PC's for the activities they are interested in. I also hear a couple of other low cost advertising ideas that we may pursue in the coming months to get our name out in the local community. While I would like to see us grow to the one hundred-member mark, I do not want it to grow too much larger than that and also I do not want to see us shrink any smaller.

Lastly, IG15 while attended fairly well by the regional user group officers, the attendance of the corporate sponsors was way off. This year it was down to seven companies from the eleven last year, but nowhere near the high of thirty some sponsors back in the early years of IG. While the support for user groups is still strong, the poor economy is taking its toll and we heard that throughout the day about the rising costs to come out to local groups for presentations and the cutback on swag. No tee shirts, software, etc. The bottom line is that the user group community can no longer expect the vendors to help grow their group. We have to go out and beat the bushes, be creative in our own programs to prosper and hopefully the vendors will survive to sponsor our groups with product to review, presentation and events like Intergalactic.

I look forward to seeing you all on the 13th.

Windows Tips: When Your System Needs Refreshing

By: Vic Laurie - PPCUG

Backing up, anti-virus precautions, and regular maintenance of your computer system have been a constant theme in these articles. Paying attention to the routine care of your system can keep things running as smoothly as if the system were new. However, for many PC users the time may come one day when there is no avoiding the fact that the system is just not performing up to par. Rejuvenating the system may involve anything from a simple Registry cleanup to the major job of reformatting the hard drive and reinstalling everything. In this article, I will discuss several procedures for restoring performance in Windows 98/Me systems. (Windows XP is an entirely different system and is not considered here.)

Registry Cleaning and Restoring

More than once I have found that a flaky system could be put right by either cleaning or by restoring the Registry from a backup copy. Strictly speaking, keeping the Registry clean should be part of everyone's routine computer housekeeping but it is my experience that the average PC user is prone to neglect this area of maintenance. For many people the Registry is a mysterious thing that they would rather leave alone. A cautious attitude toward changing the Registry is indeed wise but judiciously maintaining the Registry is a key part of system maintenance. An essential part of maintaining the Registry is the knowledge of how to back up and restore it. Proper backup insures that any cleaning that goes awry is easily remedied and allows the PC user to approach the Registry without the queasy feeling that he or she is about to make an irreparable mess of it. Fortunately, Registry backup is quite simple. Open **Start | Run** and enter "scanregw" in Windows 98 or "scanreg" in Windows Me (no quotes). Click "OK" or "Yes" and you have a backup. Also remember that five backup copies of the Registry are automatically kept, with a new one being made at the first boot of the day. (Of course, if you never turn your computer off, you don't get these backups.) Restoring a Registry from a backup is a little more complicated but still simple enough using the Registry Checker (*scanreg.exe*). See the previous article at <http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/basics.htm> or <http://www.zdnet.com/products/stories/reviews/0,4161,2265416,00.html>. In Windows Me restoring can be done from **Start | Run** but requires booting into DOS in Windows 98. This assumes that your Registry isn't so badly corrupted that a boot disk is required.

There is a wide assortment of utilities that claim to clean up the Registry. Some are provided by Microsoft, some are free-ware, some are shareware, and some are part of commercial suites such as Norton System Works. All do different things and none is a panacea but I regularly use several of these. Many (but not all) provide a way to undo any changes that they make but creating your own backup copy of the Registry (or having an up to date copy from the daily automatic back up) before cleaning is absolutely imperative. Leave the Registry alone if you do not know how to restore a backup copy.

All of these utilities require a certain amount of judgment

and there are various caveats for the use of each. Going into all the details for the many utilities available is not possible here. I will briefly mention that two popular freeware applications are Regcleaner at <http://www.jv16.org/> (not to be confused with the old Microsoft unsupported utility RegClean) and EasyCleaner at <http://www.toniarts.com/index.htm>. (Please note that some Windows Me users report trouble with EasyCleaner.) Among other things, RegCleaner is good for removing Registry entries left over from uninstalled programs and may be the best of the lot in the freeware category. In commercial suites, Norton Win-Doctor does a good job (but watch out that it doesn't clean things it shouldn't).

One tool that everyone already has is Registry Checker, the standard Windows applet already mentioned. For many PC users who find the Registry to be more than they care to deal with, this applet may be all that they ever want to use. In addition to backing up or restoring the Registry, Registry Checker can carry out some housekeeping by means of switches in the command line. This is done in DOS for Windows 98 and in **Start | Run** for Windows Me. One command is "scanreg /fix" (no quotes). This command rebuilds the Registry, removing any broken pointers. It does not really "fix" the Registry but it can sometimes speed things up noticeably. Another operation is "scanreg /opt". This process removes excess empty space and holes in the Registry. The two switches can be run together as "scanreg /opt /fix". Note the order of the switches and the space separating them. You can read more at <http://www.windows-help.net/windows98/start-145.shtml>

Rollback

One of the best friends a PC user can have is one of the applications known as "rollback" or system restore software. These programs keep a record of what is on your system at a given point in time and allow you to "rollback" or restore the system to whatever state it was in at that particular time. Windows Me comes with a very limited version (and XP an improved but still limited one) called System Restore but a better idea may be a commercial program like GoBack or ConfigSafe. (I use Second-Chance but unfortunately it is no longer available.) Note that rollback programs are only as good as the user makes them. Their greatest value comes when care is taken to make restore points before and after changes are made to the system. More on these programs can be found at

<http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,36589,00.asp>
<http://www.roxio.com/en/products/goback/index.jhtml>
<http://www.imaginelan.com/configsafe/>
<http://www.zdnet.com/anchordesk/stories/story/0,10738,2855908,00.html>

Disk Imaging Programs

Strictly speaking, these programs are for complete system backups rather than for quick restorations such as rollback programs provide. Rollback programs are convenient and easy to use but

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Accessing an NTFS disk without an OS

By: Don Arrowsmith - PPCUG

When you had a FAT formatted hard drive and it wouldn't boot, you could at least use a bootable floppy to either correct the problem or copy important files to somewhere else. If you now have an NTFS formatted hard drive, can you do the same thing?

The easiest way is to boot to the Win XP Setup CD and start the Recovery Console by typing "R" at the main prompt. While you can install the RC to your hard drive (see Microsoft Knowledge Base article Q307654), I wouldn't recommend installing the RC to your hard drive because a) you then have a boot delay to let you choose whether to go to Windows or the RC; b) you lose the hard drive space to install it; and c) if you want the RC handy in case of hard drive booting troubles it doesn't seem to make much sense to put it on the hard drive.

There is a nice description of RC in MSKB article Q314058. The default mode will let you get directories, view text files, delete files, copy files to your hard drive, fix boot partition and master boot records, run chkdsk, modify services, etc. But, as a security feature, you can't copy files from the hard drive to a floppy!

MSKB article Q310497 shows you how to modify the security settings on your system to allow the RC to copy files from your

hard drive to a floppy or other removable media. The article states that it applies to both XP Pro and XP Home but the Group Policy editor needed to make the change is not supplied with XP Home although it works fine in XP Pro. Remember you have to make this change BEFORE you have a problem and need to access the drive.

Here's how to modify Win XP Home to allow full floppy access. WARNING: Using Registry Editor incorrectly can cause serious problems that may require you to reinstall Windows. Microsoft cannot guarantee that problems resulting from the incorrect use of Registry Editor can be solved. Use Registry Editor at your own risk. If you don't feel competent using this powerful tool, seek professional help.

1. Use Start - Run - Regedit and locate the following registry key: HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\WindowsNT\CurrentVersion\Setup\RecoveryConsole
2. Modify the SecurityLevel value from 0 to 1.
3. Modify the SetCommand value from 0 to 1.

When you run the RC, the administrator password is normally blank for XP Home so just enter a return when prompted. You must enter "Set AllowRemovableMedia = True" before you can write to a floppy. Note that this command is not case sensitive but the spaces before and after the = are required.

Trimming and Cutting for Dummies Like Me

By: Bruce Switalla, Coastal Area Users Group (CAUG)

Since it will be a while before I learn how to get my graphic printouts to line up correctly on pre-perforated paper, I decided to simply save money on mistakes and take matters into my own hands. So, for the Feb. graphics SIG, I briefly demonstrated how I make business cards, greeting cards, and photo prints without the perforated paper that I can't always figure out how to line up.

For now, I use Epson Matte Heavyweight paper (52-lb) for everything. It makes a thin but acceptable bus. card, and it doesn't stick to glass photo frames. As shown at the meeting, it yields rich, dark colors too. For business card software, I use Print Artist and can get it to print TWELVE cards per 8½ x11 sheet with hairline crop marks that get split in two and don't show. The pre-perforated bus. card sheets I've seen yield only ten and thus leave wasted paper.

For bus. cards, greeting cards, and photos alike, I use the following equipment. I place an 11x15 Good Cook Flexible Cutting Board (about \$2.95) from H-E-B's cooking utensils section down on my table surface. Yes, it gets cut marks in it, but that's what its for! I heard at the meeting that a fabric store has more costly cutting mats that "heal" after you cut into them thus preventing the knife from following a previous groove. To cut, I use an Exacto knife (from Hobby Lobby) and keep it covered

with its plastic cap when not in use. For the projects without crop marks like photos, I use 2 sharp pencil marks to determine where to cut. I place the knife on the mark first, then slide a cork-backed metal ruler (available cheap at Office Depot) against the knife at my first point. Then, holding the ruler down with my finger out of the way of the cut, I place the knife-point in the other pencil mark, pivoting the ruler this time against the knife. I consistently keep the knife straight up while watching my fingers. I cut 2 or 3 times just past where I need to, so the side cuts will come apart when finished. I got a beautiful 5x7 mahogany-colored wood frame from Dollar General for \$2. And 8X10s are 3 and \$4. By the way, if you go with glossy paper, you cannot let it touch the glass, so you will need to place a spacer, like a mat, around the photo (a job for the pro's).

Advanced Advice

If you can control how large your photo prints out, you may opt for 4½x6½ or so with white borders that you leave when you cut to 5x7, since a 5x7 wood frame will cover a quarter inch on all sides, and ink is expensive. Measure the frame's inside dimensions for white border (cutting purposes) and from the front of the frame measure for printing purposes but be sure no white will show after framing. Better to think this all out and practice on Crayola-colored notebook paper than mess up a print. "Mea

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they are not a replacement for backups. Their restore points are kept on the hard drive and are subject to any mishaps that may occur there, including disk failure. Less convenient but safer are disk imaging programs such as Norton Ghost (<http://www.symantec.com/sabu/ghost/>) or PowerQuest Drive Image (<http://www.powerquest.com/driveimage/>). These programs create a compressed file that is an image of an entire disk or partition and store it in an external location. Although harder to use than rollback programs and an extra expense, I find them to be an excellent means of back up. Norton Ghost comes with a Windows interface that allows the extraction of single files from the over-all image. A drawback of these programs is the time required to create an image. Rollback programs are very fast while an image may take ½ hour. This inevitably means that fewer restore points are taken so the images tend to be less up-to-date than rollback points. However, these programs serve double-duty. They can provide the main means of complete system back up while also allowing for the restoration of individual files (at least with Ghost). And they (or some other external backup) are essential when the worst happens. (See Fred Langa's thorough discussion of backing up at <http://www.langa.com/backups/backups.htm>.)

The Last Resort- Reformat and Reinstall

Sometimes things get so bad that there is nothing for it but to zap the whole thing and start over. Be aware, however, that technical assistance personnel who don't want to have to think very hard all too often recommend this last resort first. Provided that you do routine maintenance, keep viruses at bay and have rollback capability, you should rarely need to resort to the extreme measure of reformatting. Nonetheless, it may happen that things get so boggled up that restoring the Registry or rolling back doesn't help. This usually occurs because there is no backup from a known good configuration. The Registry checker only keeps 5 copies of the Registry (you can change this number) and if the origins of the problem predate your earliest backup, you are out of luck. Also, if you have rollback software, but haven't made sure to have a rollback point for a correctly functioning setup, a system restoration won't help. Or, in the case of Windows Me, since System Restore only backs up some things, it may not be sufficient for a particular problem.

Before destroying the entire contents of your disk or partition by reformatting, first try reinstalling Windows over itself. Your settings are preserved and sometimes this fixes a problem. See <http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=kb;EN-US;q250928>. If that doesn't work, you can next try the procedure that many experienced computer users recommend. From DOS, delete (or rename) the Windows folder and then reinstall Windows. In this way all your data files and some (but not all) of your individualized settings will be preserved. Your programs will still have to be reinstalled to restore Registry settings and any special program DLL files. Also driver updates and Windows patches will need reinstalling. One description of the process is at http://www.webtree.ca/newlife/no_format_clean_install_of_windows_98.htm. Also, Scot Finnie's newsletter has a detailed description at <http://www.scotfinnie.com/newsletter/21.htm#qna>.

If all else fails, you can resort to reformatting. Now is the time to make use of that external system backup that you did. Assuming you do not have a virus problem (viruses are not discussed in the present article) the procedure is tedious but straightforward. If you have backup software, follow whatever method is involved in restoring a complete system backup.

But then maybe you never got around to a backup. In that case get out your Windows disk, your program disks, and a boot disk. Use any backup program you may have to make copies of all your important data, files, email- anything you want to save. Or burn copies to a CD of everything you want to keep or put them on some other external medium such as Iomega Zip disks. Save any updated drivers. When you are sure you have a backup copy of anything you need to save, boot up your computer with a boot disk (<http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/boot.htm>). Enter the command "format C: /s" (without quotes). (Incidentally, if you have partitioned your hard drive and put all your data on a separate partition from the operating system, your life will be easier.) The switch "/s" adds the system files and should be used only on the C: drive. There are several other switches that can be used with the "format" command that you may wish to consider. For example, "/q" does a quick format and "/u" does an unconditional format (takes longer but is more thorough). After formatting you can start the long reinstallation process. And you will see why regular backups are a good idea.

One problem is the growing tendency of PC manufacturers to provide no Windows disk but only a "Restore" or "Recovery" disk. Be sure to check what sort of disk came with your computer and learn how to use it. These "Recovery" disks are often just an image of the hard drive as it was when delivered to you. They may provide no way to reinstall individual Windows components. Sometimes the Windows installation files may be in a folder on your hard drive called `\Windows\Options\`. If your computer contains the folder `\Windows\Options\`, isn't a bad idea to burn the folder to a CD.

An even worse trend is that certain PC manufacturers (Hewlett-Packard, for one) do not even provide a recovery disk but instead put the system image on a hidden partition on the hard drive. If you encounter this situation, insist that the manufacturer provide a recovery CD. (You will have to pay "Shipping and handling," however.) Otherwise, if the hard drive crashes, there is no backup at all.

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sure twice..."

One thing I didn't cover at the meeting was folding greeting cards. I place two pencil marks down the center of where I need to fold. Then I put the ruler edge over the marks and use a pizza cutter roller to crease neatly the fold I need. Care is needed to avoid rolling away from the ruler's edge. The resulting fold looks professional!

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Caveat Emptor...

By: Judy Lococo - APCUG

I recently replaced an old computer with a brand, new, sparkling, whisper-quiet Pentium 4 speed demon. I asked the vendor to install Windows XP Professional, and I subsequently installed Office XP Professional. There was no other software on this "clean" machine, but because I have a local area network with another machine in the office, and the other machine is connected to an ADSL line, I decided I needed a firewall and an antivirus package on the new machine, too.

Symantec has always had my Antivirus (AV) software protection of choice, and although there have been a few problems with their products along the way, it was never enough of an irritation to provoke an article. But Norton Internet Security 2002 most definitely is. It is supposed to include a personal firewall to defend against crackers, antivirus protection, privacy control to keep your personal information private, and a parental control to keep your children safe on the Internet. It looks very similar to previous releases of Norton Internet Security (2000 and 2001), which I've used on other machines running Windows 95/98 and Windows NT Workstation 4.0, but the previous versions are not compatible with Windows XP. So I installed the latest version to protect my new workhorse.

The installation was not fun, and contained several error messages stating that some script or other was not able to run & did I wish to continue. I was finally able to reach the end of the line, and was prompted to restart the computer, and run a Live Update as soon as possible. My computer restarted, and then it restarted, and then it restarted again, and finally restarted again. I was wondering if I would ever be able to keep it on long enough to see the splash screen! But I did finally get to see the XP screen again, and noticed that the antivirus icon on the taskbar had a big red "X" through it. Being such a good little girl, and always doing as I'm told, <g> I started the Live Update, thinking possibly this was why the icon was inactive. But the software did not even try to update the antivirus definitions, and even after asking for all the latest bells and whistles Symantec had, it still was not enabled. I tried to enable the AV and it refused from any point I tried. After several hours of trying to get this product to work properly, and calling in the mounties (AKA resident Alpha Geek) to try to make it work properly, I gave up in exasperation.

My next strategy was to uninstall the program, as everyone knows by now that you cannot install one AV over another, and just maybe I could re-install the software and overcome the problems with the initial install. But it refused to let me uninstall it, saying I had to disable the antivirus part of it first. But I could not do that anywhere that I could find, as all it would do was inform me that it was already disabled. Finally, the Alpha Geek was able to convince the software through the XP side of things that, indeed, the antivirus had been disabled. However, this was all for naught, as it now said I could not uninstall it unless I logged in through the "Supervisor" account. There was no supervisor account! There were only two accounts on this ma-

chine, my account, and a guest account.

Panic. Desperation. Anger at a company who had always been a trusted friend, and now was just a shareholder's country club. Finally, disgust at what choices I now had because of one piece of buggy software that was not ready for prime time.

I logged onto Symantec's web page to look for some tech support. After searching through all the FAQ's, and finding nothing that resembled the problems I encountered, I tried to contact them with a personal message. But there didn't seem to be any place to reach them with a personal message, only a "forum" where others could post their requests as well. So I left a public message in the forum, asking for guidance on how to uninstall Norton Internet Security 2002.

I did find a LOT of other messages from people who were having similar problems. Only a handful of them had any replies, and those replies basically said to use a file on their website to uninstall the software. But to do that, one had to hack the registry in order to disable the antivirus, etc., and the solution was quite convoluted. Definitely not for the fainthearted, and definitely not something you wanted to do to a brand-new computer. And the replies to previous messages were the standard party line, even after some of the participants explained that their party line did not work either. FWIW, the solution utility posted on their website was not supported by Symantec, so if you chose to uninstall the software, using the files off their website, you did so at your own risk.

I finally received a response from Aaron at Symantec. I got the same party line spiel that all the others did, which means I will have to spend a lot of time getting my machine back to a point where I can use it. So basically, they have wasted a lot of my time, and \$60.00 of my money to tell me that I now have to do it myself. Hmmm. I believe they are the ones who caused it, why aren't they the ones cleaning up their own mess??? Why hasn't there been a recall of this product? Why don't they have a legitimate fix for the problems? Notice problems is plural. People are still being snookered into buying this joke, thinking it is compatible with XP, when plainly it is not.

I think it will be easier for me to just reformat and reinstall than to try to clean up this fiasco they have caused. I am perfectly capable of bugging up my own machine, without any help from the outside world. I will now move on to another company who is actually ready to protect my XP computer, and ready to accept responsibility for their mistakes. I have to wonder, though, if the term "class action" would hold any incentive for them to get their ACT! together. Pun not supported by author...

Judy is the Past President of Apcug and has done much for the User Group Community. Email: judyl@apcug



PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

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

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(Last Update: May 1, 2002)

Send Updates to kurivchp@optonline.net for inclusion in this listing.



IDEAS???

PPCUG News is looking for articles and software reviews. If you have a favorite software application, new CR-RW or DVD drive, digital camera or printer, write 500 to 800 words about it and we will publish it in an upcoming newsletter. Submit to: kurivchp@optonline.net

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Minutes for the General Meeting

April 8, 2002

By: Don Arrowsmith

The meeting came to order at 7:52 with Paul reminding everyone about TCF and the need to have volunteers staff the club's package area. Questions from the floor concerned false disk full reports from a Sony CD-RW drive, hazards of taking a laptop through airport security and using Norton Utilities to move application files between different partitions or hard drives on a computer.

The formal program started at 8:04. Paul proceeded step by step through physically installing a second hard drive to a PC. A video camera fed to the club's projector put up a large display allowing all to see the details. Next he demonstrated using Partition Magic to set up the drive. The benefits of various configurations of different partition arrangements were described. PM partitioned and formatted the drive which became recognized and available under Windows 98.

PowerQuest (<http://www.powerquest.com>) products are available at an attractive discount of \$35 for Partition Magic v7 or Drive Image v4, \$25 for Drive Copy v4 or SecureClean and \$20 for CleanDrive or Educational CD for our club at www.ugr.com/order/. Shipping is \$5 and if you order any 2 products you can get SecondChance or Lost&Found for free. You will need to enter the club name and code UGMAR02.



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