HARDCOPY slobytes

what's new
OCTOBER MEETING REPORT
by lach macdonald

After a dismal cool summer we are enjoying the best of Central Coast Octobers. Kids are back in school, tourist traffic has passed its peak, and the new weather-readers on local TV are baffled. It was too nice to be indoors, and some of us dozed off. Still, it is easier to write a column when one has been present than one has not.

First of all, I want to thank all those who told me my September column was an improvement over the previous reports. My August report was on a meeting I did not attend. Not only was I unable to attend the September meeting, but the report-said by some to be my best to date-was not even written by me, but by the able editor, Bob Ward.

George Campbell began his October presentation by urging those who are not using Microsoft Explorer 5 to download the free copy. He explained that a 56K modem is practically essential for today's use of the Internet, even though your particular phone line may provide no more than 26.6K service. The third ingredient is Real Player, also available in a free download version from the website of that same name.

With Ex5, your modem and Real Player you will be able to use your $2,000 dollar computer like a $9.95 radio. If you already have a radio in your computer area, try getting an East Coast area weather report when your friends or relatives are in typical East Coast wind, rain, sleet, snow or

PowerQuest's Datakeeper
by peter rothermel

(C)olony (C)omputer (U)ser's (G)roup, October, 1999

Datakeeper is a file-monitoring backup program which can be set up in a variety of ways. I set it up to continuously monitor data files in Quicken, Word, and Excel, and to start continuous monitoring automatically each time Windows started.

The evaluation copy came on a CD ROM but, according to PowerQuest's web page, the program can be downloaded from their site (about 2 MB). The evaluation copy I received did not include a manual but the Help file was quite comprehensive. If I had read it a bit more carefully after I installed the program, I would have avoided several false starts.

The program was simple to install and

CLUB CALENDAR

november 7th

GENE BARLOW, user group representative for PowerQuest will present their full line of software. Their latest software includes DataKeeper and Second Chance. Because of the vast amount of software, Gene will also be our speaker at the early SIG meeting at 1:00pm.

december 5th

Our annual Christmas party and software give-a-way. Here's your chance to pick up a Christmas gift.

in this issue...

POWERQUESTS DATAKEEPER

requires Windows 95/98, 8 MB of memory and about 4 MB of disk space.

The program was set up to backup any revised files on the fly to my ZIP drive. The data was compressed (apparently with a high compression rate to save disk space) each time I modified any of the data files I had designated. The program appears to put the modified data into a cache, delays making the backup for at least 5 seconds and then writes the data to the backup medium during periods of inactivity. My initial mistake was in not being sufficiently specific regarding the files I wanted monitored and my first efforts included a number of program files on my backup disk. After I had resolved this problem, the program worked as advertised in backing up my data files. I checked out the Restore function by deactivating Continuous Monitoring, revising some of my Word and Excel files and then restoring to ensure that the files reverted to the original configuration. This worked fine and I had no further problems.

The program can be set up in various configurations. It can be used to backup to any removable or floppy drive or to any specified directory on the hard drive (but not to a tape drive). It will support backup of files onto multiple disks, this being a big advantage when using large files and 1.4 MB floppies. (However, I did not check out this feature). In addition to the continuous monitoring, the program can be set up to provide daily, weekly or monthly archives.

One strange incident occurred about the time I was configuring the program to monitor the Quicken, Excel and Word data files. For some reason, all the shortcuts to these programs became inoperative at the same time, but I was able to restore them with no problem. This may just have been coincidence, as I had no further problems during the rest of the evaluation.

One cautionary note that I found in the Read me file related to Uninstall. Apparently, the Uninstall program incorrectly leaves an entry in the Registry. To eliminate this problem, the feature "Automatically run when Windows starts" has to be deselected before uninstalling.

This program can be extremely useful for those of us who are not sufficiently disciplined to back up our data on a regular basis. It works well and does a good job. Just be sure you are very specific in defining the files you want backed up.

LATEST HOAX

Perhaps you have received email saying the US Postal Service is proposing a bill that will charge every internet user 5 cents for every email sent. Bill 602P makes the proposal. Red flag folks, remember from your civics classes all bills start with HR (House Bill), or SB (Senate Bill). Complete nonsense. Don't pass it on.

WHAT'S NEW

hurricane. Or, for the reverse, they can tune in KVEC and find out whether all of California is burning (as shown on NYC TV) or just a portion of Big Usr, or where the latest quake is shakin'.

To tune into these local and regional radio broadcasts with your computer, you will use the Radio Station Guide found via windowsmedia.com. George tuned in to WJJJ in Pittsburgh, PA. You can find a station and add it to your Favorites. With Real Player installed you can also enjoy TV and films. Go to Media Center and you will find a movie page that will include short subjects, documentary films, films from independents, NYU award-winning films, Orion film previews and Disney's Sneak Peek. If you get hung up, go back to windowsmedia.com.

George checked out KEYT for sound feed via **www.broadcast.com** (the sound of the Pirates vs. the Mets). Then he demonstrated the fun and frustration of listening to police scanners by going to **www.apbnews.com**. Bob Ward indicated he would put these URLs on the SLObytes website. Ray Miklas confessed to being a regular listener to Lithuanian broad casts and others who are studying Spanish tune in to get the vocabulary and the accents.

George turned in a video station, Emergency Vets, and we all saw Zorro the Pig in Alameda. Those of us who have been immersed in print media were persuaded that radio, TV and video are converging on our desktops

people helping people

NAME	PROGRAM(S)	PHONE NO.	HOURS TO CALL
Bill Roch	Ami Pro	466-8440	anytime
Don Morgan	Word 6.0, Equation 3.1	543-6241	anytime
Dan Logan	Internet, MS Publisher	927-0515	M-Sat 8-6, Sun 12-6
Bob Hunt	Win95, Win3.1	461-1444	days
Bob Ward	Netscape, Win '95, 3.11	528-0121	evenings

We could use some more volunteers here. If interested, contact Bob Ward!

and there is much out there to explore. Thanks, George.

The feature presentation was by Rich Peterson (6205 Lomitas Road, Atascadero CA 93422, (805) 466-3915, arpeterson@thegrid.net) a multimedia consultant whose business, Picture Magic, offers digitized picture show services for weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and business presentations. Rich used treasured photographs, selections of favorite music and materials provided by the customer to develop the presentation, which is shown at your party, or meeting on a six-foot screen or can utilize a wall up to 15 feet. The images are shown in daylight with a 1200 ANSI lumens projection. The show is recorded on CD-ROM as a keepsake or for replay on the customer's home or business computer. All of the images are available for digital output.
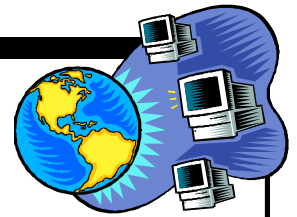
Rich began his demonstration with a 2-minute program entitled "Dave Has a Good Day" featuring SLO Chamber director David Garth. The program was shown at the C of C breakfast to 50 people and the Chamber offers similar 2-minute promo opportunities for a $40 fee; obviously you can put a lot more into a 2-minute digital multimedia spot than standing up to talk about your company for 120 seconds.

Rich uses a Mac Powerbook and Authorware 5.0 from Macromedia (about $2,000 in software in his repertoire). His fee for 50 to 100 digitized pictures with audio and music is $650, including the CD-ROM. Rich uses an HP Scanner, puts the photos in PhotoShop 5.0 to use Unsharp Mask and other features, and saves as .JPG files that are assembled in Authorware. He adds text in his favorite font, 36-point Comic Sans (red). While there may be some SLO Bytes members contemplating anniversaries or business

the surf board
by dorothy kirk, ibm/pcug redding, kirk@snowcrest.net

GPS (Global Positioning System) is a satellite-based radionavigation system developed and operated by the U.S. Department of Defense. GPS permits land, sea, and airborne users to determine their three dimensional position, velocity, and time, 24 hours a day in all weather, anywhere in the world. It has a predicted accuracy of less than 100 meters for systems available to home users. Amazing isn't it!

With more and more people becoming interested in, buying and using a GPS, this month's Surfboard is introducing some of the sites on the Web that will help those who are contemplating buying a GPS and for those who already have one. A few months ago a handheld GPS that cost $300 now costs $149. There are all kinds of systems that fit every desire and need.

GPS OVERVIEW http://gpshome.ssc.nasa.gov/OVERVIEW.HTM – A two paragraph description of how GPS works.
GPS PRIMER http://www.aero.org/publications/GPSPRIMER/index.html – This site tells you what a GPS is, how it works, and its uses in everyday life and more. Start here for a good overview. I can be printed in pdf format.
GPS-FAQ http://www.navcen.uscg.mil/faq/gpsfaq.htm – Another site to get information about GPS and how it is used.
MacACCURATE'S GUIDE TO GPS http://www.21store.com/21store/cgi-bin/printpage.pl?user=unknown&fname=../documents/macabvjll.txt&doctype=maca – Don't know what to buy or where to look? This handy guide will help. Suggestions for country walking, mountain walking, mountain biker, driving, sailing, diving, hang gliding and, coming soon, golf!
GPS WORLD ONLINE http://www.gpsworld.com - An online magazine with articles describing how GPS is used in various situations. Did you know that the technology exists to map fish spawning grounds underwater; that GPS can be used to distribute time and synchronize clocks over long distances/the Nicaragua is using GPS to map the Caribbean coast; and that GPS helps keep Auckland's Sky Tower upright? These and more are covered in articles in this zine.
GPS SOLUTIONS DATABASE http://guru.gpsworld.com/gpsworld/gpsviewer/main.dbm – A database with 720 GPS-GIS receivers. Look in names first for Magellan. If you know a lot about these receivers then click on Search Criteria and narrow the list down.
ASK MacACCURATE http://www.21store.com/21store/cgi-bin/printpage.pl?user=unknown&fname=macz.txt&doctype=macz – Ask any question about GPS via email. Read about the guru who answers you query.
GPS WAYPOINT DATABASES http://www.cnde.iastate.edu/staff/swormley/maps/maps_waypoints.html – The links on these page are a rich source of where to find it GPSwise; how far is it; what is the longitude and latitude of an address. Try out the links and you will probably find what you want.
GPS TIPS http://www.gpsresource.com/gps_tips.html – Current tip shows how to convert between decimal format and degrees, minutes and seconds.
THE GPS STORE http://www.thegpsstore.com/site/ - A very good source of information as well as a selection of products and their prices.

THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO ONLINE AUCTIONS

By Dorothy Kirk, IBM/PCUG member,

kirk@snowcrest.net

This is a MUST book if you are interested in online auctions or even if you think you might be interested. I have actually bid on only one item online, a printer, but the bidding soon exceeded what I was willing to pay, as a matter of fact, the winning bid was more than you could buy it for at a retail store! Overbidding is a common mistake in any kind of auction – so find out the true worth of an item before bidding. There are at any one time literally millions of items that you can bid on in just about any category you can think of. You may bid on a car, a case of wine, a trading card, a vacation package, tickets, art, rare books, maps, collectors items, antiques, button, clothing, and so on and so on. If you want to sell an item(s) you can find an online site that is right for you. Why would you want to bid online? Well, the two best reasons are that you have access to items that otherwise might be very hard to find and it is just plain FUN. If you have an item to sell, you have a wide area of prospective buyers. Online auctions are big business, projected to grow to an $8.5 billion market by 2001. The first and the biggest online auction site by far is eBay with, since 1997 it has logged more than 50 million items for sale, with 200 million total beds made. There are at least 2.1 million registered users since its beginning in 1997. Whew! I wish I had bought stock in the company when it first started. This book suggests that you can't go wrong looking first in eBay for the item that you want.

There are two general auction types: Person-to person auctions and Merchant auctions. They both operate on the same principle that the auction is for a limited period of time, and, at the end of the auction, the highest bidder wins. By and large merchant auctions are easier for the buyer.

Online auctions are not quite the same as "real" auctions. Most online auction sites require that you register at no cost before you can bid. In a regular auction, you make a bid of the maximum amount that you want to pay; the automated bidding process manages so that the buyer's current bid is no higher than it needs to be in order to be the high bid on the item. You win if your bid is the highest. You pay the shipping costs. Some online auctions require a seller's fee, but usually no fee is required of the buyer.

Another type of auction is the Dutch auction. Generally a Dutch auction is used when the seller has more than one identical copy of an item for sale. In this auction the highest bidder still wins, but pays the lowest successful bid price. Puzzled? Read the book for details. There is also a reserve price type of auction. In this auction if the highest bid is less than the reserve price, the seller doesn't have to sell the item. Some sellers like reserve price auctions, but most buyers don't due to the uncertainly factor.

Bidding by proxy or robot bidding is also an option. The advantages to this method is that it keeps you from undisciplined spending and it saves you time. You define the amount you are willing to pay, and then the robot agent takes over and does your bidding for you, bidding as little as possible at each increment and stops at your maximum bid.

When an auction ends both the buyer and seller have certain protocols that ensure a smooth transaction. Making contact, how to pay, how to deliver, and feedback – and what to do if any of these result in any unsatisfactory transaction.

WHAT'S NEW

presentations, I suspect a few are wondering about getting presentations software. Those with scanners might well consider assembling their images and negotiating the Multimedia package with Rich. The demo opened up a realm of possibilities.

There were several prizes offered to the 55 members present: Ken Stitz was drawn for Quicken Business Lawyer 2000 DeLuxe. Lach MacDonald won Living Trust Maker 2.0 from Nolo Press. In the excitement of receiving his prize, Lach (me) missed a few names. If you won a Microsoft pen, Automap Street Guide or Health Pak, you know who you are. P.S. (Bob Ward did not write this column, but if there are mistakes in it, take it up with Bob.)

Bob sez, *thanks Lach for the honorable mention. But was the statement honorable? Stay tuned for next months column. It will be written by someone who will remain anonomyous for the time being. Actually neither of us has written a thing in years. We depend on ghost writers available over the net at 1 cent per word.*

WINDOWS TIP

If you upgraded from Windows 95 to 98, you may have noticed a difference in the behavior of the menus, tool tips, and even application windows; rather than simply appearing, they roll out or slide in when accessed. You can control this behavior through windows' Display properties. Right-click on a blank area of the desktop and choose Properties from the context menu. Click the Effects tab and select or deselect the Animate Windows, Menus, and Lists option as you wish.

- Karen Gibson

http://www.tipomatic.com

SURF BOARD

NAVTECH SUPPLY PRODUCTS http://www.navtechgps.com/supply - This site has a lot of information mainly on GPS products. Check out their clearance sale – then click on anything else that take your interest.
GPS BOOKS http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/external-search/002-5840424-3406668?mode=books&keyword=gps&tag=gpsresourcecom – Amazon.com has an amazing variety of books on GPS. You may find something you want in their Auction, too.

ONLINE AUCTIONS

Only a small minority of transactions online results in great dissatisfaction or outright fraud. This book is full of steps to take to ensure a safe transaction. One way is to enlist the services of an escrow service. The escrow service receives your payment, checks its validity and informs the buyer. The buyer sends you the item, you check it, and notify the escrow service that it is OK. The escrow service sends the payment to the seller. The kicker is that both the buyer and seller need to agree on using an escrow service and pay its fee; contact the seller via email before serious bidding to find out if using an escrow service is agreeable. Some online auction sites cover loses due to deception or fraud up to a certain amount, but not more than a few hundred dollars. You can also buy insurance to cover this option. If you are a frequent buyer or seller it can be bought for as little as $19.95 a year.

This book describes and compares the five largest auction sites: eBay, Amazon.com Auctions, Auction Universe, Classifieds 2000 Auctions, and Yahoo. It also gives short description of many other general auction sites as well as many specialty sites. It lists local auction sites, too. It describes in detail how to buy and how to sell to your advantage, and to find the best sites for doing so. It describes in detail how to use eBay. It lists 30 tips for placing a winning bid – and getting the most for your money. It also lists 30 tips for getting the most for your merchandise. It has pages and pages of URL's for online auctions and tells what type of auction. There is a glossary of online auction terms. In short, as stated

above, this book is a MUST for interested online buyers and sellers.

You can probably buy this book at any bookseller. The list price is $16.95. Barnes & Noble Online sells it for $13.59. The address is QUE, Alpha Books, 201 West 103rd St., Indianapolis, Indiana 46290, http://www.mcp.com.

★★★★★

for Dreamscape...

On a recent trip to Los Angeles, I stopped by Fry's Electronics in Burbank to pour over all their computer hardware and software. My daughter picked up a copy of Prince of Egypt. On arriving home we found the tape to be totally unusable on three VCR's. I called Fry's and was informed that unless I could return it in person, there was nothing they could do for me. They do not accept returns by mail, nor will they ship anything out. (remember this folks if you buy from Frys but do not live close for returns). One person even asked me why I was shopping in Burbank when I lived in Los Osos, 200 miles away. With that statement, I knew this conversation was doomed.

Two days later, Sheila called Dreamscape, explained the situation, and within 24 hours a brand new copy was on our doorstep along with a letter of appology for any inconvenience it may have caused us. They did not want the old copy back, nor did they want proof of purchase. Now here's a company who knows how to treat their customers. Dreamscape, a 5 star company!

Bob Ward

SPLITTER CABLE

might worked better if I was sharing something faster than a 56K modem connection. The client slowdown shouldn't be as noticeable with a cable modem or DSL connection. Microsoft must think there's a future for this type of software. They have announced that Windows 98 Service Pack One will include some form of Internet sharing capabilities.

StarTech's Internet Splitter does work, but it's not for everybody. There are performance compromises made, but the savings are considerable from this $40 product.

StarTech Computer Products Ltd.
175 Stronach Cres, London, Ontario, Canada
Phone: (519) 455-9675
URL: www.startechcomp.com

ANOTHER WINDOWS TIP

How do you access your desktop quickly when you have a lot of applications open? You could right click on the TaskBar and do a "Minimize All Windows", but on a 386/486 that's pretty slow. Here is another way:

1.Double-click on "My Computer"
2.If there is no toolbar, select View from the menu and select Toolbar
3.Then from the drop down list-box in the toolbar select Desktop

Now minimize it and forget about it. The next time you want to access your desktop just click the desktop window on the TaskBar. As long as you don't close the window when you shutdown, it will reopen when you start windows again..

Find more tips and tricks at:
http://www.windows-help.net/windows95/

StarTech Internet Splitter Cable ver. 2.0

By Ron Stykel
Milwaukee Area IBM PC Users Group

Internet Splitter Cable version 2.0 by StarTech Computer Products Ltd. is a product that enables two computers to share one Internet connection. This is a substantial cost saving for the consumer over purchasing the two modems, phone lines, and ISP accounts that would be required to simultaneously access the Internet with two computers.

StarTech offers three different solutions. The software is sold separately for computers that are already networked or it is bundled with network cables, cards and connectors for computers that are not yet networked. The third version is the one I tested. It includes a 50' serial cable to connect two computers together using Windows Direct Cable Connection software (included with Windows 9x). The serial connection is an extremely slow network connection but it's faster than a modem so it's really all that's needed to make the shared dial-up connection work.

The software sets up the computer with the modem as a server and the one without a modem is the client. The server acts as a gateway to the Internet for the client. All requests from the client are sent to the server and then relayed to the Internet. Replies are passed back to the client through the server. The server is also allowed to set up rules limiting access to certain sites or services to the client.

Setting up the hardware was easy. Both computers need to have a serial port available so a cable can connect them. The included serial cable is actually the size of an Ethernet cable, but with adapters to plug into the serial ports. This makes it easy to pull the cable between computers without having to punch huge holes in the walls, floor and ceiling.

Once the physical connection is made, Windows DCC (Direct Cable connection) can be installed. DCC isn't always easy to install. After some trial and error and instructions from other sources I managed to get it working. StarTech isn't to be blamed for any DCC shortcomings, this is a Microsoft application. It's definitely a poor man's networking solution. It's too slow to be used for much more than modem sharing. File transfers can be done if one is patient and the files are small enough.

The serial port connection does have the added benefit of allowing multi-player games. Most games now have the option of playing others through a modem or an Internet site. The serial connection is fast enough to make games work well and without the latency problems found on Internet sites. My kids and their friends are having great time with this feature.

Next it was time to install StarTech's Internet Sharing software. That's when I found out that it was registerware. Purchasing the software isn't good enough. In order to install it I had to visit StarTech's Web site to get a registration number first.

The Web site gave me reason to question the quality of the software before it was even installed. I found my way through the misspelled words to get my unique code that I needed to save in case I ever had to reinstall the product. When I tried to print it out nothing showed up because the Webmaster had used white text. It was a very negative out-of-the-box experience.

Setting up the Internet sharing software after installation took a few tries before I was successful. The documentation is minimal for a product like this. Online documentation is more thorough and helped me successfully share an Internet connection.

The software worked as advertised. We connected two computers to the Internet at once using a single modem, phone line, and ISP account. Either computer had the ability to browse to any Web site, check e-mail or newsgroups independent of the other. The server didn't have any noticeable slowdown.

Client performance was compromised. It was much slower than the server was and because it was running through a proxy it had several other limitations. Every URL had to be typed completely from the www. to the .com or the browser would search the server and not find the keyword. Some Internet connections weren't allowed through the proxy. Online game sites didn't work; neither did as Symantec's Live Update feature. An option allows the client to establish a dial-up connection. This isn't enabled by default with good reason. Loading the software automatically dials out through the server modem without warning and there is no way to disconnect from the client computer.

Later I decided to change the client computer back to using it's own modem. The StarTech software makes changes to the browser and e-mail programs that aren'tundone by the uninstall program. The Internet connection was unusable until I found these alterations and changed them back. StarTech's Internet Sharing

club information

HARD COPY is a monthly publication of SLO BYTES PC User's Group located in San Luis Obispo, California. Information in this Newsletter is derived from both our own membership and other PC User Group Newsletters. The purpose of this publication is to inform our members of meetings and provide information related to the use of IBM PC's and compatible computers.

Membership: Dues are $25 per year. Full membership entitles you to our monthly newsletter, full use of the public domain software library software drawing at the end of the meetings.

Article Submission: Deadline for submission of articles is the 15th of each month. Articles should be provided in ASCII format without any type of formatting from your wordprocessor including tabs, indents, extra spaces, or highlighting. We prefer articles on disk but will accept hardcopies if necessary.

Disclaimer: Neither SLO BYTES PC User's Group, its officers, editors, or contributors to this newsletter assume liability for damages arising out of this publication of any article, including but not limited to the listing of programming code, batch files and other helpful hints.

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Member of
Association of Personal Computer User Groups
APCUG

meeting times

GENERAL MEETINGS are held the 1st Sunday of each month. Our meeting location is the San Luis Obispo I.O.O.F. Hall on Dana Street.

The general meeting starts promply at 2:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGS) meet at 1:00 p.m.–2:15 p.m.

slobytes website

WWW.THEGRID.NET/SLOBYTES/

slobytes officers

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VICE PRES.	GUY KUNCIR
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TREASURER	M. BAXENDALE
EDITOR	BOB WARD

treasurer's report

October, 1999

Checking Account
Beginning Balance	$1,521.48

Income
Membership Dues	125.00
Refreshment Receipts	21.75

Expenses
Room Rent	75.00
Newsletter Copying	45.05

New Balance	**$1,548.18**

Savings Account (Projector Fund)
Beginning Balance	$51.01
Current Balance	$51.01

Marvin Baxendale
treasurer