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PPCUG NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

Remote Computing

Hank Kee

Monday, November 13, 2006, 7:30 p.m.

Access and manage information systems residing on remote computer systems. Learn how to do this using free software. The speaker will show how to set up the hardware and software for remote desktop access. He plans a surprise demonstration of Remote Computing.

Hank Kee is a Computer Management Consultant. In 1959, 47 years ago, he began as a computer programmer at Rand Corporation working on the IBM 701 vacuum tube computer. Most of his work experience has been adapting computer technology for financial institutions. His computer business experience spans the spectrum from building applications to designing networks and developing software systems.

Hank is also active in several computer club activities as well as the annual Trenton Computer Festival.

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

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Coming Schedule

Dec. 11	-----	Member's Year End Party
January 8, 2007	-----	Tom Kirk—Creative Labs Demo
February 12	-----	Douglas Dixon—Portable Travel devices: GPS Mapping
March 12	-----	Joe Perignat—Computer Security
April 9	-----	Vic Laurie—Windows Vista Now or Later?
April 27, 28, 29, 2007	---	Trenton Computer Festival at TCNJ

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 (at) 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

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Vic Laurie 609-924-1220

Sol Libes 609-520-9024

Chairpersons

Hospitality:

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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 OCTOBER MEETING

The meeting started at 7:30 p.m. by President Clarke Walker.



The feature presenter was Victor Laurie, <http://vlaurie.com>. Vic helped us on "[How to Find and Use Health-Related Resources](#)" on the Internet.

Vic Laurie by Judge Landis



PICTURES FROM THE OCTOBER 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. Please see *
 * a Board Member for more information. *
 * *****

President's Message

At the November Meeting we will be accepting nominations for Club Officers and Board Members. For over a year we have been without a Secretary. You may have noticed that there hasn't been any minutes from the meetings and no giveaways. We also need an "assistant" Hospitality person and some one to help with Publicity. Please consider one of these offices. To keep the club viable we need to have enough members willing to lead it.

Sol has been able to get an impressive line up of speakers. Our thanks to him for doing this and to those who are willing to give a presentation.

- Clarke Walker



Link of the Month

Joe Perignat, an instructor at Bucks County Community College, gave a talk recently at the Princeton Public Library. He suggested this site for free or low cost software:

<http://www.filehippo.com/>

Have you discovered a useful link? Then share it with the members of the P PC UG.



We Are All Frogs

by Vic Laurie, <http://vlaurie.com>

Member of the Princeton PC Users Group, www.ppcug-nj.org

You must have heard the story about the frog that sits in a pot of water that is gradually heated. The process is slow and the frog doesn't notice as the temperature inches up, even when it gets quite hot. Finally, it is too late and the frog is boiled. Well, we are all frogs in the computer security pot and it is getting awfully hot.

The manufacture and application of malware is no longer the province of script kiddies, thrill-seeking hackers, and occasional malcontents. It has passed into the hands of professionals who are in it for the same reason as bank robbers- money. These people are in the full-time business of removing your wallet. They are located all over the world and are almost impossible to prosecute (if they are ever caught). Not only do they use sophisticated programming but like other types of con men they are masters of psychology and social engineering.

It isn't just individuals who seem to be ignoring the rising heat. Institutions like banks have been shameful in their neglect of basic security practices. It's the old story of human behavior when faced with an unpleasant prospect. They hope it'll go away and they won't have to actually confront the situation. Security is too much work. Security is inconvenient. Security is unpleasant. Security costs too much.

Well, the problem is not going away. It's only going to get worse; there are too many easy pickings for the international gangs. The statistics that get reported are very discouraging. There's no way of knowing the true numbers but various studies show that maybe 10 to 20 percent of PCs (or more) contain malware. Much of this is some form of Trojan horse that makes the unwitting owners of the infected zombie computer part of "botnet" rings. Even a small number of infected machines is a problem. The Internet is like a giant organism with low resistance and a few infected machines rapidly multiply their numbers.

In my opinion, this is a situation that is rapidly getting out-of-hand. It's a mess that gets more complicated by the day. You are supposed to have a vast collection of software to guard you. You need a firewall. You need anti-virus, anti-Trojan, anti-spam, anti-phishing, anti-spyware. All of these programs do not always play well together. Yes, you can get suites but so far

there is no suite without at least one or more inferior components. All these things running in the background result in a big hit to system performance. Next, you need constant security updates for all of this. And you also need security fixes for all kinds of other applications. You need to update Windows. You need to update your browser. You need to update Microsoft Office. You need to update Flash. You need to update Java. And so on. Then there is the problem that not everybody bothers to update. The software companies are trying to make the updating as automatic as they can but the statistics on the results are not good. People get “patch fatigue”. They get numbed by the constant drumbeat about new malware. Even businesses with full-time IT staff have a hard time keeping up. The fact is, even with constant updating, systems are still vulnerable to so-called “zero-day” and undocumented exploits.

Moreover, it’s not just the PC that is a problem. People are becoming more and more connected. Cell phones, iPods, Blackberrys, and other similar instruments are ubiquitous. The criminals are not neglecting these fresh pastures.

I could go on with the lamentations and hand-wringing but that becomes boring. Let’s look at possible answers. We have to begin with the sad fact that our fellow human beings are not to be trusted. Most of us are basically decent and responsible people who do not steal or enjoy vandalizing other people’s computers. We would prefer to be able to use the Internet in a spirit of community and trust. Unfortunately, there are always hoodlums and charlatans and sociopaths waiting to take advantage of our trust. So we have to stop believing everything that we read on the Internet. We have to treat all emails as possibly suspicious and never click on any links they contain. We have to regard unfamiliar Websites as potentially dangerous. We must test anything that we download before we install it to see if it is malware. We have to trust less and verify more.

Also, there is no getting around the fact that we must give up a lot of convenience. There is a clear trade-off between ease-of-use and security. Locked doors are less convenient to use than open doors. For example, online operations like banking will have to involve longer procedures. Security can be tedious but we must learn to live with computers that are harder to use. Reports on the Web about the annoyances of the new security features in Windows Vista illustrate that point.

Some people (usually officials who want headlines) suggest that more laws are the answer to the security problem so they urge or pass laws against Internet fraud. These efforts are so pathetic that I have to wonder how seriously the law-makers really take them. There are plenty of laws against fraud already. Does anyone really believe they are going to deter the gangs in places like Uzbekistan, and Iran, and Russia? However, if the legislators want to pass laws, there *is* a very important way that they could help. Let them make fiduciary institutions like banks more responsible for security breaches. At present these institutions are woefully inadequate in guarding your personal data or in guarding against phishing. (There are some exceptions like Bank of America and Vanguard that are beefing up their online security.)

If your identity is stolen, the burden is on you, not the bank. Let the legislators pass laws making the banks, stock brokers, *etc.* responsible for losses due to identity theft. Make them responsible for safeguarding your personal information. Make the institutions liable and then you’ll see a lot more security. Of course, this will cost money and make things like online banking less convenient but it has to be done. As long as it is really easy to steal somebody’s account information, thieves will thrive. As of now, institutions haven’t the incentive to do much about it.

I also believe that the current notion that the PC should be an all-purpose machine with the same basic type being used by everybody from grannies doing email to big businesses with large applications is fatally flawed. Microsoft and Intel and Dell have a big investment in this model so we are probably stuck with it for a while but it makes no sense. A whole lot of the people who use computers at home simply don’t need the power and flexibility of the current PC and they are completely unprepared to do many of the security measures that these systems require. I deal with a lot of ordinary people who have little understanding of Windows and no interest in learning details about how a PC operates. They want something that works like their other appliances. They want to turn the PC on, do some email, surf a little and that’s it. The needs of this large section of the PC users could easily be met with a machine that is a lot safer and easier to use than the present PC type. It would also be cheaper and that’s the rub; there’s no money in selling a box with limited functions. Unfortunately, these average users are the very people who are the biggest security problem. I gave a lecture to a group of average PC users recently where I asked how many had a firewall. About half either had no firewall or had no idea what a firewall is. About half did not have an up-to-date anti-virus subscription. Their machine had come with Norton or MacAfee and when the update subscription expired, that was that. This is not a scientific sample but it is indicative.

What about the defenses right there on our own PC? Can we improve them? In a previous article in this newsletter, “[Do We Need a Paradigm Shift in Anti-Virus and Anti-Spyware Protection?](#)”, I suggested that the reactive approach with anti-everything software was clearly not working. The solutions mentioned in the previous article included using virtual machines and I think that may be one practical solution. Another approach is to operate with reduced privileges or in a “sandbox”. More about this last method is at <http://tips.vlaurie.com/2006/a-different-approach-to-pc-security-the-sandbox/>

There are also various ways to configure your Internet browser to make your computer safer but that's a subject that involves technical details and will have to wait for another time. Meanwhile, don't let the criminals out there ruin your enjoyment of the wonderful world of the Internet.



Ram & Reason: Enter the Dragon: Comodo Free Desktop Security Tools

by Rob Rice, articles@isp.com
Computer Club of Oklahoma City, <http://www.ccokc.org>

Every once in a while a company manages to push my button. Symantec is the latest after having bought my beloved Sygate Personal Firewall and then immediately yanked it from the market. Having paid for the Pro version, I can no longer install it; since it requires authorization - I am dead in the water.

Still, a nice thing about capitalism is that where there is a void, it will get filled. Enter the Comodo Group, with not only a worthy alternative to Sygate's Personal Firewall, but a whole suite of security products for free!

The Comodo Group gets its name from the Komodo dragon, a metaphor for the Internet, with a "C" instead of a "K" to acknowledge a commitment to commerce, communications, and dot com. Comodo is the "2nd largest Certification Authority for ensuring Identity Trust & Assurance" on the Internet. In other words, they are the folks that make that little yellow padlock on your web browser work. The Comodo Group is the real deal with headquarters in Jersey City, USA (Yes, they have a real mailing address unlike some so-called security products offered on the web) with global offices in UK, Norway and India.

So why is Comodo giving away product? While the company does more than just issue SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) certificates, but apparently they feel the need to build brand identity. According to Melih Abdulhayoglu, the President and CEO - Comodo Group:

If we are able to write good software and give such valuable software for free, our name will be known in the market place, we will build our Comodo brand and this brand will be associated with security. And this will help us sell more Digital Certificates and other services we have as we will have a big brand!

Simple enough! So what are they offering? Again from the Comodo website:

- Comodo Firewall
- Comodo Verification Engine
- Comodo AntiVirus
- Comodo AntiSpam
- Comodo BackUp
- Comodo iVault

Comodo Personal Firewall 2.0
FREE lifetime license

Sleek design gives an at-a-glance overview of your security status

1. Highlights - displays the latest Comodo news and information about updates
2. Traffic - high visual overview of the last minute of traffic history in terms Applications and Network protocols
3. System info - information about your system in terms of the Hardware and details of all network Adapters in your computer.
4. View Alerts - Get in-depth details on the high severity risks that the firewall has detected.
5. Update License - One click activation of your free-for-a-lifetime Comodo license.
6. Computer Security level - customize firewall security by using the slider to quickly move between preset security levels

7. Check the security of your firewall's configuration with Comodo's online vulnerability scanner, HackerGuardian.
8. Security Monitoring - get an immediate heads up on the status of the firewall's major components.
9. Protection strength - your overall security level determined by the settings you have chosen

Comodo Firewall, rated by PC Magazine Online as an Editor's Choice, constantly monitors and defends your PC from internet attacks. It's easy to install and use and passes the industry's most stringent firewall "leak" tests. Unlike some other 'free' firewalls, this is not a stripped down version but is the full, completely functional product. This free solution comes complete with continual updates that are free forever!

System Requirements:

Windows 2000 (ALL)

Windows XP (ALL)

Windows 2003 (ALL)

64 MB available RAM

32 MB of available free hard disk space

Comodo Verification Engine

FREE for life

VerificationEngine anti-phishing and identity assurance tool for Microsoft Windows offers an extremely simple way to differentiate legitimate web sites from fraudulent ones. Place your mouse cursor over a site logo. If it is authentic, a green border will appear around your browser. So if you really wish to be sure you are looking at the real www.paypal.com site rather than a clever imitation created to steal your identity, install VerificationEngine now!

Comodo AntiVirus

FREE lifetime license

- On Access Scanning - Always on, real-time protection against threats more...
- On Demand scanning - Take control by running instant scans on any file, folder or drive more...
- Automatic Daily Updates - Up-to-the second protection against the latest threats more...
- Email Scanning - Automatic checking and disinfection of incoming and outgoing mail more...
- Process Monitoring - Continuously scans your PC's memory for viruses more...
- Worm Blocker - Monitors and intercepts suspicious mass mailing attempts more...
- In- depth Reporting - Comprehensive logs of all scans performed more...
- Pro-active virus defense - Submit suspicious files for analysis by the Comodo AntiVirus team more...
- Easy, User Friendly interface - Sleek design provides fingertip access to all major settings more...
- Scan Scheduling - Timetable scans to run when you choose more...
- Dedicated Quarantine Facility - Isolate suspected files where they can do no harm more...
- Advanced Heuristic detection Engine - Protection against unknown viruses more...
- Scan Removable Devices - CD's, DVD's, external drives, USB devices, digital cameras more...
- Scans Network drives - protection from any potential threats on your network more...
- Scans Compressed Files - there's no hiding place for viruses, even in a .zip file more...
- Does not hog system resources - Maximum Protection with no slow down of your PC more...

System Requirements

Windows XP (SP2) / Windows 2000 (SP4 or later)

50 MB available space on your hard drive

128 MB RAM

Intel Pentium 300 MHz processor (or equivalent)

Note - Not compatible with Windows 9x systems

Comodo AntiSpam

FREE license

Install Comodo AntiSpam for free and reclaim your inbox. Our powerful challenge-response technology authenticates the sender of every mail – a system that automated spam bots can't get around. This is the full product, not stripped down 'cripple ware' and is free forever to the end user.

- Total Spam Elimination
- No hassle set-up
- Sender based authentication
- Thwart the Spam Bots
- Works with your existing setup
- Automatically authenticate your address book
- Instantly migrate custom black and white lists
- One click Bandwidth Optimization
- Pro-active Spam defense
- Maximum Protection – Minimum Drain
- Independent Authentication Database
- Independent Quarantine Database
- Protects all your email accounts
- Stay spam free WHEREVER you access your mail from
- Never miss a message
- Failproof
- E-Commerce friendly
- You're protected – stay protected!!

System Requirements

Operating Systems: Windows 2000/XP
 Processor: Pentium 100 MHz or higher,
 System RAM: 32 MB RAM
 Hard Drive: 21 MB of HDD free space
 Internet Browser: IE 6.0 or above.

Comodo BackUp FREE lifetime license

Comodo Backup is the straightforward and powerful utility that allows users to quickly and easily create backup copies of critical files. Free of charge, it includes complete file and folder-duplication to local network drives and FTP servers, intelligent incremental backups, e-mail reporting, extensive report logs, real time back ups with “synchronization” mode, advanced rule-based filtering, flexible scheduling of backups, space-saving archiving capabilities, and more.

- Easily backup files or folders anywhere on your computer, network, CD-RW or FTP server
- Protect yourself against ever losing those critical files that took hours to create
- Quickly recover your data in the event of data loss
- Schedule backups to run automatically at a time that suits you
- Synchronized backup feature - save a file and it gets copied instantly
- Send E-mail notifications to team members about the status of a backup job
- Save Disk space by compressing your backups as ZIP files
- Configure in minutes with our intuitive interface

System Requirements

Windows XP (Service Pack 1 or later) or
 Windows 2K (Service Pack 3 or later)
 Intel Pentium IV with 133 MHz processor
 64 MB RAM
 12 MB free hard drive space
 Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.01 or above

Comodo iVault FREE license

iVault saves time by providing instantaneous logins to any username/password secured web pages such as online banking and email account sites. It also doubles up as a 256 bit secure storage for private and confidential information such as credit

card details and social security numbers and protects against the very latest key-logging Trojan Horse viruses.

- Instantly login to your favorite websites and applications
- Speed up surfing - No more forgotten passwords
- Single point of storage for all your confidential information
- 256 bit encryption of credit card and bank account details
- Secure Password Generator instantly creates complex passwords
- Supports multiple users on a single machine
- Anti Keylogging feature- stop hackers monitoring your personal data
- 'Drag 'n' drop' interface -Windows ease of use

Comodo i-Vault can protect and manage:

- Website password details
- Software access passwords
- Credit card numbers and PIN details
- Bank Account Details
- Telephone banking codes
- E-Mail account passwords
- Computer logon passwords
- Personal Contact details
- Cell Phone PIN codes
- And much more..

Phew! That is a lot of stuff! And I must admit I have yet to test all of these free products. Not for a lack of desire but because we are talking about six programs! I will say that I am about half way through my testing of the firewall product and it does seem to perform as advertised. But don't wait around for me, grab these six freebies and let me know what you think of them!

Thanks Comodo!

Comodo - <http://www.comodogroup.com/>

PC Magazine Article on Comodo Firewall - <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1895,1969485,00.asp>



What is APCUG?

by Eugene Freeman

Newsletter Editor Henry Ford Village Computer Club, <http://member.apcug.org/hfvcc/>

What is APCUG? It's the Association of Personal Computer User Groups.

Do you know that our Club is a member of APCUG?

IF Yes! Then have you explored the many other clubs located in the USA, Canada, Japan and Australia that are also members? If not, you are missing something.

IF No! And you are interested in finding out—click on <http://www.apcug.net>

Oh! Too much to click on, of course. Start with Newsletters → then Online newsletters
→ States → Pick the State you want.

What state should I pick first?

Why not Michigan? The Henry Ford Village Computer Club AND the SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, Inc. <http://www.semco.org/> are members of APCUG.

OR—Find Florida in the list of states & click on Central Florida Computer Society. <http://www.cfcs.org/newsletter.asp>

OR—Find the MOTHERBOARD, a publication of the Computer Users Group of Redding, CA. Of course look in the California list of clubs. <http://users.snowcrest.net/ibmpcugr>

Ohio is near—check out <http://www.acpcug.org/site3/presentations.htm> (Akron Canton PC Users Group) and click on Past Newsletters.

Look at all the sites you can contact from their Web site. There are over 300 Computer Clubs that belong to APCUG.

Why Bother?

Of course, to read the Computer Club newsletters—current & past issues— and find what they are doing.

Get helpful tips and tricks that other Club members have found and are sharing. If you find a good one to share, send it to your Editor.

Try Canada, our neighbor. Big Blue & Cousins: <http://bbs.bbc.org/newsletter/index.php>

Tell us what you find of interest to you that you think our Club should consider doing.



U3 Drives

by Diane George, digeorge@sbcglobal.net

Webmaster of PC Community, California, www.pcc.org

This month's column is half tips and half product review. I recently got interested in U3 drives, partly as a result of some software I saw at the Southwest PC User Group conference in San Diego in July.

What is U3 and why do I want to know? It's not the successor to the rock band U2. U3 is an open-standard platform that allows you to take applications and store and launch them on a flash drive. Several flash drives are offered with U3 with pre-loaded U3 applications on them. Verbatim, Memorex, Ativa and SanDisk all offer U3 smart drives. Go to <http://www.u3.com/smardrives/> for a list of U3 drives and more information.



The drives come with software preloaded, such as an application that will allow you to take Office documents created on your desktop computer, and work on them on another computer (also with Office installed), without a trace of the files being left on the second computer. This means that you can take your work with you without a laptop, use a computer elsewhere, like in an Internet cafe, without having to copy the files to the new computer, including your e-mail.

Other applications that come preloaded include antivirus software for the flash drive, password storage and management, SKYPE, Zinio Reader for digital magazines, ACDSee for photo management, and Migo (more about that later). In addition, there are other free and commercial applications available at the U3 Central site that are accessed from the drive, including games.

How does this work? The flash drive has a small partition that pretends to be a CD-ROM so that your computer will autorun a launch pad that makes the rest of the drive storage accessible—did I mention that it is password protected and can be encrypted? When you start up, a launchpad for the drive is opened. You can password protect the flash drive itself so the first thing you see is a login screen. The launch pad is part of the U3 system and is the same on different brands of drive. The launchpad gives you access to the applications on the drive and is required to remove the drive—you must use the launchpad to eject the disk or you risk damaging the drive.

When you plug in the drive, your system recognizes it as a USB drive and you can see it in My Computer, as a very small 3.78 MB CD-ROM drive, that will autoplay. It also appears as a 2 GB removable drive that you can copy files on like any other flash drive. In general the device works, but I have a couple of quibbles. I have had difficulty with installation on one of my two computers and I have not yet been able to determine what the problem is. The first time I put the drive in, it caused my computer to slow to a crawl and it never did recognize the drive. Only when I had the drive inserted at startup did it allow me to use it. I have tried it on two other systems and it worked fine.

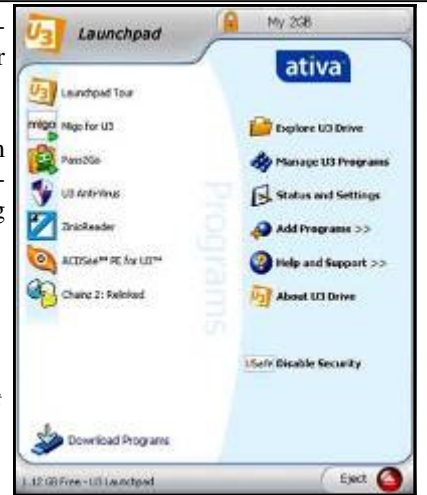
One of the software applications allows you to save selected files, Outlook email, contacts, tasks and calendar information, and creates a desktop that represents the desktop on a particular computer. You can create two of these desktops. When you take the device to another computer and launch the software, you have the choice of using either desktop. A tab is added to the top of your screen and when you click on it, you see thumbnails. (See Figure.) Each picture is the desktop of the other computers.

When you click on one of the names or images, your desktop changes—the My Documents folder contains only the items that you brought from the other computer and your e-mail client will show the contents of your inbox and the other shortcuts are different.

I haven't figured out yet why some are the icons from the desktop of the computer I am on and some are from the computer on the flash drive. I need more time with the applications and will write a follow-up. In the meantime, these drives present some interesting possibilities and should be fun to explore.



*** There is no restriction against any non-profit group using these articles as long as they are 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 Princeton PC Users Group is a member, brings their respective articles to you. ***



All unattributed articles are solely the fault of the editor.

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* **Nominations Sought** *
*
* At the November meeting we will be accepting nominations for Officers and *
* Board Members. See any Board Member for more information. Elections *
* will take place at the December meeting. *
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Princeton PC Users Group
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