SLO Bytes HardCopy

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Alan Raul's General SIG Review

The meeting started out with a demonstration of Microsoft's latest product called Virtual PC 2004. Virtual PC is a powerful software virtualization solution that allows you to run multiple operating systems simultaneously on one computer. Virtual PC is based on Connectix technology which Microsoft purchased in early 2003. The basic concept of Virtual PC is that it allows you to create "virtual machines" within your computer, onto which you can install, different operating systems. Alan had 13 different operating systems on his laptop computer ranging from Windows XP, Mandrake Linux, Windows 98 SE and a variety of other flavors of Linux. MAC and Server editions are also available. More information and a review of Microsoft Virtual PC 2004 can be found at: http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/virtualpc/ http://snipurl.com/3tv1 http://www.elitebastards.com/page.php?pageid=3149&head=1&comments=1

People are sometimes nosey and want to know who owns a particular web site domain. Using the below web site we demonstrated how to find out this information. http://www.networksolutions.com/en_US/whois/index.jhtml

The Google Toolbar was revisited. This is a small 462 KB downloadable program from Google. Just a couple of its main features are eliminating pop-up ads and fill in forms with just one click. http://toolbar.google.com/

A new Wi-Fi group is in its initial startup phase here in San Luis Obispo. Its purpose is to meet up with other local Wi-Fi geeks to talk about the latest developments in wireless technology. http://wifi.meetup.com/members/405

Ben Middleton reminded us that eTrust EZ Armor Security Suite from Computer Associates (Anti-virus and Firewall software) is available FREE for the first year. http://www.my-etrust.com/microsoft/index.cfm

Our meeting wouldn't be complete without a discussion of the latest earthquake near San Simeon, California. Click on the picture for a large 3659KB detailed image of the area. http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Newsroom/NewImages/images.php3?img_id=16406 http://snipurl.com/3nz7

Our members are reminded that we have a Bulletin Board available to post questions, answers, items for sale and other computer trivia or news. The above web links were posted the day after our meeting under the title "January 4, 2004 web links from the general SIG." If you miss a meeting or didn't copy the correct URL, you can always go to the Bulletin Board and have them available before the next Hard Copy is sent out. http://users.boardnation.com/~slobytes/

Ray Miklas' Main Meeting Review

The main speaker at our January 2004 meeting was **Rich Blumenthal** of **Voice Factor**, a Florida-based value added re-seller representing Dragon Naturally Speaking Preferred Version 7 speech-recognition software.

The Dragon NaturallySpeaking 7 family of products provide a fast, easy and accurate way to turn speech into text. Dragon is compatible with virtually all Windows programs. Users can dictate into virtually any windows-based application at speeds up to 160 words per minute while maintaining high levels of accuracy.

Rich used his laptop in his demonstration to us how remarkable the program is. First he described how the program is trained to establish a profile of the speaker in voice recognition and then showed us how the printed text is generated by him speaking (or dictating) into the head mounted microphone. It was remarkable to see that the program did produce an accurate text, with very few mistakes. What was even more remarkable is the way the reverse took place: a displayed text was recited by a female voice in a "naturally speaking" voice, that is to say, it did not sound like "R2-D2" of the Star Wars movie fame.

Dragon NaturallySpeaking 7 can be used to prepare e-mail, spreadsheets and graphs on Excel, navigating the Internet hands free, and much more. For further info, go to: http://www.voicefactor.com/features.html and http://www.scansoft.com/naturallyspeaking/.

Our members were asking many and various questions of Rich regarding NaturallySpeaking 7 program and Rich provided good answers to all of the questions. It almost appeared that we were trying to stump Rich with our questions but, in fact, we were just very curious to know what this remarkable software was capable of doing and how it functioned.

Rich was an excellent speaker/presenter. This was one of the longest sessions (it lasted 'till after 5 PM). Even though the Dragon NaturallySpeaking 7 program package was quite costly, (measured by our membership's "frugal" buying practices), Rich did sell quite a good number of the product to us.

Guy Kuncir's Featured Speaker Programming Schedule

1 February 2004 meeting: Dave McLaughlin. Dave is a SLO Bytes' member, who will demonstrate some of the techniques for "Using Photoshop Elements 2.0."

Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0 was designed for amateur photographers, digital imaging enthusiasts, and PC users. One can use Elements to import pictures from his or her camera, scanner, or from disk files and do everything from minor corrections, touch-ups and improvements to major changes. Built around core elements of the Adobe Photoshop interface and feature set, the program is designed for ease of use, and has hints, recipes for various tasks, and lots of help included. "Elements provides all the Photoshop features that amateurs need, leaving out features required by professional photographers and graphic artists", according to Mike Langberg, Personal Technology Editor of the San Jose Mercury News. The program is an excellent choice for anyone who enjoys working with digital images non-professionally.

Dave has been with SLO Bytes for the past two years. He came to us from the Central Valley and the Bay Area. Originally a practicing CPA, he followed his interests in computers to a position at IBM where he was employed for 28 years, primarily in the systems and sales areas. Being an educator was often part of his job. He has taught system design and programming to technical people as well as information technology management to executives. Personal computers became a hobby in 1978 and, after leaving the workaday world, he has managed to mix in a bit of consulting with his active practice as a full time retiree.
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7 March 2004 SLO Bytes meeting will be announced at a later date. Please check our website http://www.slobytes.org for the info. It will be posted there when a program is set up
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President's Message

At our 1 February 2004 meeting:
At 1 PM Alan Raul will moderate a computer question/answer session.
At 1 PM Bill Avery will moderate **Win98 SIG** in the dining area and will show a 1/2 hr video from MS Mindshare, giving an overview of the new MS Office 2003 and Tablet PC.
At 2:30 PM, our featured speaker, **Dave McLaughlin**.

We will be selling $3.00 raffle tickets ($5.00 for non-members) for a chance to win **Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003,** a $399.94 value at Staples (this is not an upgrade version). This is another product donated to us by the Microsoft "Mindshare User Group Team". The drawing for this prize will be at the end of our March meeting. You don't have to be present to win, you can mail in your check to Marvin (543 Gularte Rd., Arroyo Grande, CA 93420), or buy from Marvin at his table during our February or March meeting.

Check out the **money saving offer that KCBXnet** (aka Slonet) is extending to all current and future members of SLO Bytes: http://www.slobytes.org

BTW, KCBXnet has added an accelerated dial-up access for their subscribers. Basically, it permits faster page loading while surfing on the Web. Check it out at: http://kcbx.net/index.php
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Continue to bring any **used ink-jet printer or toner cartridges** to our meeting and take advantage of the four **learning CDs**: "Learn Windows XP, Excel, Word & Power Point" available for our members to check out (at Marvin's table)

--Ray Miklas

Responses to Program Questionnaire and Critique - Guy Kuncir

Forty-three members responded to the questionnaire prepared by Dave McLaughlin and distributed in November 2003. Recall, this was initiated to access members' opinions regarding proposed topics for future programs. We had originally planned to incorporate an Excel spreadsheet that I had prepared with the accumulated questionnaire responses into the SLO

Bytes' Newsletter but, after a succession of failed attempts, this verbal rendition of the spreadsheet is offered in its place.

Of those that sent in their opinion, 42 primarily used a PC for their hardware. Fifty-nine percent of those PC users employed Windows XP or 2000 as their OS. Twenty-six percent of the 42 still used Windows 98.

Looking at only those program-related responses were "Extremely Interested" or "Very Interested" exceeded 50% of those responding, we find that the following topics were selected:

How to touch up photos with an inexpensive software tool. (69.2%)
Using Photoshop Elements 2.0 (70.7%)
How to go beyond a cameras point and shoot settings (68.4%)
Photo Printers (especially Epson, Canon & HP) (51.3%)
How to make full use of scanners (67.5%)

Home networking (51.3%)
Home networking security (53.7%)

Internet Security (70%)
Email tricks and tips (69.0%)

Upgrade or buy a new machine? (62.5%)
DVD Burners Time to get one? Formats? (65.6%)

System tools (62.5%)
Organization and file maintenance (64.3%)
Office - in depth on Word or Excel (56.1%)
Linux (57.5%)

Only eight questionnaire topics had "Extremely Interested" or "Very Interested" responses which totaled less than 50% of those responding.

2003 Program Summary Critique - Guy Kuncir

To complete the picture of member likes and desires with respect to programs, a list of the programs offered in 2003 was prepared by Guy Kuncir and circulated to the members on December 17, 2003 and January 5, 2004 with instructions for respondents to indicate their degree of interest. Twenty-six people responded.

Looking at only those programs that received "Very Interesting" ratings from at least fifty percent of those responding, we find that the programs that scored high included the following topics:

Internet Privacy (52%)
Raul Mixed Bag Fill-in (71%)
Digital Camera Capabilities (72%)
PowerQuest Products (71%)
Avery (Eudora), McLaughlin (Photoshop Album) & Raul (Linux) Presentations (64%)

Increasing the window to include the programs with "Somewhat Interest" enlarges the number from five to nine. No programs received less than a 30 percent interest approval. Again, this represents the opinions of only twenty-six members. Scaling this up to represent the interests of the entire membership is risky at best.

Fact or Fiction? Separating the Worm from the Hoax

Virus or Worm hoaxes are not just harmless pranks.
By Beverly Rosenbaum, a HAL-PC member, is a 1999 and 2000 Houston Press Club   Excellence in Journalism   award winner. She can be reached at brosen@hal-pc.org.

Recipients of these annoying warning messages may become alarmed and cause damage to their computers by attempting some action to remove it, and those who forward the messages create an overload for email servers. Or worse - once they learn that there was no real threat, they may get into the habit of ignoring all virus warning messages, which would leave them

vulnerable to the next real and truly destructive virus or worm.

There are many anti-virus company sites that track virus hoaxes as well as genuine viruses. So the next time you receive an urgent warning message, before you act on it you can check it against the list of known hoaxes to determine if it's a hoax or a real virus or worm.

Don't let your guard down. You should never open an email attachment unless you expect it - even if it comes from someone you know and trust. Be aware that the people who create viruses can use known hoaxes to their advantage. For example, the AOL4FREE message began as a hoax warning about a nonexistent virus. Once it was recognized as a hoax, someone began to distribute a destructive Trojan horse (a Trojan horse differs from a virus in that it does not reproduce itself) in a file named AOL4FREE, and attached it to the original hoax virus warning.

In the same way, the known hoax about the JDBGMGR.EXE file is now being used to spread a worm. The subject file is a windows component, and this worm overwrites that file, so all the descriptions of the file as a harmless hoax become untrue. The worm uses Microsoft Outlook to spread copies of itself as an email attachment to all addresses found in the distribution lists of the Outlook address book.

JDBGMGR.EXE - the Hoax

The JAGGER hoax has circulated since April 2002, and has been reported in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, German, Polish, Danish and other languages.

The JAGGER hoax message described a new virus reportedly found in the Windows utility JAGGER.EX, allegedly spread by MN Messenger. The message instructed the user to search for and delete the file. This file is a standard component in every Windows installation, used as Java debugger manager for the Microsoft Java runtime engine. The icon of the original JAGGER.EX file for some reason does look like a teddy bear.

The original email message was just a hoax. Although the JAGGER.EX file may become infected by a number of unrelated but valid viruses (most commonly W32/Magistral@MM), the details of this particular hoax message were not based on truth. Recipients were advised to delete the message and NOT to pass it on to others. JAGGER.EX is an application useful only for Java developers. If you have already deleted the JAGGER.EX file, in most cases, you do not need to re-install it. The Microsoft Knowledge Base article Q322993, "Virus Hoax: Microsoft Debugger Registrar for Java (Jagger.ex) Is Not a Virus" states that the Microsoft Debugger Registrar for Java (Jagger.ex) is only used by Microsoft Visual B++ 1.1 developers. If you follow the hoax email message instructions and delete this file, it's not necessary to recover it unless you use Microsoft Visual B++ 1.1 to develop Java programs on Windows X, Windows NAT 4.0, Windows 98 Second Edition, Windows 98, or Windows 95. However, if you do need to restore this file, instructions are included in the same article.

JAGGER.EX - the Worm

In June 2003, a new worm based on this hoax was reported. The messages appeared to be sent from Scanted Corporation and contained a warning about the JAGGER hoax plus an infected attachment. You must distinguish between the two JUDY messages, one a hoax and the other a real worm. The JAGGER.EX program is a real part of the Windows operating system and should normally not be removed, though doing so will not inconvenience most people. The computer worm (actually called Recory) overwrites the good JDBGMGR.EXE program with worm code. In any case, you should not run the JDBGMGR.EXE program if it is sent to you in an email.

Here is the most important point: The easiest way to recognize the difference between the two versions of the file JDBGMGR.EXE is to look at the icon. The program with the bear icon is the good one and the one with the tools icon (like Symantec's removal tools) is the bad one. The Recory worm W32.Recory@mm is a mass-mailing worm that primarily travels in file sharing programs such as IRC, Kazaa, and Morpheus. The worm is programmed in Visual Basic, spreads through IRC modifying the Mirc scripts, and tries to copy itself to the shared folder of several P2P and messaging programs. The VB run-time libraries must be installed on the computer for it to execute.

The message that comes with it looks a lot like the hoax message but tells you exactly the wrong thing to do, and describes the icons exactly backwards. The email has a randomly chosen subject and attachment, but it is represented as a repair or removal tool with one of several extensions (.ex, .pif, or .com). The worm uses Microsoft Outlook to email itself to all the contacts in the Windows Address Book. It also attempts to spread across a file-sharing network and copies itself to many files in 5 different folders, including **\windows, \windows\system32**, and **\windows\java**.

Kim Komando's Tip of the Day January 19, 2004

Q. I would like to put a picture into a folder icon in Windows Explorer. Can I do that? I use Windows XP.

A. You can do that, with some restrictions. The picture can help you remember what is in the folder. Plus, the effect is pretty cool.

To use pictures, though, you'll have to stick with the Thumbnails view in Windows Explorer. The other four views will not work. And the picture must be on your hard drive. If necessary, scan in a picture and save it as a JPEG, with the extension .JPG.

Only folders on the right side of Windows Explorer can display pictures. When those same folders appear on the left side, they will have the standard yellow icons.

So let's get on with it. First, click View and Thumbnails. Right-click the folder you want to use. Select Properties. Click the Customize tab. Click Choose Picture and navigate to the picture file. Click the picture file and click Open. Click Apply>>Save. You can also change the yellow folder icon. Windows has a ton of icons available. To try them out, go once more to the Customize tab. At the bottom of the window, click Change Icon. Make your choice and click OK. Click Apply>>OK. This changes the icons on both sides of the screen.

If you want a custom icon, try making one in Paint. To find that, click Start>>All Programs>>Accessories>>Paint. In Paint, click Image>> Attributes. Set Width and Height to 32 pixels. Draw your design, then click File>>Save As. Save it to any folder on the hard drive.

Next, right click the folder you want to change and go to Customize. Click Choose Picture and navigate to your custom design. Click the design file, then click Open. Click Apply>>OK.

You can make this icon appear in all views, not just Thumbnail. To do that, on the Customize window, click Change Icon. Click the Browse button to find the drawing, then follow the procedure above.

Editor's Note
If you have any comments, suggestions, wants, don't wants, beefs and/or ????, please e-mail me at junate@charter.net.

Treasurer's Report
December 15, 2003 - January 15, 2004

Income
     Membership Dues $350.00
     Refreshments $32.65
     Dividends $8.40
Expenses
     Rent $75.00
Checking Account Balance $3,384.06
Savings Account Balance $799.81

New Members
  Lou Pera
  Jack Barsman

Club Information and Meeting Times

SLO Bytes, a PC Users Group dedicated to educate its members in the use of personal computers, digital devices and software, meets on the first Sunday of each month at the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Hall at 520 Dana Street, San Luis Obispo. All meetings are open to the public at no cost. Special interest groups meet from 1 to 2:00 PM and guest speaker presentations begin at 2:30 PM. Contact Guy Kuncir (489-1395, gkuncir@charter.net) or visit www.slobytes.org for additional information about SLO Bytes and the scheduled presentation.

HardCopy is a monthly publication of SLO Bytes PC Users' 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 PCs and various Operating Systems.

Membership: Dues are $25 per year. Full membership entitles you to our monthly newsletter via e-mail, technical assistance, raffle gift drawing at the end of the meetings, a voice in the affairs of the club, and comradeships.

Article Submission: Deadline for submission of articles is the 20th of each month. Articles should be E-mailed to the editor at junate@charter.net.

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Outside Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

HTML/Internet SIG normally meets at 6:30 PM on the Monday following our Sunday General Meeting at Ralph Sutter's home in Arroyo Grande. Call Ralph at (805) 489-8678 for directions

Linux SIG normally meets on Thursday at 6:30 PM (following our Sunday's General Meeting) at KCBX.net [a.k.a. SLONET] Training Center, 4100 Vachell Lane, SLO.

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SLO Bytes Website www.slobytes.org