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PPCUG NEWS

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Monday, September 13, 2004
Safe Shopping on the Internet
Vic Laurie

The Internet contains the largest and most diverse marketplace that the world has ever seen. Almost anything is available from sources all over the globe, and it's never closed. But is it safe? Find out how to protect yourself when shopping and how to find the best deals.

Vic is a retired chemistry professor who is a volunteer instructor of computer classes at the SeniorNet Learning Center in Ewing, NJ and a PPCUG board member. He is a regular contributor to the PPCUG newsletter (two articles in this issue) and a frequent presenter at our meetings. More information is available at his web site: <http://www.vlaurie.com>

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.*

In this issue

Web Link of the Month.....	2
Fonts in Windows	2
Maintenance of Cars and Computers..	3
Registry Mechanic Review.....	4
Cheap Software?.....	5
Excel Compare.....	6

Coming Events:

October 18, 2004 - Bill Machrone, PC Magazine columnist
November 8, 2004 - TBA
December 13, 2004 - Holiday Party and Elections

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.



Web Link of the Month

Don Arrowsmith

Microsoft will send you a CD with Windows XP Service Pack 2 for free with no shipping charge. I ordered mine on 8/25 and it arrived on 8/30. If you are on dialup, this will save you a lot of time. I've installed SP2 on two computers so far without any incidents. The firewall even saw that I was using File and Print Sharing and set itself to allow the sharing. Order your CD at: http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/sp2/cdorder/en_us/default.mspx.



Fonts in Windows

Vic Laurie, PPCUG

To the average PC user, fonts may not seem like the most interesting of topics. However, there is more to the subject than many may think. Windows comes with a considerable assortment of different types of fonts and characters that allow for considerable flexibility in format and a wide assortment of distinctive and artistic effects in Windows documents. There is support for a number of languages and for many special symbols. In this article, I will cover some of the aspects of Windows fonts.

The fonts on the Windows system

Font files have the extension .FON or .TTF (true-type) and are listed in the special system folder **/Windows/Fonts/**. (If you have additional fonts that are specific to a particular printer, those may be elsewhere and have a different extension.) The system font folder can also be reached through **Control Panel-Fonts**. To see what a font looks like, left double-click on its file (or right-click and choose "Open"). This procedure can be tedious if you are interested in looking at more than one or two fonts or if you want to compare fonts. There are many software programs, some free, some shareware, for viewing or managing fonts. One good freeware program is from Karen Kenworthy (<http://www.karenware.com/powertools/ptfonts.asp>). Others can be found at any of the software download sites like NoNags (<http://www.nonags.com/>) A list of other references is given at the end of the article.

The standard Windows installations have around 100-200 fonts (the exact number depending on your setup). According to Microsoft Knowledge Base Article 314960: "The following fonts are included with Windows and are installed on every computer:"

Courier New (TrueType, including Bold, Italic, and Bold Italic variations)

Arial (TrueType, including Bold, Italic, and Bold Italic variations)

Times New Roman (TrueType, including Bold, Italic, and Bold Italic variations)

Symbol (TrueType)

Wingdings (TrueType)

MS Serif

MS Sans Serif

In addition, Windows has several hidden system font files (for example, Dosapp.fon, Vgafix.fon) that don't show in the Fonts folder or in Control Panel. These fonts may be shown, however, in some font management utilities. Windows requires these hidden font files for various system interfaces. There are also standard fonts intended mostly for use in displaying Web pages or in applications like PowerPoint (the Garamond, Georgia, Tahoma, Trebuchet, and Verdana families, for example). Some fonts are for foreign languages (WST_czec.fon, WST-ger.fon, for example). As well as the fonts intended for screen display, there may be additional fonts just for printers.

If you look at the whole list of fonts that are on your computer, you will probably find some that are rarely, if ever, needed. Since all the fonts are loaded each time Windows is started and each font file requires a certain amount of time to load, some people feel that they can shave a little bit off the startup time by uninstalling some unused fonts. In a normal setup with 100-200 fonts or so, it is unlikely to make any difference.

However, sometimes software programs install extra fonts and if you find yourself with 1000 fonts, it is possible that removing some fonts could reduce startup times a little. My personal opinion is that with today's systems, it isn't usually a factor. Back

in the days of Windows 95, there were valid reasons to worry about large numbers of fonts but these days I don't think it is an issue for most people.

Installing and uninstalling fonts

If you do find that you wish to uninstall a font, you can simply go to the font folder and delete the unwanted fonts. A better idea might be to move the font file to another folder. This will keep the font from loading but will not remove the font information from the Registry. Should you want the font back, then it is a simple matter of putting the file back into the Fonts folder.

The fonts that come with Windows or that other software programs install are by no means the only fonts that you can use. To augment the fonts that come with Windows, there is a coterie of font fanatics who love nothing better than designing new fonts, some of which are freely available on the Web. Many others are for sale. Once they start adding new fonts, some people seem to find it hard to stop. Anyway, there are many sites on the Web for obtaining new fonts and getting information about fonts.

Windows has support for a number of modern languages but if you need fonts in more esoteric languages, the Yamada Language Center Font Archive (<http://babel.uoregon.edu/Yamada/fonts.html>) has fonts from many non-Western languages (and some very Western ones like Cherokee and Cree) not to mention Gaelic, Old German, Slavonic, and more.

To install or reinstall a font go to the Fonts folder, either through **Control Panel** or by opening **Windows\Fonts**. In the "File" menu, select "Install New Font". A dialog box will open. Select the drive and the folder where the new font file is located. A list of any font files that are found in the indicated location will appear under the "List of fonts" heading. Highlight the desired font and check "Copy fonts to Fonts folder". To select multiple fonts, hold down the Control key and highlight all desired fonts. Click "OK".

The procedures for installing and uninstalling fonts are also given in Microsoft Knowledge Base Article 314960.

If you use fonts that are not standard in Windows, keep in mind that documents or Web pages that you prepare with these fonts may look nifty on your machine but will probably have a different appearance on any system lacking any special fonts you use.

ClearType

In Windows XP, Microsoft introduced some new technology called ClearType (<http://www.microsoft.com/typography/ClearTypeInfo.mspx>). It is designed primarily for LCD displays and is therefore mostly applicable to notebooks and to desktops using flat panel displays. It improves font display resolution and screen readability for this type of display. Some people claim that it helps regular CRT monitors also but I could see no effect when I tried it on my CRT. (Of course, my eyesight isn't too good.)

To turn ClearType on:

Right click on the desktop and select "Properties".

Select the "Appearance" tab and click the button "Effects...".

Put a check in the box next to the words "Use the following method to smooth edges of screen fonts" and select "ClearType" from the drop down box. Close the Effects dialog by clicking "OK" and click "Apply".

Microsoft also has a Web site (<http://www.microsoft.com/typography/cleartype/tuner/1.htm>) where you can turn ClearType on and go through a configuration process for the best settings.

More Font References

- List of font viewers and managers- <http://cgm.cs.mcgill.ca/~luc/fontmanagers.html>
- Free fonts archive- <http://www.1001freefonts.com/>
- Fonts and font software- <http://www.fontsnthings.com>
- Information on buying fonts- <http://www.myfonts.com/support/>



Maintenance of Cars and Computers

Karl Juelch, Sun City Computer Club

Ed. Note: Karl is a former PPCUG member who has presented programs for us. Here is a note from him:

"Here's an article you may want to include in an upcoming newsletter. I wrote it for the Sun City, (South Carolina) Computer Club Newsletter, I've relocated and as a result will not be renewing my membership in PPCUG. I was a member for a long time and finally decided not to put up with NJ winters. I escaped in time to avoid this last winter and from all reports am glad I did.

"The Sun City Computer Club has over 700 members and monthly meetings generate as many as 200±. I recently did a presentation on Surge Protectors for the club. I am teaching as a volunteer at the club and also at the local branch of the county library. (Continuing what I did at the Ewing SeniorNet.) Life here is much easier; like a permanent vacation. Plenty to do or not to do; it's your choice."

You periodically maintain your car, don't you? If you answer, "yes" to this question, I'm sure you can tell me why you have this maintenance performed. It's to prolong the life of the car. Or it's to catch things before they go wrong and you find yourself stranded on the highway. It's a matter of safety, isn't it.

Well, why don't you do periodic maintenance on your computer? You should, you know, and for the same reasons you maintain your car. You want to prolong the life of your computer and you don't want a failure at the worst possible time. So, if your goal is to have a computer that performs faithfully, it's up to you to learn some of the basics that will promote faithful performance.

Everyone has heard the of the dreaded virus plague inundating the computer field. Well, protection is available in the form of anti-virus programs. Those dastardly people who create viruses recognize the challenge posed by anti-

virus programs and constantly create new viruses. So what are you to do in the face of this continual onslaught?

Number one is to install an anti-virus program. There are a number of effective programs both free and for purchase. Installing the program is one thing, but remember what I said in the preceding paragraph, “dastardly people are constantly creating new viruses”. The anti-virus creators know this so they are busy doing their thing to protect you.

BUT, HERE’S THE PROBLEM, you installed the anti-virus program some time ago and meanwhile those dastards have been busy. So your “old” program doesn’t recognize these new threats and can’t protect your computer.

SOLUTION, the anti-virus good guys provide updates, i.e. new protection for your computer. THE RUB, you have to register your anti-virus program with the manufacturer and then you will be allowed to download the updates that will provide protection. In many cases the update will be done automatically. (Purchased anti-virus programs provide one years worth of updates after which a nominal amount is charged to renew for another years worth of updates.) Remember, the oil in your car provides protection for a limited time, that’s why you change the oil as part of your periodic maintenance program.

Knowing you need an anti-virus program and installing one is like “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing”, you’ve got to take the next step, register and snag those updates. (I recommend updating the anti-virus program weekly.) As of 7/21/2004 my Norton Anti-Virus program recognized 67,867 viruses (and counting). Having and updating an anti-virus program are the first steps in safe computing.



Registry Cleaners: Review of *Registry Mechanic* Vic Laurie, PPCUG

Over the years I have recommended various ways of maintaining the Registry (<http://www.vlaurie.com/computers2/Articles/registry98.htm>). The Registry is an essential component of the Windows operating system and its proper maintenance can help to keep a computer functioning smoothly. Over time it may accrete substantial numbers of incorrect or useless entries. However, partly by necessity and partly by Microsoft design, the structure of the Registry is very complicated and abstruse; editing it is no simple matter. Therefore, special software is required and many different applications are available for Registry cleaning.

One of the more popular programs is *Registry Mechanic* from WinGuides, which has just come out in version 3. The interface is pretty simple with only a few options. The opening screen is shown in Figure 1. The left side shows the parts of the Registry that can be scanned. It also allows for shortcut scanning on individual drives. These sections can be checked or not, allowing for selective scanning. There is a Backup button, where previously made backups can be shown and restored. The Support button takes you to

the main Internet page, which contains a link for sending questions by email. The Help button opens a box that offers very little useful information. Way down at the bottom of the box are links to generalized WinGuide pages where I guess you are supposed to hunt for answers. Don’t expect any help on deciding what to delete or clean up.



Figure 1. Opening screen for Registry Mechanic

The Settings button opens the box shown in Figure 2 and allows for some minimal configuration. It is essential to check “Automatically create a backup before repairing.” In fact, first use whichever applet (Registry Checker or System Restore) for Registry backups that comes with your version of Windows before using any software that alters the Registry. Also consider *removing* the check by “Automatically repair all errors.” In my opinion it is not a good idea to let this type of program edit Registry entries before you look at the recommendations. All Registry cleaners that I have ever used sooner or later wanted to remove something they shouldn’t.



Figure 2. Settings screen

Clicking the “Scan” button (Figure 1) will begin a scan of the selected areas. It took 15 -20 minutes on my system, which is on the slow side for this type of program. When

finished scanning (assuming that you unchecked the Automatic Repair function mentioned above) a list of “errors” and the recommended solution will be given. One thing that I want a Registry cleaner to do is to remove leftover entries for software that has been uninstalled. So I made some phony software entries in the Registry to see what the program would do with them. It found part but not all and Figure 3 shows what its recommendations look like. In general *Registry Mechanic* found fewer errors than other programs that I compared it with. For example, the freeware *Easy Cleaner* (<http://personal.inet.fi/business/toniarts/eceane.htm>) was much faster and found many more possible problems.

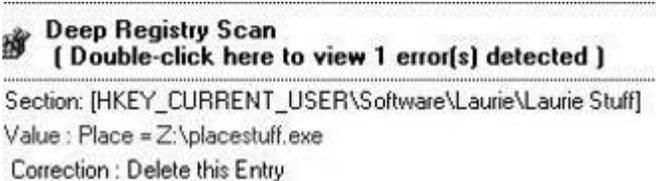


Figure 3. Example of a recommendation

A free trial version can be downloaded at <http://www.winguides.com/regmech/>. This version is crippled and will only correct the first six of the Registry categories shown in Figure 1. At its price of \$29.95 (downloaded) I do not believe that *Registry Mechanic* is a good buy for the average PC user. *PC Magazine* recently did a review of utilities including Registry Cleaners (<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1759,1591471,00.asp>). Those who are interested in using a Registry cleaner might consider some alternatives mentioned in this review. (In fairness to *Registry Mechanic*, note that the version reviewed by *PC Magazine* was the older 2.1)

Specifications

Registry Mechanic, version 3, GuideWorks Pty. Ltd., www.winguides.com

Microsoft Windows 95, Microsoft Windows 98, Windows Millennium Edition, Windows NT 4.0, Windows 2000, or Windows XP

5 MB of free hard disk space (an additional 10 MB is needed during installation only).

16MB of RAM available

Intel 486, Pentium or better processor

File size 2.3 MB

Price \$29.95 (Direct)



**Can you really buy popular “software at rock bottom prices” online?
Linda Gonse, Editor of Nibbles & Bits, Orange County IBM PC Users’ Group, California**

Probably you, and millions of others, have received e-mail offers with subject lines similar to these:

- Unbeatable software deals
- Amazing prices on software
- Take 95% discounts on Adobe, Microsoft, Corel products from Putnam’s Stuff Store

- Receive discount ticket on Corel, Adobe, Microsoft software from Koenig’s Stuff Store
- Get software at rock bottom prices

What’s more you may have seriously considered purchasing the programs described in the e-mails at prices that you’ve only seen in your dreams. Here’s an example in one message:

Looking for inexpensive high-quality software?
We might have just what you need.

Windows XP Professional 2002	\$50
Adobe Photoshop 7.9	\$60
Microsoft Office XP Professional 2002	\$60
Corel Draw Graphics Suite 11	\$60

These amazing prices are not legitimate. They represent the work of software pirates who are trolling for customers, or illegal sales. Do not take the offers at face value. Stop and ask yourself how it is possible for programs that sell for hundred of dollars to be discounted for a fraction of their usual retail cost. Certainly, these products are not even selling at wholesale, much less for these unbelievable prices. And, if the companies did offer programs at these prices, you would be reading about it in your newspaper, or hearing about it on television or radio, or in your user group.

A Washington Post article said, “The U.S. software industry loses at least \$13 billion a year to piracy, according to the Business Software Alliance (BSA) estimates. The group, which represents some of the world’s largest software companies, including Microsoft and Adobe, does not know how much money the industry has lost to online piracy.”

Still, user confusion about piracy prevails. Microsoft, attempting to educate software buyers, has posted a document that points out warning signs of counterfeit or illegal software. (Unfortunately, most of the warning signs apply to software already purchased.)

Microsoft’s warning signs of counterfeit or illegal software:

- Prices that are “too good to be true.”
- Products that are missing key elements such as user manuals, Certificates of Authenticity, or end-user license agreements. Pirates often sell only the CD-ROM and jewel case without retail packaging. Look for the Certificate of Authenticity on the retail box.
- On all new machines, with the release of Windows 2000, the COA label is found on the tower of the computer. If you acquire a new computer and it doesn’t have the COA label on the tower, you should question whether the software loaded on the machine is genuine.
- Software or components that appear to be of poor quality including:
 - *Back-up disks or CD-ROMs with handwritten labels.
 - *Poor imitations of security features such as edge-to-edge hologram etched into Windows 2000 and Office 2000 (first service release) CDs, or poor imitations of the hologram found on the hub of the Windows 98 CD that shows the word “genuine” when tilted in the light

*Low quality print, letters that aren't evenly spaced, etc.

*Products marked with phrases that do not describe the transaction, including:

“For distribution with a new PC only”

“Special CD for licensed customers only”

“Not for retail or OEM distribution” or “Academic price – not for use in a commercial environment”

Note that counterfeiters often use these types of phrases to fool consumers into believing that they are getting genuine product that was over-stocked or otherwise deserves to be discounted.

Consumers dealing with software vendors over the Internet should also beware of:

*Companies or individuals unwilling to verify their identity or full business name or provide a physical street address and telephone number for follow-up after the transaction has occurred.

*Online distributors unwilling or unable to provide adequate or satisfactory descriptions of their return, service or warranty policies.

*Online distributors that offer unusual inventory explanations (e.g., special deals with the software publisher, liquidated inventories or acquisition through bankruptcy sales).

*Vendors offering software products at prices and in packaging inconsistent with offerings through legitimate retail

channels.

*For Microsoft software, software components being sold solely as a CD housed in a jewel case or as a loose or individual end-user license agreement, because these items are not distributed in this form through legitimate channels.

Save your money and your time when you receive “rock bottom” software offers. There are no unbelievable “deals” out there on name-brand software. Let this be your guiding mantra: If it sounds too good to be true—on this you can rely—just walk away and say no, you can't buy!

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



Excel Compare 2.0

Last month's newsletter had a short note about Excel Compare. For a review of it by a trustworthy reviewer, see: <http://www.officeletter.com/blink/excelcompare.html>. The Office Letter (Standard) is a free, weekly email letter that always has useful tips for the various parts of MS Office. I highly recommend it. You can sign up from a link at the above web page. A Premium edition with even more content is available for \$12 per year.

All unattributed articles are solely the fault of the editor.

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