

February 2006 Volume 22 Number 2

PPCUG NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

The Power of And . . . TV Choice in NJ

Anna Lustenberg

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

Verizon is in the process of installing fiber optic lines (FiOS) in New Jersey. Anna Lustenberg will discuss this and other Verizon service offerings.

Anna Lustenberg is Director - External Affairs at Verizon. She is responsible for community relations, local government affairs, economic development, consumer, education and urban relations and local media relations for Mercer County.

Web sites: <http://www22.verizon.com/FiOSForHome/channels/FiOS/>
<http://www.verizon.com/nj> <http://TVChoiceNJ.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.*

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Coming Schedule

March 13 ----- Martin Mosho on Selling on eBay
April 10 ----- Dave Whittle on New Software Applications
April 21 - 23 ----- TCF'06 at the College of New Jersey
May 8 ----- Alfred Poor on Will your next computer be
HDTV?
June 12 ----- Sol Libes on Podcasting and Videocasting with
iTunes

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.nj@gmail.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.

Board Members

President:

Clarke Walker 609-883-5262

Vice-President:

Tom Carman 732-828-6055

Secretary:

vacant

Treasurer:

Judge Landis 609-737-2997

Members-At-Large:

Al Axelrod 609-737-2827

Kim Goldenberg 609-631-9140

Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778

Vic Laurie 609-924-1220

Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Chairpersons

Hospitality:

Bill Hawryluk 609-655-0923

Member Records:

Paul Kurivchack 908-218-0778

Newsletter Editor:

Clarke Walker 609-883-5262

Program Coordinator:

Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Web Master:

Joe Budelis 609-921-3867

2006 Annual Dues

Dues are \$40 per calendar year with a mailed newsletter or \$20 per year with online access to the newsletter.

New members pay \$3.25 or \$1.75 per month times the number of months remaining in the current year.



Minutes of the January Meeting

The meeting started at 7:30 p.m.



Our presenter was Steven Kieley who gave us some tips on using Microsoft PowerPoint to create slide shows.

Steven does not have his own web site but recommend the Ewing SeniorNet Computer Literacy Center web site (www.ewingsnet.com).

Steven Kieley by Judge Landis



Pictures of the January Meeting

by Judge Landis, judge@alumni.princeton.edu

Member of the Princeton PC Users Group



 * **Help Wanted** *
 * **Secretary** *
 * The group is in need of a Secretary to take minutes of the *
 * meetings. Also to read and respond to club email. See Joe *
 * Budelis for more information. *
 * *****

This is a well laid out and readable book. Marcel writes as if he is talking to you in an easy, conversational way. The text is easy to read, and there are plenty of screen shots. The only “problem” I found was a reference to RPM package listings with .i386.rpm, and .i686.rpm. In it he says that .alpha.rpm is for PowerPC architecture,; I believe it for the late Alpha Processor (of Digital Equipment Corporation, then Compaq/HP) and .ppc.rpm is for PowerPC. Other than that, it appears to be free of flaws. It is also not a book which says here's the way to do it; alternatives are shown equally with biases.

Marcel starts with a discussion from what is Linux, an his preferences are, all the while showing what the alternatives are. He then discusses what is the supplied Knoppix disk includes and how to use it.He then moves on to KDE, as that is his preference, and customizing the desktop. Next comes installing software and hardware and getting to the Internet. He then talks about some common groups of software packages, such as E-mail and office functions. Then it's off to multimedia land, from digital pictures and the GIMP to playing music and recording CDs. Last, but certainly not least, come games, games and games. Appendices include a discussion of the GPL, installation of a distribution, a discussion of command line and shell use, and finally editors. Most chapters end with a Resources section with web resources for the items discussed in the chapter.

This book is well suited for the Windows user who wants to look at Linux. Marcel Gagné has taken on the task of leading this user through the maze without getting lost in the details. On the other hand, this book is more than just a light overview of Linux that leaves one wondering what all the fuss was about, this book was interesting and informative. I would wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone who wants to start with Linux. Marcel web site, www.marcelgagne.com, which he call WFTL – Writer and Free Thinker at Large – has references to this book as well as his other writing for *Linux Journal*, and other places. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it, even though I know many of the topics discussed, I learned a thing or two I hadn't known.

Moving to Linux - Second Edition
Kiss the Blue Screen of Death Goodbye!
By Marcel Gagné
Addison- Wesley Pearson Education
502 pages
\$39.99 U.S./\$55.99 Canada
ISBN 0-321-35640-3
www.awprofessional.com
www.marcelgagne.com



Review: The Symantec Guide to Home Internet Security

by Teresa Stimpfel
Member of the Princeton PC Users Group

Some computer users their take home internet security like their broccoli – close eyes, hold nose and swallow, it's healthy. Of course indigestion is not the only outcome. I suggest the non-technical home PC user try a palatable alternative, **The Symantec Guide to Home Internet Security**. Andrew Conry-Murray, the technology editor at IT Architect, and Vincent Weafer, a Symantec Global Security Response team leader, use a clear engaging style to keep the reader involved and wary of potential security risks yet not paralyzed by fear or overwhelmed by jargon. Eyes will open quickly as readers learn that nerd ego no longer drives internet predators instead it's Mammon and the opportunity to steal your money or even rent out your computer! The basic information in this book is well presented and is essential for Windows based PC users to protect privacy, finances, taxes, etc.

Careful organization enables a security novice to move easily through the book - Chapter 1 Internet risks; Chapter 2 identity theft - prevention and response; Chapter 3 firewall logic; Chapters 4 and 5 malware - viruses, worms, spyware, adware and Trojan horses; Chapter 6 SPAM; Chapter 7 good practices and Windows settings; Chapter 8 protecting family members; Chapter 9 Wireless/Portable devices and VoIP applications; and Chapter 10 cryptography. While any discussion of security involves jargon the many illustrations mostly Norton and Windows menus do clarify the text. Scenarios and stories pepper the book as the authors transform abstract internet security into concrete checklists of dos and don'ts to reinforce key points in each chapter. These checklists and the Table of Contents, which lists the many well-labeled chapter subsections won't leave the impatient reader reach-

ing for an antacid. So is this book as the authors' suggest "The only Internet security book you'll ever need?"

Clearly **The Symantec Guide to Home Internet Security** promotes its Norton software but the authors' even-handed treatment of much security software, vendors and freeware helps to offset this bias. Also the authors objectively recommend migrating from Windows™ and Internet Explorer™ to reduce the frequency of attacks and they provide some attack statistics to support their recommendation.

My issues with the book center in fact on it's simplicity. Apparently Symantec assumes home PC users plan to remain internet security novices. In Chapter 3 an illustration of the Norton firewall settings menu accompanies text on basic firewall settings - low, medium or high. However if you put a menu with six tabs in front of this Norton user and comment "advanced users may want to tinker with the guts of the firewall..." well it's full steam ahead. Change this setting, tweak that one - what's the deal with Active X anyway? - suddenly I need a help book to help me with this guide book which lacks a substantive appendix.

A growing number of stand alone PC users have a router plus security software and a discussion of this set up would be a nice addition. My last point is crucial or unimportant for security depending upon your point of view. The authors do not mention the risks of routinely working as administrator. So is this "The only Internet security book you'll ever need?" Personally I like broccoli.

The Symantec Guide to Home Internet Security

by Andrew Conry-Murray, Vincent Weafer

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Addison-Wesley Professional (August 24, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN: 0321356411



What Your Computer Really Does When It's Idle

by Vinny La Bash, vlabash@home.com

Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

You're sitting at your machine, thinking about what to do next, when your disk drive starts whirring and the light flashes, indicating that something is going on. What is your machine doing? Your hands are nowhere near the keyboard or the mouse, and you can be relatively certain that neither telepathy nor telekinesis is at work.

One possibility is that your system is loading automatic updates from Microsoft.com because you set your system to download updates automatically. The same could be true for anti-virus programs, firewalls or any application software that offers this type of automated service.

The Task Scheduler may be running a background utility. Your automatic backup may be kicking in, or an online subscription service is delivering requested information as part of a service it provides. Any number of similar operations could be going on. There is a dark side to this. You may be infected by a spyware program reporting back to its master over the internet. Most spyware blabs about your web surfing habits to a commercial entity so that it can tailor ads to your individual tastes. Many people consider this annoying or intrusive. Nevertheless, the designers of these programs have no desire to hurt you. They want only to sell you something.

However, something far less benign could be going on. A program could be attempting to steal your banking information, PIN numbers, credit card records, social security information, and other financial data with the intention of draining your bank account.

A Trojan horse program may be downloading spam to retransmit from your machine, making it look to recipients that you are the spammer. Other programs make your machine a "zombie" or a node in an array of machines designed to launch a Denial of Service (DOS) attack on a web site.

Worst of all, there have been instances reported of stealth programs downloading child pornography and retransmitting it to another machine. These programs make it look like you are the culprit, making you subject to arrest and incarceration. This

kind of frighteningly malicious activity has been rare, but the danger is real.

If you are concerned about this, and you should be, Windows XP offers a solution:

Click Start.

Click Run.

In the text portion of the Run dialog box, type cmd and click OK.

This brings you to the Command Interpreter, which starts out by displaying the Version of XP that's running on your machine and some copyright information. Now enter the command netstat -o, which displays network statistics about your current active connections.

There are five columns of information displayed. The Proto column tells you what communication protocol is being used for a particular process. In most instances this will be TCP (Tele-Communications Protocol). This is irrelevant for our purposes. Local Address is your machine.

Foreign Address is the IP address and port number of the machine the process is communicating with.

State informs you if the communication session is sending or receiving, waiting, acknowledging or finished.

PID (Process Identifier) is the piece we need, because it identifies the process (program) that is controlling the communications session from your computer.

4. Perform the Ctrl+Alt+Del keystroke sequence to bring up the Windows Security window.

5. Click Task Manager.

6. Click the Processes tab.

7. Click the PID column. This sorts the information, making it easier to find the program you're looking for.

Note: If the PID column is not displayed, you can activate it from the View menu.

Examine the PID list until you find the PID number(s) you found with the netstat command. If it's msnmgr.exe or iexplorer.exe, there is nothing to worry about. These are normal Windows XP processes and no cause for concern. There are many other legitimate Windows XP processes that are likely to be listed in the Task Manager.

How do you tell the good from the bad? Unfortunately, Windows itself isn't much help in showing what any given process is doing and you can't shoot them all and "let God sort them out". A search of Microsoft's web site won't yield useful information.

A great place to find valuable information about common Windows processes is:

<http://www.liutilities.com/products/wintaskspro/processlibrary/>

This site contains information about all common Windows processes, and the site administrators do an excellent job of keeping posted information current.

Knowing what's going on in your system is good, but the best protection against intruders is to keep your anti-virus, firewall, and other specialized protection programs up-to-date. :



Tech Books for Non-Dummies

by Gabriel Goldberg, gabe@gabegold.com

APCUG Advisor, Region 2; Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website

With the approaching holidays, those reading this portion of AARP's Web site will seek techno-gift ideas for family, friends, and themselves. But with conflicting suggestions from stores and manufacturers all around us, a trusted guidebook is valuable. So it's a luxury to have three such references from which to get great gift ideas, or to develop your own wish list.

These guidebooks would be Sandy Berger's Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology, Great Age Guide to Gadgets and Gizmos, and Great Age Guide to the Internet. Each book offers an open and uncluttered design, amply illustrated with easy-to-read screen images and photos, and clearly written in an engaging style that builds confidence in the reader.

Sandy shares her sense of excitement and discovery with the reader, offering clear opinions on technology and how it affects us. Nothing is dumbed down — there's no mention of dummies or idiots — which is pleasantly different from many technology books. And whether you agree or disagree on individual items, you'll certainly know where Sandy stands.

The "Great Age" title is credited to Pablo Picasso, who said "Age only matters when one is aging. Now that I have arrived at a great age, I might as well be twenty." Chapters begin with other thought-provoking quotations. My favorite, highlighting the empowering nature of the books' subject matter, comes from marketing guru Greg Arnold, who said that "All greatness is achieved while performing outside your comfort zone." Although these books aren't uncomfortable reading, they may challenge you to try new things.

Each book opens onto Contents at a Glance, a list of chapter titles and page numbers which offers a handy, quick review of its content, and a brief "What's Inside" write-up. The Technology and Internet books include valuable sidebars calling out Sandy's Tips, Blooper Alerts, Lingo, and Trivia. Selected items in Gadgets and Gizmos are designated as Sandy's Favorites.

Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology reminds us how pervasive technology is, how much things have changed in our lifetimes, and how change is accelerating and never-ending. It addresses how technology has affected shopping, travel, health, finances, and even meeting people, and how families can take advantage of the digital world. Throughout, it encourages continued learning at any age and illustrates just how much there is that's worth learning. For example, it lists diverse search engines, giving attributes and advantages for each. Many are specialized and lesser known than Google or Yahoo but may be better for fulfilling certain information quests, such as the Library of Congress, available to all online.

The Great Age Guide to the Internet focuses on getting online and learning the language of the Internet, but also to have fun while avoiding problems. The book starts gently, introducing Internet concepts and terms, and assembles them into tips and tricks for Web searching, e-mailing, understanding Web advertising, and even building our own Web pages. It gives tips for picking an ISP (Internet service provider), demystifies browser windows components, and offers netiquette advice for instant messaging.

The Great Age Guide to Gadgets and Gizmos is a different sort of book. It serves as a catalog, shopping guide, and tour guide through current and future technology, offering gift ideas for oneself or Santa. It's not Consumer Reports, since it doesn't compare choices head-to-head, but its interesting and opinionated narrative provides both good and bad news about products. Its general advice and principles regarding technology keep it from becoming outdated as fast as a simple products list.

All three books are complementary, an easy read cover-to-cover, or useful as references for specific topics, services, and products. Their indexes locate topics quickly and, although there's some necessary overlap of content, each provides different information with varying orientation and emphasis. Overall, the books deliver usable information about evolving technology areas.

Title: Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Que

ISBN: 0789734400

Price: \$19.99

URL: Purchase Great Age Guide to Better Living Through Technology from Barnes & Noble

Title: Great Age Guide to the Internet

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Que

ISBN: 0789734427

Price: \$19.99

URL: Purchase Great Age Guide to the Internet from Barnes & Noble

Title: Great Age Guide to Gadgets and Gizmos

Author: Sandy Berger

Paperback: 264 pages

Publisher: Que

ISBN: 0789734419

Price: \$19.99

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**Princeton PC Users Group
PO Box 291
Rocky Hill, NJ 08553**