

PPCUG

NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

Monday July 8, 2002

Upgrading to WinXP

Vic Laurie & Paul Kurivchack

Considering upgrading to Windows XP?

**Talk with two people who have done it and can relate their experiences.
How difficult is it? What is the difference between the Home and Pro versions?
Should you use the FAT or NTFS file system plus much more. . .**

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*

In this issue

- About PPCUG 2
- Presidents Message 2
- Cookie Control 3
- Mandrake 8.1 4
- Ten Years Ago 5
- Member E-mail Directory 7
- Consultants Corner 7
- General Meeting Minutes Back Cover



Digital Photo by: Ed Weiss

Author George S. Faigen speaking about Making Sense of Wireless Business" at the June General 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

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

Board meetings are open to All.

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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.

Published Monthly by: Princeton PC Users Group
PO Box 291 Rocky Hill, NJ 08553
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Coming Events

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 - Adobe Systems (Third Monday!!)

Kiyo Toma will make a presentation on PhotoShop Elements and Acrobat

November 18, 2002 - To Be Announced (Third Monday!!)

December 9, 2002 - Holiday Party & Elections



Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

Some days you wonder why things just start going down hill and never stop. I had one of those days back on Monday June 10th, the night of our general meeting. I was late. The day started out fine but as time went on, things just didn't go as well as planned. Now that I have moved from my "assembly line type, 8 to 4" help desk job to a desktop support tech, my hours are not as flexible (I obligated to stay until the PC is up and running) and it becomes harder to leave on time or early. So with the numerous problems at work that caused me to leave a few minutes later than I should have, I was still on schedule. Close but on schedule. That is until I caught my NJ Transit train. As we left Penn Station in New York, everything seemed OK. That is until we exited the tunnel and came to a complete stop. They announced that an Amtrak train was broken down just in front of us. Now we just sat there or in my case, stood for forty-five minutes as NJ Transit and Amtrak figured out what to do. Well they decided to back our train back through the tunnel into New York so they could switch tracks. We did back up almost all the way but as faith had it, Amtrak magically move their train out of the way and we were allowed to move forward towards Newark. Now I was only one hour behind schedule and one of the few people left on earth that does not own a cell phone so I could not even call anyone to let them know I was running late. I finally made it home at seven twenty five, picked up the projector, etc. and drove the twenty-five miles to Lawrenceville to arrive at eight fifteen. Not bad considering all that I went through. Hopefully this was the first and last time for this, but you never can tell when another train will break down. Despite my trials and tribulations, the meeting started on time thanks to Sol Libes and the other board members, exactly as it should.

I want to thank George Faigen for his interesting presentation on the Wireless Industry. As George pointed out, we are moving faster and faster to a wireless society. Look at all the cell phones, Blackberry two way pagers/e-mail, wireless networks at work and in the home along with the new wireless devices coming for home entertainment and appliances. We will be surrounded within a few years with some good and bad technology. Which technology will be right for you and I. Who knows, but George gave us a taste of where we are heading and that we need to keep our eyes open.

Our upcoming meeting on upgrading to Windows XP by Vic Laurie and myself should turn out to be very interesting evening. Come and hear about why you should or shouldn't do the deed.

Have a very safe and happy Fourth of July! See you all on July 8th.



Cookie Control

By: Vic Laurie - PPCUG

I have previously written about the subject of Internet “cookies” (http://www.ppcug-nj.org/articles/vic_laurie/cookies.html and <http://pages.zdnet.com/hampsi/Articles/cookie.htm>) but there have been a number of developments since then. Also I get many questions about cookies so I am going to revisit the subject.

What is a Cookie?

Cookies are small pieces of information in text format that are downloaded to your computer when you visit many Web sites. The cookie may come from the Web site itself or from the providers of the advertising banners or other graphics that make up a Web page. Thus visiting a single Web site can actually result in the downloading of multiple cookies, each from a different source. You may never actually visit a page of one of the major advertising agencies like Doubleclick.com but you will still get cookies from them. Cookies typically contain some kind of ID number, a domain that the cookie is valid for, and an expiration date. They may also contain other tracking information such as login names and pages visited. Since they are in text format, they can be read with a regular text editor such as Notepad although the contents may not necessarily seem to make a lot of sense.

There are a number of cookie viewers available, which will also give some information about the meaning of the content. A good freeware program is Karen's Cookie Viewer by the well-known programmer, Karen Kenworthy. It can be downloaded at her freeware site <http://www.karenware.com/powertools/ptcookie.asp>. This program can also be used to delete selected cookies.

Where Are They?

Each type of Internet browser designates a particular place for storing cookies. Internet Explorer has a folder \Windows\Cookies\ where cookies are kept as small individual text files, one for each cookie (Windows XP has different folders depending on user). There is also an index file, *index.dat*. As part of a complex caching scheme, pointers to the cookies are also kept in the folder \Windows\Temporary Internet Files\. Since AOL uses Internet Explorer underneath its proprietary interface, it employs the same method. Netscape uses a single text file *cookies.txt* with each cookie occupying one or more lines within this one file. Where the file is stored depends on your version of Netscape. In versions 4.x it is usually in \Program Files\Netscape\Users\[YourName]\ but in version 6 it is elsewhere.

The easiest way to find where cookies are kept is to do a Find or Search either on the folder name *Cookies* or the file name *cookies.txt*, depending on your browser.

What Do Cookies Do?

Cookies were introduced to Internet browsing by the pioneering firm Netscape. They are necessary to provide the function

of “persistence”. Browsing the Internet involves what is known as a “stateless” process. In other words, a Web site ordinarily has no memory of who comes and goes. As soon as the information that your browser requests from a site is downloaded to your computer, the connection is dropped. If you return to the site a minute later (or whenever), the site has no knowledge that you were just there. If a site has several pages and you go from one to the other the site does not remember which pages you have been to. That is, it won't unless a cookie is on your machine to remind the site and provide continuity. For example, sites that require log-ins can recognize you from a cookie. Or, as you go from one page to the other on a shopping site, a cookie can keep track of what is in your “shopping cart.”

For more details on how cookies work, here are some references:

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/cookie1.htm>

<http://www.cookiecentral.com/faq/>

<http://www.pestpatrol.com/Whitepapers/AboutCookies.asp>

<http://www.netassoc.net/techstuff/cookies.htm>

The Good and the Bad

Although some cookies provide a useful function, many others may not be desirable. As the Internet has evolved from its beginnings in academia and government to a commercial enterprise, cookies have inevitably been turned into a tracking mechanism used by advertisers. In principle, cookies are only accessible to the site that originated them but large advertising agencies with many clients can easily circumvent this restriction by collecting information for all their clients under one domain. A fairly harmless (and perhaps even useful) advertising application of cookies is to rotate banner ads as you go from page to page to make sure that you do not see the same ads over and over. However, there are more invasive tracking methods that might involve cookies and therein arise privacy issues. The privacy problem is beyond the scope of this article but here are some references:

<http://privacy.net/>

<http://www.epic.org/privacy/internet/cookies/>

<http://www.cookiecentral.com/ccstory/cc3.htm>

It should be emphasized that cookies are plain text files and, as such, are not executable programs and cannot do anything to your computer.

Filtering Cookies

All standard browsers allow for the complete blocking of cookies. However, as I discussed in http://www.ppcug-nj.org/articles/vic_laurie/cookies.html, this is not a very practical solution. Too many sites use cookies for useful or benign purposes. A better alternative is to selectively block and/or remove undesirable cookies while keeping good ones. There are a number of approaches. One way is by do-it-yourself methods. I discussed a number of these previously but since then browsers have added ways of selectively configuring for cookies. For example, Internet Explorer 6 (IE 6) has Privacy settings with a number of cookie options. Among the options is the ability to list specific sites whose cookies are to be rejected. This gives a PC user the op-

Cookie Control continued on page 6

Mandrake 8.1- *Is Linux for you?*

By: Bryan Lilius - Alamo PC Group

I have been a Linux dabbler since 1993, when I worked in Berlin, Germany with a real programmer, Scott Maley. Our mission there was conversion of the Tempelhof Terminal Radar system to serve as the regional Air Traffic Control System for the former East Germany. Scott was a subscriber to Linux Journal before the Linux Kernel reached version 1.0, and he would let me look at his magazines, which I found to be interesting curiosities. While I could look over his shoulder at his Linux system, I didn't have one of my own until 1996 when I installed Red Hat (4.0?) on a 486 I was retiring from active Microsoft service. Amazingly, I succeeded at getting that old 486 set up as our home file and print server, although it didn't seem the sort of thing that just anyone could do. I had to recompile the kernel to get it to work with my bus mouse and obsolete Western Digital network card. Recompiling the kernel, for me, required extensive reading of kernel cookbook instructions, and resulted in having to start over from initial installation more than once. It was the sort of thing that computer "hobbyists" might enjoy.

I stayed with Red Hat through version 6.0, and would probably still be using it but couldn't get network services working on a Toshiba laptop. While this may sound like a criticism of Red Hat, it isn't, as many other people were able to get a configuration similar to mine working, and they were patiently helping me do the same when someone suggested I might like to try Mandrake <www.mandrake.com>. The Linux world is very remarkable in this respect there are a lot of people willing to help you and it is very inexpensive to try different distributions. If you have access to a high-speed Internet connection and a CD burner (and almost everyone does nowadays, right?), then you can try any one of the hundreds of Linux distributions for the cost of your time and the blank CDs. When I first tried Mandrake Version 6.0. I was very impressed with how easily it installed on my laptop, recognizing all the hardware, including the Ethernet PC-card. A creature of habit, I have been using Mandrake ever since and have been quite happy with it.

Who should try Linux

Linux is most suited for those with a "sys admin" outlook, who enjoy twiddling with configuration files. Web-site developer/maintainers and software developers must give it a try it a try and see the incredible capabilities available at little or no cost.

More and more, though, if you just want to surf the web, use e-mail, and maybe compose your paper for school, Linux may be for you. Mandrake Linux installs easier than Microsoft Windows (98, 2000 or XP), and is at least as likely to recognize all your hardware and work on first boot up. There is the possibility that you may be one of those able to free yourself from the monolith before you get so locked in to applications that demand the Windows operating system.

Getting Started

While most people I know who use Linux (including myself,) have a dual boot machine, (we want Linux on our best hard-

ware), I think first-timers are better off trying it on the machine they have just replaced. Right now people are giving away old Pentium II's, if you don't have one of your own sitting in a closet, and Linux will run just fine on them. The advantage of this is that you don't worry about messing up your Windows machine and you have the freedom of knowing you can't hurt anything. You should be aware that if your computer is really old (say a P-133 with 8MB RAM) you ought to get an older version of Linux. These older versions are still available for download. Mandrake recommends you have at least 64 MB of RAM for using version 8.1. You should also have at least 2GB of disk space available, and 4GB is better. However, you can still obtain versions that will even run on a 386 with 640kb of RAM from their Web site.

If you are not putting Linux on a stand-alone machine, you must make some decisions. Mandrake provides an option of installing itself in your Windows partition, and actually starting up from a windows command. I have never tried this, and wouldn't recommend it. I have heard that it runs slower than native mode.

If you have room for a second drive that you can dedicate to Linux, then this is a better option. You won't have to repartition your current, fully utilized Windows partition. If for "some reason" you have just lost all your data and must reinstall Windows, then you have the perfect opportunity to set aside a small portion of that big hard drive, create a Linux partition, and enjoy a dual-boot machine. Before you do any of these things, be sure to read the "install.htm" file in the top-level directory of the first CD. This document tells you everything you need to know to boot from the CD-ROM and install Mandrake Linux. It also shows you how to create a set of boot floppies if your machine can't boot from CD-ROM. Other informative reading about Linux and Mandrake can be found at Mandrake's Web-site.

Mandrake's installation is easy and straightforward. From my experience and reading, Mandrake does the best job of recognizing the hardware on your machine and configuring it appropriately of any Linux distribution available. Figure 1 shows what the screen looks like as you step through the installation program. There isn't space in this review for a step-by-step description of all must do, but the installation instructions will be sufficient for most users and systems. When you are finished you will have X-Windows and the KDE environment all configured for you. After you log in you will have a desktop that you could in no time have looking like this screen shot taken from Mandrake's web site.

What's included

Mandrake 8.1 comes with Linux Kernel version 2.4.8, the KDE Desktop version 2.2.1 with the "dramatically improved" KOffice 1.1. Server features include:

support for Journalized File Systems, a special version of SAMBA which allows Windows file sharing with NT-like access control lists, and the Apache web server.

Ten Years Ago

A look back at a column that describes the process of getting a new hard drive - in 1992!

By: Steve Bass - Pasadena IBM Users Group

Here's a quiz: Why is upgrading your IBM PC like going to the dentist? It's not — going to the dentist is a lot more fun.

It's no joke. I hate upgrading because it's a day of tinkering with the insides of my computer. But I had to get a larger hard disk because I switched to Windows. Applications written for Windows take up humongous amounts of hard disk space and there's little chance that the trend will stop. Microsoft's Word for Windows, for example, gobbles up 12 megabytes and Corel Draw takes about 14 megabytes.

Most users have hard disks ranging in size from the older 30 megabyte (the one I'm still using) to about 200 megabytes. Larger sizes are available and many people are looking towards the future, buying disks as big as 384MBs. I predict that within two years, 1 gigabyte disks (that's 1000 megabytes) will be on many machines. But for now — with hard disks dropping in price — I recommend a minimum 200MB hard disk on a new system or 120MB on an upgrade.

There's more than one way to add a new hard disk and how you do it depends on your budget and your existing system.

Quantum's Plus Hardcard is not the least expensive but it is the quickest, easiest way to upgrade. For about \$400, you get 105MBs of disk storage on an add-in card — and no installation hassles. Putting in the Hardcard will take less than fifteen minutes from start to finish.

A friend of mine chose a neat alternative and upgraded with a Bernoulli storage device. Instead of a "fixed" disk — one that stays in the computer — Bernoulli lets you remove their 90MB disk. The internal Bernoulli drive is discounted to under \$800 and is a good solution as you can buy more disks (at about \$150 each) when your storage needs increase. My friend keeps Windows applications on one disk, shareware on another and DOS programs on a third. You're also able to move the data to another computer via the portable disk, an added benefit.

The traditional upgrade path is to add a hard disk to your existing system which means the drive you purchase must match the controller card that's already plugged into one of your system's expansion slots. Older machines usually have an RLL or MFM interface but newer machines come with faster IDE (integrated drive electronics) controllers, the current standard. Most controller cards manage up to two hard disks along with the two floppy drives. Some IDEs include parallel and serial ports used to attach modems and printers.

If you have an IDE controller, I recommend you stay with it. On one IDE machine, I upgraded and choose a fast Conner hard disk because of their reputation for long life expectancy and fast access time. Their 120MB model (CP30104) will set you back about \$400 and their 212MB (model CP320) is about \$560.

Macintosh owners, however, have a secret recently available to IBMs: Small Computer System Interface (SCSI) adapters. SCSI, pronounced "scuzzy," lets you attach up to seven devices onto one internal controller card. If you're upgrading a hard disk and think you may want a CD ROM player (also called a reader) in the near future, consider the SCSI adapter. You can daisy chain the hard disk, CD ROM player, a tape backup and up to four peripherals.

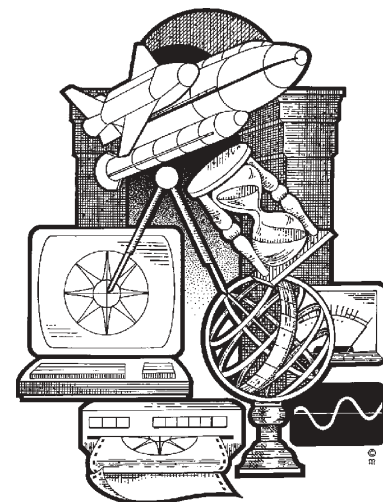
Adaptec's fast SCSI adapter, the one I'm using, even lets you connect up to two floppy drives, a valuable addition. If you choose to upgrade with SCSI, make sure you check with the hard disk manufacturer to see which controller cards are compatible. I tried the Adaptec with a Conner SCSI drive and had no problems. If you run into trouble, get in touch with CORELSCSI, a Canadian company that supplies special software for a wide array of SCSI devices.

While SCSI offers faster access and more flexibility, it isn't for everyone. On uncomplicated home machines, upgrading to SCSI should present no problem and you can likely do it yourself. But in business settings — especially if you're on a network — you may need to hire a technician for help.

So what will it be: upgrade or go to the dentist? I'll let you make your own decision. I've already made mine.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He's also a founding member of APCUG. Check PCW's current edition at www.pcworld.com/resource/toc/index.asp and sign up for the Steve Bass online newsletter at www.pcworld.com/bass_letter.

Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.



tion of refusing cookies from certain advertising agencies such as DoubleClick that use aggressive tracking methods.

To configure IE 6 go to **Control Panel | Internet Options**. You will notice that IE 6 has added a button “Delete Cookies” on the General Settings window. This function can be used if you wish to delete all cookies and start from scratch. However, you will lose any cookies that serve a useful purpose as well as any “bad” ones that are tracking you. Various cookie settings as well as individual cookie control is available by clicking the “Privacy” tab and then “Default” (Figure 1).

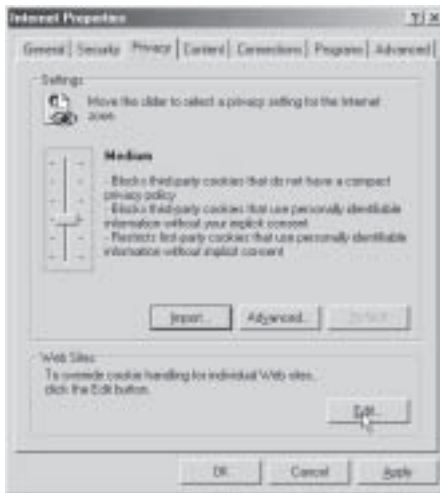
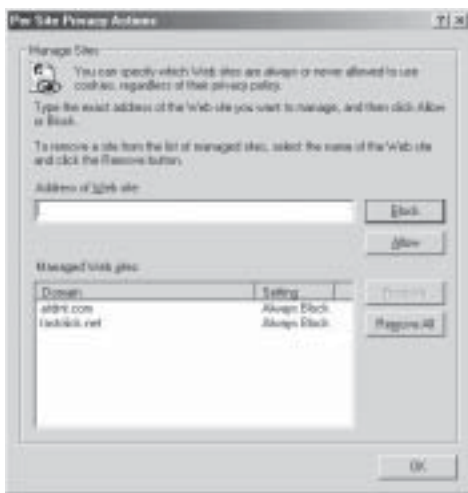


Figure 1. Cookie control in IE 6

Clicking the “Edit” button (see pointer in Figure 1) allows for the entering of individual Web sites whose cookies are to be



blocked (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Blocking individual cookies in IE 6

For more on IE 6 security settings, see <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/winhelp2002/cookies.htm>
<http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/en-us/dnpriv/html/ie6privacyfeature.asp>

If you would prefer to have some software do the cookie managing, there are many programs. Some freeware programs are:

Cookie Jar at <http://www.jasons-toolbox.com/cookiejar.asp>
CookieCop at <http://www.pcmag.com/article/0,2997,s=1478&a=20845,00.asp>

Privacy Companion at http://www.idcide.com/pages/per_intro.htm

The number of freeware as well as commercial programs is very large and cookie management is often combined with other security functions. For example, see <http://www.pcmag.com/article/0,2997,s=1626&a=12687,00.asp> <http://webveil.com/cookie-tools.html>

: Mandrake 8.1 continued from page 4

Some of the 100's of applications include:

- * Grio500: synchronize your desktop with the Rio 500 MP3 player
- * Mozilla 0.9.4: browse the Web and try the new communication module
- * XMMS 1.2.5: edit and manage MP3 files
- * GIMP 1.2.2: create and manipulate photos with this powerful graphics software
- * Gphoto2: manage all your digital photos
- * Grip 2.96: burn your favorite CDs
- * KOffice 1.1: perform all your office tasks
- * Galeon 0.12.1: try this unusual browser for a new kind of browsing experience
- * Gnomemeeting 0.11: Share good times with family and friends with this full-featured video conferencing software

Availability and pricing

If downloading and making your own CD is not something you can or want to do, you can order the 3-CD “Download” set from Mandrake for \$25 plus \$5 shipping, or from www.cheabytes.com for \$10.49 including shipping. You may also find bargains on Mandrake through other inexpensive sources such as book and discount computer stores.

If you want to jump in with both feet, Mandrake Linux PowerPack Edition 8.1 features 7 CDs, 2 manuals, thousands of Open Source and commercial applications and installation support. The price of \$89 includes shipping and a contribution to Mandrake's Free Software developments. Other more expensive and extensive options are also available.

Bryan Lilius is the Staff Elder at Faith Presbyterian Church, 1307 Blanco Woods.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.



PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

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

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(Last Update: June 29, 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

Consultants Corner

Meyda Online

"Meyda means Information"

J.D. Abolins

"Pro Bono" Educational Services

Specialties: Information Security, Privacy

Issues, and Web Publishing

<http://www.meydabbs.com>

E-mail: jda-ir@njcc.com

Consultants Corner

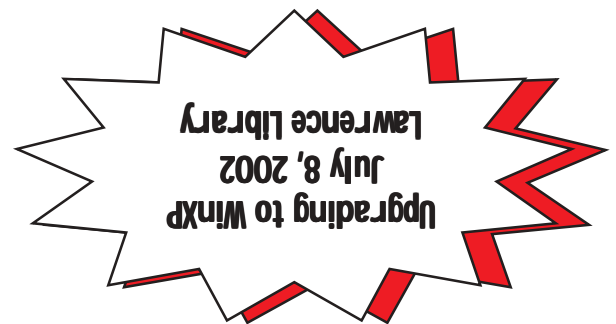
You can advertise your consulting business for \$25 per year in addition to your normal membership fee.

Minutes for the General Meeting

June 10, 2002

By: Don Arrowsmith

Sol Libes opened the meeting at 7:51 with a rundown of the program schedule for the rest of the year. Questions from the floor included problems using Norton Internet Security 2002 with Windows 98 and a Toshiba notebook running Windows XP that powers off unexpectedly. At 8:07 George Faigen began the formal presentation on Wireless Data developments. He presented an overview of the devices used for mobile and wireless modes of data and voice and their outlooks for the future.



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