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PPCUG NEWS

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Monday, July 12, 2004
Video Editing and DVD Creation with
Free (or Nearly Free) Software
Douglas Ferguson

The advent of inexpensive DVD recorders and Digital Video cameras has brought about much interest in editing and creating home videos on DVD. We'll examine how to create high quality work using free and in-expensive tools for the PC.

Doug Ferguson is an avid home video enthusiast who creates DVDs of home videos for his friends and family to enjoy. It is his goal to rid the world of long, boring vacation videos. In his day job, Doug is the technical team lead for the Telecom Solutions Center of the Intel Communications Group. Doug is a 3-year speaker at TCF.

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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The PPCUG Board will be meeting soon. Now is a great time for you to make your wishes known about where you'd like to see the group go for the next year. Are you happy with the meeting location? Are you satisfied with the program topics? Would you like to suggest a new fund raiser? Should we put together a CD of freeware to distribute? Would you like to draw a new logo for the club? Should we order custom tee shirts? Speak up now!

Coming Events

August 9, 2004 - Computer Security - Joel May
September 13, 2004 - PC Magazine columnist - Bill Machrone

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:

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

or email us at:

ppcug@njcc.com (Please include "OK" in the subject line.)

Board Meetings

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

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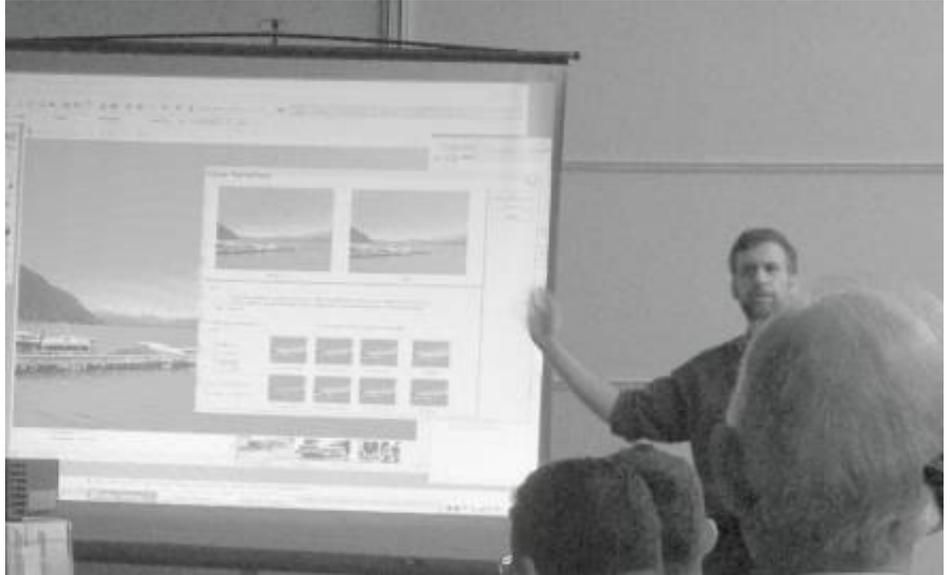
Annual Dues

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.

June Meeting Minutes

The meeting came to order at 7:30 with questions from the floor concerning: Loss of autologon to Windows XP {see article in this issue}; Spyware on a system with Windows Me; Auto-renewals of PCMag and other magazines; Buying a domain name.

At 7:46 Doug Dixon began the main presentation on Adobe Photoshop Elements v2. This consumer oriented product has most of the good features of the expensive Photoshop along with several unique and useful additions. Doug walked us through most sections of the program including the file selector with thumbnails and detailed photo information and the many and varied editing tools. Pricegrabber.com shows the lowest online price at \$65.50. More information and a trial version is available at <http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopel/main.html>.



Web Link of the Month

Don Arrowsmith

TitanTV.com is an excellent spot to check television listings. You can select from several provider types (cable, satellite, over-the-air) and levels of service to get a base listing. Within that listing you can customize which channels are displayed; e.g. I have removed the shopping, Spanish, and other channels that don't interest me. When the color-coded-by-genre grid is displayed, you can click on a program title to get more information about that program plus any additional, upcoming airings. Schedules for the next 14 days are searchable. Any of these airings can be added to your reminder list. You can set favorite movies, actors and shows to see a special list of when they are showing, both today and tomorrow. Appearances of any of your favorites and your reminders can optionally be sent to you by email. You need to register with them but can opt-out of any marketing emails.



Kim Komando Radio Show

If you just can't get enough computer and Internet news, maybe you'd like to listen to The Kim Komando Computer Show. Kim takes your calls from coast-to-coast three hours every weekend. She gives out so many tips, tricks and secrets you better have a pen and paper handy! In the Princeton area, the show is heard on WHWH at 1350 AM, Saturdays from 12noon-1pm. To talk to Kim, call the show Saturday mornings 10am-1pm eastern toll-free at 1-888-825-5254. You can also sign up for any of three, free email newsletters: Computer/Internet Tip of the Day, Cool Site of the Day and Weekend Edition. Sign up or get more info including other radio stations at: <http://www.komando.com/>.





Auto-Logon for Windows XP Don Arrowsmith

One of the questions at a recent PPCUG meeting concerned the logon screen which now appears when Windows XP is started. The user stated that formerly he was presented with his desktop without any need to select his user name to logon. Now he is presented with the Welcome screen and must select his user name to get started. He'd like to return to the previous operation.

Windows XP will auto-login a user if 1) There is only one user (not counting the Administrator and Guest accounts) and 2) That user has no password in place. What has happened to the user's system is that he installed either or both of two Windows Update selections which add additional user accounts. The two patches are related to the .NET Framework v1.1 and to SQL. Now that there are multiple user accounts, XP doesn't know which one to start and asks for guidance. The SQL Debugging account is also hidden so it doesn't show up on the logon screen.

There are several ways to automatically start as before. First, I suspect that you could probably delete the added accounts without any bad effects. Second, you could look here: <http://www.mvps.org/sramesh2k/Autologon.htm>. Third, you could look here: <http://support.microsoft.com/?kbid=827072>.

My choice is to use TweakUI, one of the XP PowerToys that MS makes available. It is available for free at: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.msp>. Note that the version at this page requires that your XP be at SP1.

You should first add a password to your user account. To do this go to Start - Control Panel - User Accounts. Click on "Change an account" and select your normal account. Please record the password that you select! And please record the password that you select! Oh, did I already say that? Sorry, but recording that password may make your life much, much easier at some point in the future.

After installing TweakUI, start it and click the "+" before the Logon item in the list on the left. Then select Autologon. Now check the box that says "Log on automatically at system startup". Type your user name in the text box, click on "Set Password", and enter your new password in the two fields. OK out of TweakUI and you should be good to go.



Upgraded Free Mail Services

To compete with Google's upcoming free Gmail with 1GB of online email storage, Yahoo! has upgraded their free email offering. Users now get 100MB of storage, up from 4 or 6MB. Yahoo! formerly charged for POP3 access,

forwarding, or larger mailboxes: Their former Mail Plus product at \$29.99 per year included only 25MB. MailPlus has now been upgraded to 2GB of storage and the price has been reduced to \$19.99 per year. (Note that Gmail is not POP3 addressable.)

Hotmail is slowly upgrading existing users from 2MB to 25MB with 250MB promised in July. It also will launch a \$19.95 per year service with 2GB of in-box capacity.

Ask Jeeves operates the MyWay, Excite, and iWon services. It will upgrade these from 3MB or 6MB to 125MB before October. Excite Gold had offered a 10MB in-box for \$19.99 per year and a 25MB in-box for \$24.99 per year. After the upgrade, Excite Gold members will get a 2GB in-box for \$19.99 per year.



McAfee Class Action Settlement

Network Associates announces a special offer for retail users of McAfee VirusScan versions 3 or 4 -- a free download of one of the following perpetual retail products: McAfee VirusScan version 8, McAfee AntiSpyware version 1.0, or McAfee QuickClean version 4.01.

This offer is being presented as part of a settlement of a class action lawsuit. If you are a U.S. resident and you bought a retail version of McAfee VirusScan versions 3 or 4, then your rights are affected by this settlement. To take advantage of the special offer or to learn more about the lawsuit and the settlement, go here: <http://us.mcafee.com/root/campaign.asp?cid=10315>



Mouse Tips Vic Laurie

The mouse is a primary way of interacting with the computer. Smooth and responsive functioning is a must. Here are some tips to help ensure trouble-free mousing.

Keep the Mouse clean

I find nothing so frustrating as a mouse that sticks or behaves sluggishly. Very often this behavior happens because the mouse has accumulated dust or dirt. If you are using the usual type of mouse with mechanical rollers and contacts, it is almost a given that sooner or later the mouse will need cleaning. (Optical mice generally don't have this problem.) Fortunately, cleaning the mouse is a simple operation but should be done while the computer is off or the mouse unplugged (not because of any electrical danger, but because otherwise Windows can be very unhappy and even freeze during the cleaning.)

Turn the mouse over and pop off the bottom cover. Usually, this is done by twisting the cover. Remove the ball that is inside and clean off any debris that is on the ball. A Q-tip with alcohol is one way of cleaning. Also clean the roller contacts that are inside the mouse. Make sure all dust and

debris are removed from inside the mouse. For a site with pictures, go to http://www.helpwithpcs.com/maintenance/mouse_problem_maintenance.htm

Not only the mouse but also the mouse pad should be clean. If you use the free, throw-away types, replace your pad periodically.

Double-click made easier

Not everybody is adept at manipulating things with their hands and I often have students in my classes who have troubles with the computer mouse. The double-click can be especially troublesome since it involves precise timing between clicks as well as accurate and steady placement of the mouse pointer. I often suggest replacing the double-click with one of the two following alternatives.

Instead of double-clicking an icon, file, or other object of interest, highlight or select the object with a single left-click. The object will turn blue or become darkened indicating that it has been selected for further action. Then press the “Enter” key on the keyboard. The net result will be the same as double-clicking. This method works for files listed in Explorer as well as for icons.

Another method for opening programs or folders is to use the right mouse button instead of the left. Right-click once on an icon. A menu will open, listing a group of possible actions. Click once more (right or left) on the entry in the menu that says “Open” and the net result is the equivalent of a double-click with the left mouse button.

The parameters of the double-click can also be adjusted to conform to an individual’s patterns. Open the “Mouse Properties” dialog box by going to Control Panel-Printers and Other Hardware-Mouse. Under the “Buttons” tab (Figure 1) is a dialog box with an entry “Double-click speed” with a slider that allows the user to test different double-click parameters by clicking a trial icon. Once the desired speed is determined, click “Apply”. Depending on your mouse software, the procedure may be slightly different. Also in versions of Windows older than XP, the mouse settings are in a slightly different place. Consult your help files for the exact location.

Turn off the double-click

It is also possible to dispense entirely with the necessity of the double-click and to configure the system to behave like a Web page. Open “My Computer” or any folder and click on the “Tools” menu and choose “Folder Options”. (For Windows 98, go to “View-Folder Options-Settings.”) In the dialog box (Figure 2) under “Click items as follows” choose the radio button by “Single-click to open an item...” You then have a choice to have icons titles appear underlined just like links on the Internet or to have the underlining appear only when the mouse pointer is over the icon. Click “Apply” for the settings to take effect.

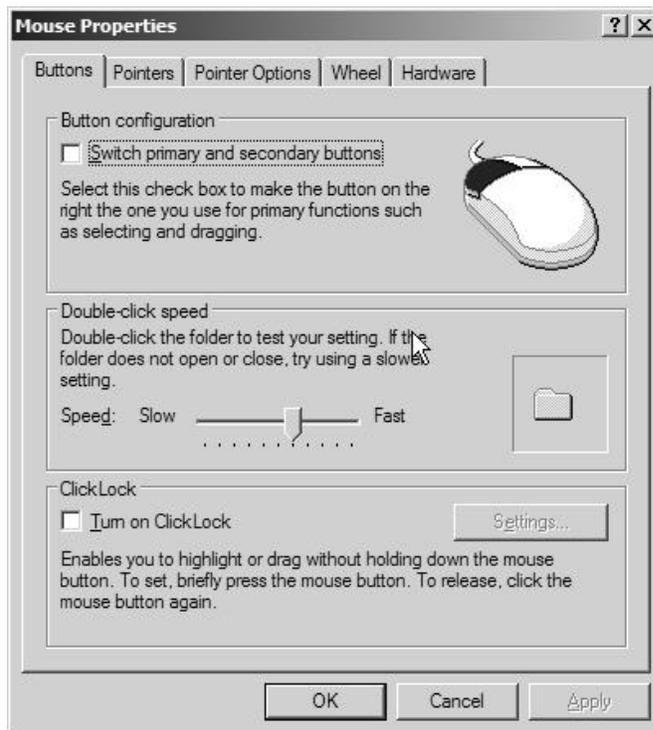


Figure 1. Mouse button properties

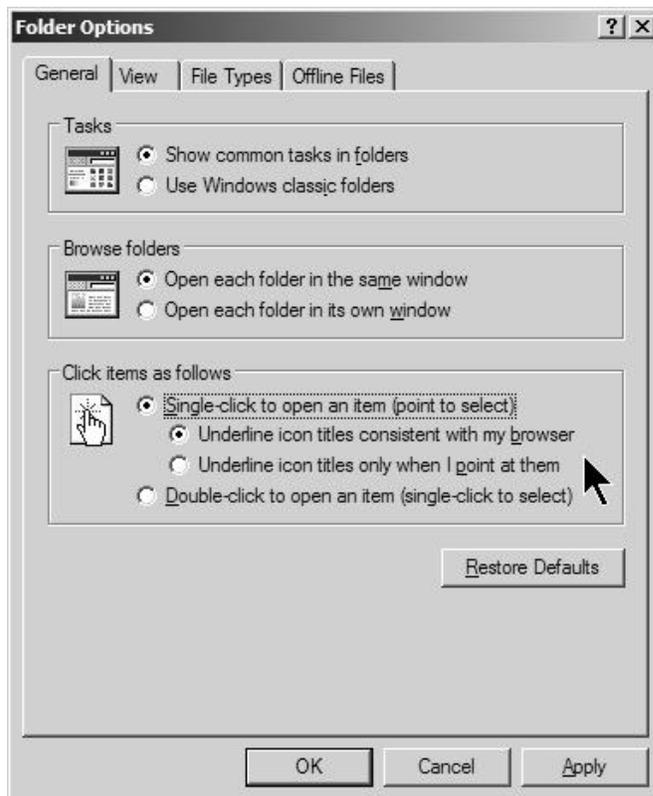


Figure 2. Replacing the double-click

Adjust pointer speed and appearance

It is also possible to adjust a number of other characteristics of the mouse in the Mouse Properties dialog box. For example the speed at which the pointer moves can be

adjusted by clicking on the “Pointer Options” tab (Figure 3). Use the slide bar in the section “Motion” to obtain the speed that you find most suitable.

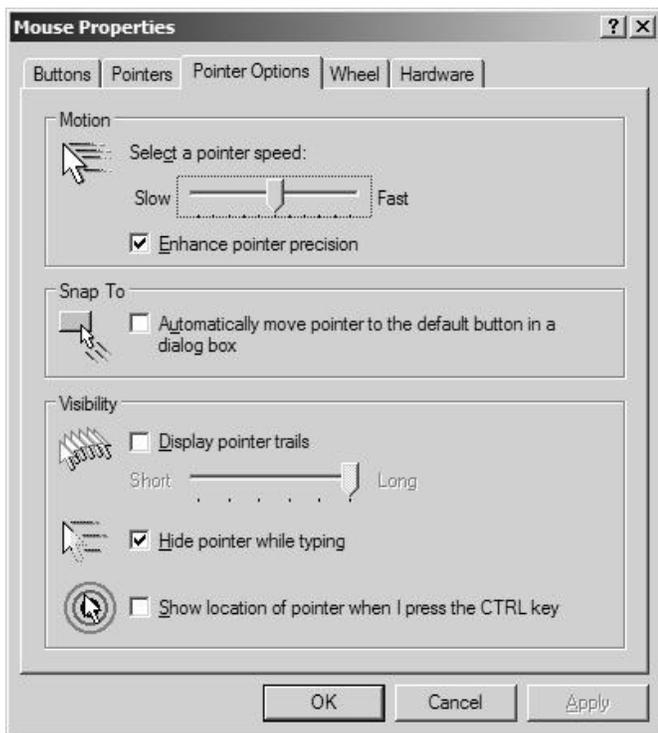


Figure 3. Pointer options

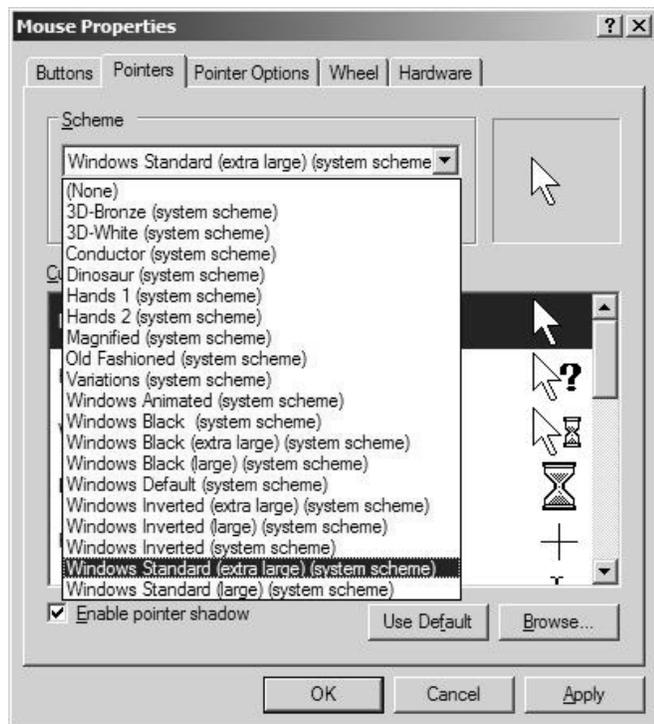


Figure 4. Pointer choices

Many people do not realize that they have a choice of pointer type. Select the tab “Pointers” and you are presented with a variety of possibilities (Figure 4) in the drop-down

window “Scheme”. I find that I like a larger pointer than the default and I use “Windows Standard (extra large). A larger pointer is also good for classroom use.

Keyboard instead of the Mouse

For those who wish to avoid having to use a mouse at all, Windows has a setting that allows the pointer to be controlled from the keys on the numeric pad. These are separate keys usually on the right of the keyboard. They may be missing on laptops where one of the “Fn” keys may have to be invoked. Go to Control Panel-Accessibility Options-Mouse and check “Use MouseKeys.” There is a “Settings” button for configuring speed and acceleration.



Don't Be a Victim of Health Scare Stories ** Alicia King Padgett APCUG Advisor for Region 9

Health scare artists are utilizing the Internet as a medium for terrorizing the public, and unfortunately many adults are taking the stories seriously. These tall tales are often written citing evidence and research that sounds legitimate. Frequently an e-mail is sent to you from a reliable friend who had received it from another acquaintance who had “personal knowledge or personal experience” with the alleged dangerous item. The health scare messages are always the same—whatever it is will make you sick or even cause death.

If you try to research accurate health information about the topic sent, you may literally become caught in the Web, where health hoaxes and urban medical myths run rampant. Many of these Websites appear to have valid researched data.

Before you decide to believe or, worse forward e-mail with serious health claims, do a little checking. Start on the Web with www.urbanlegends.com or www.snopes.com that catalogue the more persistent rumors. These two sites also detail persistent legends on other topics in addition to health scare stories.

Then go to reliable health sites, like:

- www.mayohealth.org for general health
- www.medhelp.org especially good for cardiology
- www.oncolink.org for cancer
- www.cancer.gov for cancer
- www.navigator.tufts.edu for nutrition
- www.fda.gov for latest updates on food/drugs as well as extensive archives

So keep yourself informed and don't become one of the individuals caught in a web of confusion by believing the stories and passing them on to others.

Many of us have been victim of health-related frauds, myths, and fallacies. We have to make many decisions about our health and care and want to make them will informed. This site will keep you up-to-date on the latest findings on health care frauds.

Quack Watch is an informative site that deals with such issues like growth hormone scams, coral calcium, and acupuncture. It has a section on allergies and alternative medicine. You might want to start with Tips for Navigating our Web Sites. In the "Quackery" section you will find the following sections: Seven Warning Signs of Bogus Science, Ten Ways to Avoid Being Quacked, Signs of a "Quacky" web site. Always seek a second opinion, but please peruse www.quackwatch.org



Tech News **

Sue Crane,

Big Bear Computer Club, California

Internet2, the high-speed network designed to facilitate scholarly collaboration among university researchers, has spawned a new turbo-charged file-trading network dubbed i2hub. University network administrators are concerned that copyright violations are occurring and a computer support specialist at Florida State University says: "The fact is, (the

network) cost a lot of money and downloading games and music should be the last priority on any campus network."

Yury Gitman, a self-described "wireless and emerging-media artist" in New York, has outfitted his bicycle with an iBook laptop and Wi-Fi antennas so that everywhere he goes, a cloud of free, high-speed wireless Internet access follows. Demand for wireless Internet access in automobiles has been picking up, and plans are to offer it in airplanes soon.

The History Channel's 13-episode series on "Decisive Battles" that debuts July 17 makes use of a not-yet-released PC game to re-create the epic battles that mark ancient Rome's colorful history. "Rome: Total War" will be published by Activision this fall.

Memory designer Rambus, has begun to license designs for interfaces for DDR DRAM, or double data rate DRAM, the most common type of memory found in PCs and a technology that's often used in consumer electronics devices. The interfaces let another component retrieve data out of DDR DRAM chips. A new version, called DDR 2, will be released soon that runs at 533MHz. It will soon speed up to 800MHz.

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