

May 2004 Volume 20 Number 5

# PPCUG NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

**Monday, May 10, 2004**  
**Troubleshooting Windows Problems**  
**David Soll**

David will discuss the causes and solutions for many of the problems commonly experienced by Microsoft Windows users. His talk will focus primarily on Windows XP, but will include a discussion of the differences between earlier versions of Windows and Windows XP and reasons for upgrading.

David Soll is the Vice President of Advanced Technology for Omicron Consulting in Philadelphia. He is also the past Chairman of the Princeton Joint Chapter of the ACM/IEEE Computer Society. He has been working with computer technologies for over 24 years and holds a BS in Electrical Engineering from Drexel University. He has worked in computer programming, network engineering, systems analysis, and system architecture and design and is still active in the most technical aspects of computing.

Lawrence Library  
Meeting Rooms 1 & 2  
US Alternate Route 1 South & Darrah Lane, Lawrenceville, NJ

*Meetings of an organization at any of the facilities of the Mercer County Library System  
in no way imply endorsement of its programs.*

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**Members** may bring spare items to sell or may make excess magazines available for free at our meetings. These should be placed on one of the side tables. Any sales negotiations should occur before 7:30 or after the main program has completed. PLEASE make sure that anything you brought is removed or discarded by you at the end of the evening so that others are not burdened by extra cleanup.

## Coming Events

June 14, 2004 - Using Adobe PhotoShop Elements  
July 12, 2004 - Video editing with free (or nearly free) software

## About PPCUG

### General Meetings

Second Monday of the month at the Lawrenceville Library, Alternate Route 1 and Darrah Lane.

7:00 PM: Social Time / Tech Corner

7:30 PM: Meeting comes to Order

7:45 PM: Featured presentation

For information about upcoming meetings or joining PPCUG, see our web site:

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

### Board Meetings

Board meetings are open to all members. Notice of an upcoming meeting will be posted on the web site.

### Board Members

#### *President:*

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#### *Vice-President:*

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#### *Secretary:*

Don Arrowsmith 609-883-9874

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#### *Hospitality:*

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#### *Newsletter Editor:*

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#### *Program Coordinator:*

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### Annual Dues

Dues are \$30 per calendar year with a mailed newsletter or \$20 per year with online access to the newsletter. New members pay \$2.50 or \$1.75 per month times the number of months remaining in the current year.

## April Meeting Minutes



The meeting started at 7:33 with Clarke reminding everyone to volunteer to work at the pickup booth at TCF - contact Paul ASAP to show your intentions. Questions from the floor included a Word 2003 file, originally a Word 97 file, with mysterious horizontal lines across some pages of a large document. The main program on eBay began at 7:39. Scott Marshall shared many tips that he successfully uses in his auctions. Interestingly, he greatly recommended the book "eBay Hacks" which was favorably reviewed here in the February issue. Scott stressed having good photographs which highlight the actual appearance of the item for sale. He always uses a tripod to hold his digital camera to minimize any blurring. The importance of never getting negative feedback was stressed. Key to that is to always represent the true condition of the item in words and photos. His items can be found by searching for "scott-on-ibay" as a seller. You can catch Scott again at TCF on Sunday, May 2 at 12:50PM.



## Trenton Computer Festival May 1&2

If you haven't volunteered to help at the TCF Package Pickup area, why not? Contact Paul to indicate your availability. If you have already volunteered, please show up at the time you requested. Thanks for helping to keep the PPCUG dues low - To replace the money we receive from this project we would have to raise our dues by \$8/year.



## Web Link of the Month

**Vic Laurie**

In preparing to teach my April SeniorNet class on Computer Safety, I came across the reference below. In light of the rash of computer worms, Trojan horses, and viruses that we are experiencing, I think the Security Checklist given in the reference could be very useful to us all. Some of the items (for home networks, for example) may not apply to everyone, but I think it is a worthwhile list to look at.

<http://www.securityfocus.com/columnists/220>



## HP Tablet PC

**Paul Kurivchack**

I had the opportunity to play with a HP Tablet PC tc1100 on and off for a couple of weeks recently. My first reaction was that it is a pretty cool PC and that Tablet PC's may just be ready for prime time use.

### **Hardware / Physical**

The tc1100 is quite versatile as it switches between being a tablet PC and a desktop with attached keyboard just by swiveling the keyboard (acts as the base/stand) out from under the tablet screen and tilting upward (I did get this queasy feeling when twisting and turning the keyboard out from under that the plastic would easily break).



Also, when changing from tablet to desktop mode the screen changes from portrait (tablet) to landscape (desktop). The keyboard, while slightly smaller than a typical laptop was quite suitable for most typing functions with good keyboard feel. In fact I liked the thinness of the keyboard as it did not raise your wrists in an awkward way that a typical laptop does. The point stick was a little stiff to use and in most cases I would prefer to have a USB mouse along to use.

The tc1100 is a little on the heavy side to carry to meetings with the attached keyboard, but I do understand from the documentation that the keyboard does detach for tablet use only which will reduce the weight somewhat and reduce the overall thickness. Overall I thought the tc1100 to be fairly rugged and well designed for active users in an office setting.

### **Software / OS**

To start with the Windows XP Tablet PC Edition OS worked fine with no major issues. It is just like running WinXP Pro but with the addition of the pen/handwriting entry (an oversized Palm Pilot PDA). Software installs were all accomplished via the external CD/DVD ROM drive and it worked flawlessly.

The pen/stylus worked very well as a mouse for all on-screen controls. It was kind of weird to use a pen as a mouse on the actual screen but after a short time it became very easy. I did get frustrated trying to right mouse click with the pen though. Pointer accuracy was again very good with me making only a couple of misses per session (not great eye-hand coordination). This is also without any pointer calibration being performed. Practice using the pen is very important for ongoing success using the tablet PC.

When using the tc1100 in tablet mode is the ability to choose an on-screen keyboard that you would hunt and peck the characters one at a time using the stylus pen or the handwriting entry (not as fast as typing by any means). These screens appeared at the bottom of the screen and are user selectable by clicking the tab at the top of the active window.

Like the Palm handwriting method, Windows XP Tablet expects characters to be written in a uniform way with this being part of the tutorial (I skipped this). Despite the fact I very seldom ever read the users manual, the handwriting function of Tablet XP performed very well, even with my somewhat sloppy printing. It captured the correct characters about 95% of the time. Again an area where practice makes perfect otherwise the end users will become frustrated very easily.

### **Other Software**

Microsoft OneNote. This application truly makes the tablet PC useful using the handwriting function. When launched it makes the screen look like a ruled note pad. Just start jotting notes on the screen using the pen. When completed, use the menu to select the command to change the handwritten notes into easy to read typed notes in your preferred font. Again accuracy was very good considering my handwriting (It does prefer hand printing). But with OneNote and some practice, you will never take a pad of paper to a meeting

again.

Microsoft Reader (E Books). Win XP Tablet again shines here as an E Book reader. I downloaded a couple of free books to test out this feature and was surprised how well it actually displays the text on the screen (as good as looking at any paper based book). Text was clear and sharp, plus if your eyesight is not what it uses to be, you can enlarge the type. There is also a computer generated voice reader. This feature still has a long way to go for proper pronunciation of complicated words or names but it was a cute novelty feature that might be used for service technicians to have repair instructions read aloud when fixing a piece of equipment.

### **Wireless**

While the tc1100 was supposed to have an integrated wireless 802.11b WLAN built in for testing, we were unable to test this feature due to the security nature of the wireless network installed in this office. Surprisingly we found an external Ad Hoc wireless LAN within the local area that the integrated wireless LAN tried to attach to. Also, if we had the time to test the tc1100 outside the building at a WIFI Hot Spot, it probably would have connected without a hitch. Using an industry standard PCMCIA Avaya Gold 802.11b WLAN card, we successfully attached to the internal network at 11 mbps.

### **Conclusion**

Overall the tc1100 is a very cool product. It performed well, despite that fact it is only running a 1.0GHz processor, it didn't crash during our limited use or act overly weird.



## **Software Freedom Day**

The first annual Software Freedom Day will be held on August 28, 2004. The Software Freedom Day initiative intends to make the world aware of the existence, availability, and high quality of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS), and to encourage its use by as many people as possible. It is a global grassroots marketing campaign in which volunteers from around the world are invited to participate.

Planned giveaways include informational fliers and CDs with selected FOSS, such as TheOpenCD or Knoppix, in public places on SFD. It will be up to individual teams to choose how they wish to organize the PR effort locally, but help is available for bulk production of posters, T-shirts, CDs and whatever else will be required. More info is at: <http://softwarefreedomday.org/> and <http://theopencd.sunsite.dk/>.



## **Epson Printer Academy**

If you use an Epson printer, you might be interested in the Epson Printer Academy. It is being held in 30 cities across the U.S. and Canada and is "packed with tips, techniques and insider secrets for taking your photography and digital prints to the next level and beyond". The closest one to us is at the Philadelphia Airport Marriott Hotel on May 15. The cost is \$59.95 but there is a \$15 discount if you register online at least three days before the event. More informa-



## Domain Report for ppcug-nj.org

I thought you might be interested in who visits the PPCUG web site. Below is a table of the domain of visitors, sorted by amount of traffic, for the week of 3/27 - 4/3. As you can see, people from all over the globe stop to see us. If you want to look at the statistics for yourself, go to <http://www.ppcug-nj.org/stats.html>

### #reqs: %bytes: domain

511: 30.48%: .com (Commercial, mainly USA)  
923: 26.31%: .net (Network)  
346: 26.17%: [unresolved numerical addresses]  
36: 3.34%: .ca (Canada)  
29: 2.17%: .edu (USA Educational)  
13: 1.88%: .mil (USA Military)  
13: 1.58%: .be (Belgium)  
7: 0.82%: .au (Australia)  
5: 0.77%: .br (Brazil)  
4: 0.70%: .nl (Netherlands)  
6: 0.67%: .dk (Denmark)  
7: 0.63%: .de (Germany)  
3: 0.62%: .us (United States)  
2: 0.50%: .gov (USA Government)  
6: 0.38%: .pt (Portugal)  
3: 0.35%: .uk (United Kingdom)  
5: 0.31%: .sg (Singapore)  
6: 0.30%: .it (Italy)  
3: 0.29%: .fr (France)  
2: 0.25%: [unknown]  
1: 0.25%: .ee (Estonia)  
2: 0.25%: .id (Indonesia)  
2: 0.20%: .gr (Greece)  
1: 0.18%: .se (Sweden)  
2: 0.15%: .cz (Czech Republic)  
1: 0.12%: .sy (Syria)  
3: 0.10%: .il (Israel)  
1: 0.09%: .th (Thailand)  
1: 0.09%: .nz (New Zealand)  
3: 0.02%: .jp (Japan)  
1: 0.01%: .org (Non-Profit Making Organisations)  
2: 0.01%: .tw (Taiwan)  
1: : .sc (Seychelles)  
1: : .pl (Poland)  
1: : .tr (Turkey)

Total successful requests: 1 953  
Average successful requests per day: 280  
Total successful requests for pages: 239  
Average successful requests for pages per day: 34  
Total failed requests: 317  
Number of distinct files requested: 115  
Number of distinct hosts served: 499  
Total data transferred: 118 455 kbytes  
Average data transferred per day: 16 984 Kbytes



## Defend Your Computer, Part II Vic Laurie

In a previous article, <http://www.vlaurie.com/computers2/Articles/defend.htm>, I discussed some of the defenses that are necessary to defend computers against the onslaught of viruses, worms, Trojans, and their related ilk (hereinafter termed "malware"). These measures were employing common sense, keeping anti-virus programs up-to-date, using firewalls, and applying Trojan and spyware cleaners. In this article I will continue with the remaining steps that a PC user can take to defend home computers.

### Windows Update

For a variety of reasons the Windows operating system has been far from optimum in the area of security. A large number of security holes have been found over the years. As time goes on, Microsoft plugs these holes but new ones keep being discovered. Microsoft has been issuing patches with numbing frequency. Windows XP comes with a feature that provides for downloading and installing this constant flow of updates but it has its problems. There is no room here to go into all the details but Window Update does not always work correctly (for just one example, see [www.computerworld.com/softwaretopics/os/windows/story/0,10801,84084,00.html](http://www.computerworld.com/softwaretopics/os/windows/story/0,10801,84084,00.html)). Nor is it always as current as it should be. Not only that, but sometimes the patches break things and have to be re-patched. Another problem is that dial-up connections can be too slow for practical downloading of some patches. In response to this last difficulty, Microsoft has made a free CD available at <http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect/>. The CD contains all critical updates through October, 2003. More recent updates will have to be downloaded until the next (if there is one) CD comes out. Updates and patches for the operating systems Windows 98/ME/2000/XP are all included on one CD.

Windows Update problems or no, there really isn't a good alternative for the average PC user. All critical updates should be applied, either from a CD or by downloading. To guard against problems from installing a patch, be sure to create a System Restore point before any installation (<http://vlaurie.com/computers2/Articles/xptweak.htm>). If something goes awry with an installation, then you can at least get back to where you started. The update feature has settings that will allow downloads to be automatic but dial-up users should probably configure the system to ask first before downloading. They can then be prepared for a long process if the file is large. Windows Update can be configured by going to Control Panel-Performance and Maintenance-System and clicking the tab "Automatic Updates". You can then choose from these options:

"Notify me before downloading any updates and notify me again before installing them on my computer" (best for dial-up)

"Download the updates automatically and notify me when they are ready to be installed"

"Automatically download the updates and install them on the schedule that I specify"

Those who are disciplined and savvy about Windows systems can disable the automatic update feature and check periodically with the Microsoft site at <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/>. This allows you to select which patches to download after the site scans your computer and catalogs which updates are already installed on your system.

### Configure System Settings

One line of defense against malware attachments in e-mail is to watch the file extensions carefully. So once more, I urge that the setting be made that allows file extensions to show (<http://www.vlaurie.com/computers2/extensions1.htm>). If you can see the extension, you can be aware when a file is of a type that is potentially dangerous.

Depending on what software you use for reading e-mail there may be other settings that help with guarding against attachments. If you use Outlook Express as your e-mail client, a tutorial showing how to make a variety of security settings is at <http://www.vlaurie.com/computers2/internet.htm>.

Internet Explorer has a variety of security settings. Unfortunately, the defaults are not always the safest and some tweaking can make your system more secure. There are too many possible settings to go into here but an article at <http://www.windows-help.net/features/surf-safe.html> gives many details.

Computer experts also suggest that you not use an account with administrative privileges for your routine activities. Rather, they suggest that you set up and use a separate account with limited rights. Then if a virus does get into your system, the damage it can do is curtailed.

### Is the Internet Safe?

There are so many warnings and alarms about malware and other problems that some people wonder if it is safe to use the Internet at all. If the average PC user takes the precautions we have been discussing, there should be little cause to worry. Common sense alone will keep you out of many problems and the other measures we have discussed will protect you against the more subtle ones. The Internet is a wonderful thing and should be used to its fullest. Just don't be careless. If enough people take proper security measures, the chain reactions that we get from malware won't get started.

**Note:** I have completely revamped my web site and moved it to a new server and domain. The new site is <http://vlaurie.com> and contains the material from the old site as well as much that is new. I will be posting newsletter articles there as well as other articles and slide shows.

There are still some unfinished parts but I hope you will all take a look and let me know any suggestions for its improvement. I would really appreciate it if you will let me know about any broken links or any other problems or comments.



## PRINCETON ACM / IEEE-CS SPRING 2004 SEMINAR

Digital Media Bootcamp: Technology and Applications

Saturday, May 8, 2004, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sarnoff Corporation Auditorium

Cost: \$90 (Princeton ACM/IEEE-CS members), \$100 (non-members)

### ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Full description and registration online at:  
[www.acm.org/chapters/princetonacm/sem04.pdf](http://www.acm.org/chapters/princetonacm/sem04.pdf)

### -- Seminar Description

This seminar is a day-long bootcamp in digital media, covering both the gory details of technologies and formats, and the bigger picture of the developing market and applications. It combines technical details such as compression formats with hands-on demonstrations of working with digital media products and applications.

The day will cover the full range of digital media formats and applications:

- Digital Imaging – Photo Editing
- Digital Video and Audio – Video Editing
- Streaming Media
- Automated Video Processing – Transcoding and Compression
- DVD Authoring

In each area, we will explore the base concepts and market, the underlying formats and technology, and the end-to-end workflow of working with these media:

- Acquisition – Capture / Import
- Process – Tools
- Share – Convert

This seminar will help you make sense out of this profusion of digital media formats, and equip you with the background needed to create, edit, and share digital media – whether you need to capture and post a short video clip, or add media clips to a PowerPoint presentation, or share an event on DVD.

### About the speaker

Douglas Dixon is a technologist and author specializing in digital media. His Manifest Technology website ([www.manifest-tech.com](http://www.manifest-tech.com)) provides free articles and technical references to help make sense of multimedia technology.

Doug has published over 100 feature articles, and is the author of three books, including *Desktop DVD Authoring* and *How to Use Adobe Premiere*. Among other positions, he is currently editor-at-large for *Mediaware* magazine, contributing editor for *Camcorder* and *Computer Video* magazine, and a contributor to *CNET Reviews* and the *U.S.1* newspaper.

Doug has presented over 35 seminars and talks in the past few years on digital media topics, for professional groups and conferences including Sony Training, NAB, ShowBiz Expo NY, DVD International Conference, TECHXNY / PC Expo, and Government Video Expo.

**ALSO:** The May Dinner Meeting will be Thursday, May 20 at Good Time Charlies -- Architectural Evolution of Computers see <http://www.acm.org/chapters/princetonacm/mtg0405.pdf> for details.

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**eBay University**  
**Don Arrowsmith**

My wife and I have done some moderate selling on eBay and decided to attend an "eBay University" session to learn more. It was held in Hartford CT which we made a stop on the way home from a trip to see family in RI and MA. Staged in a convention hall, I wasn't sure what to expect. Between the Basic track which my wife attended and the Advanced offering that I was in, there were 800+ people present!

The cost is \$39 and includes a bound copy of the slides, notepad, and pen. A sales table was available selling branded watches, caps, "The Official eBay Bible", and mugs. Lunch was unfortunately not included!

The Basic session was led by Jim Griffin, Griff, a familiar name to anyone who has visited eBay community forums. He authored the eBay book and was happy to autograph copies.

As is the case with a program that is often repeated, the content has been honed into a well-crafted presentation. The day's schedule was followed exactly, which I appreciated.

The focus in both classes was on selling and mainly on making eBay your business or an adjunct to an existing business. A lot of information was geared to eBay Stores which is understandable as eBay profits grow more from serious sellers. Don't attend if you are only a buyer! The content was broken into various modules on starting up, finding merchandise, tools to create listings, marketing, managing listings, using PayPal, packaging, and other eBay programs.

Even though geared to heavy sellers, there was a lot of information of use to casual sellers and good tips for experienced sellers. Turbo Lister is free software from eBay that can make it extremely easy to generate, post and manage listings.

This program is given frequently, usually on a Saturday from 9-3. The next and closest date is Saturday, July 10 at a Marriott in Whippany NJ. More information is available at: <http://pages.ebay.com/university/classes.html>.

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