



## What's New

by Wm. Avery

### SLOBYTES

consisted of two Special Interest Groups during the first early meeting from 1:00 PM to 2:15 PM



At 2:30 PM, Bruce Fries, an author and expert on MP3/CDR-W audio playback and recording systems for computers filled us in on the mysteries of computer music. Our Frequently Asked Questions is a discussion SIG lead by Alan Raul in the Main Hall with contributions from many members of the club, while at the same time, Jim Kiraly leads a group interested in special aspects of the Windows Operating System in the Dining Room. Approximately 64 members attended both sessions.

Alan lead off with his demonstration of Charter's Web-based email found at <http://mail.charter.net>, while in the Windows SIG, Jim helped solve Window's problems that seem to plague all of us. One member asked if Charter Communications has space for Web Pages, and Alan confirmed that they do. He also noted that SLONET has subscribed to Charter Pipeline Cable Modem service, to provide high-speed access in their SMART community center and offices. Alan's discussion of web-based email noted

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## Demystifying Graphic File Formats

by Ben Luna, Coastal Area Users, Corpus Christi, TX.

As found in the May, 2001 issue of Diablo Blue Newsletter

The purpose of this article is to briefly describe some of the most common graphic file formats for image files, as well as how to determine which file format to use for Web graphics and print publications. When an image is saved to a specific file format, you are telling your applications how to write the image's information to disk. The specific file format you choose depends on the graphics software application you are using (e.g., Adobe Illustrator, Freehand, Adobe Photoshop) and how

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## CLUB CALENDAR

June 3rd

1 pm

**Early SIG's.**

Main hall, Alan Raul  
FIRST LOOK - Windows XP  
Dining ares, Jim Kiraly  
Windows Q&A

2:30 pm

**Randy Whittle**

MGI Graphics presentation  
plus  
CD-Recordables

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that it is commonly offered by all the major internet services, as well as SLONET, and can be accessed from any browser when traveling, as a convenience.

We reviewed the procedure for setting up a Hotmail account, which was giving one of our members some difficulty. The Microsoft *Passport* requires a Hotmail account, so it is good to have. Another member had asked about a program to print file directories from Windows, without using DOS. Alan reported that his Hero, Leo Laport, suggested *Folder Print* a utility found at: [www.homestead.com/algor/files/FolderPrint332.zip](http://www.homestead.com/algor/files/FolderPrint332.zip). It is a freeware utility that allows listing of directories, folders and files on one's hard drive, or any removable media. It can make lists or labels, and it is not an installed file, just a 360K executable program. Also available is DIRPRN31 which is a \$25 shareware program from the web. This may be found at Simtel, [www.simtel.net/pub/dl/11604.shtml](http://www.simtel.net/pub/dl/11604.shtml). Alan has a Free Lunch page off of SLOBYTES website, which lists links discussed in our meetings.

This coming month, Alan will demo the latest Microsoft Windows XP operating system in beta.

The topic of upgrading RAM brought a comment from the audience, about a 32 MB, PC100 DIMM module, available for sale. If this is still available, let us know, and we can place a notice in the *HARDCOPY*, *Items for Sale* space. Ray

had a short discussion with Alan on the best type of chip and motherboard for overclocking either a Celeron 600, or a SiS motherboard with AMD chip. Ray reported that he used a Duron 650, experimenting via the BIOS, to increase the Front Side Bus speed to 110 Mhz, which was as high as he could go. Other parameters were also increased, which helped improve system performance. If you are interested, contact Ray Miklas for details.

A question from the floor, "can you use 133 MHz RAM in a 100 MHz system?" Ray recommended reading your motherboard's website, or the owner's manual, such as Asus, for clearer details on this topic.

While Ray has had good luck buying Micron RAM from Google Gear another member reported some difficulty with his hard drive purchase from the same company. They didn't mention the hard disk was "refurbished", rather than new. This led to a discussion of pricing for 133 MHz RAM, which is sometimes cheaper than 100 MHz ! One engineer, who is a regular SLOBYTES member, noted that the faster chips are now in oversupply, due to the fact that there are two types of fabrication facilities running at the same time, as the transition occurs to the faster RAMs. This member also noted that overclocking is a threat to reliability, and he warned against it. Intel chips run on the lower side of operating specifications, for greater margins of stability, as compared to AMD, whose specifications are often higher, according to Alan. An overclocked chip tends to run hotter, due to the higher

frequency of CMOS transitions between digital logic states, where each transition represents a burst of power, and generates heat, which must be dissipated to prevent destruction of the processor. An inquiring mind wanted to know, "Would you advise increasing the system RAM above 128 MB?" Alan responded, that it depends on the type of computing requiring the expansion. He expects to use his new lap top to run several virtual machines at one time, so he can switch between them quickly. For this task, one will need lots of RAM. Running three operating systems simultaneously is an example of such a situation. Our engineer-member uses 512 MB of RAM, for 100MB Photoshop files and Audio/Video edits, which also needs massive memory.

One of the new types of RAM is called RAMBUS [DRDRAM], is used with Pentium IV, which is very fast and expensive. According to my Cuesta College ELTECH153 textbook, [Personal Computers for Technology Students](#), by C. Raymond, DRDRAM is a completely new concept and design shift from the technique used by current PCs. It requires additional controllers and dedicated buses used strictly by the computer's RAM. The use of dedicated buses means that memory buses will not have to be shared with all the other devices that need to transfer data. This is expensive, and may not be adopted in low-end computers as quickly as the DDR SDRAM, or Double Data Rate Synchronous Dynamic RAM, which transfers data on both the rising and falling edges of the clock.

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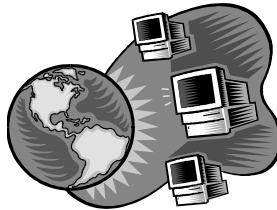
### \* \* \* people helping people \* \* \*

NAME	PROGRAM(S)	PHONE NO.	HOURS TO CALL
Bill Roch	Ami Pro	466-8440	anytime
Dan Logan	Internet, MS Publisher	927-0515	M-Sat 8-6, Sun 12-6
Jim Kiraly	Win 98, Office 97, Quicken, Map Programs	556-0301(pismo)	anytime
Bob Ward	Win 98, DOS, Internet, Eudora	528-0121	evenings
Ray Miklas	Any PC hardware or software questions	541-5633	anytime

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

## The Surf Board

by Dorothy Kirk  
ibm/pcug, redding, ca.  
kirk@snowcrest.net



It seems that more and more Web surfers are looking for MP3 songs for listening or downloading. There are many sites on the Web that contain MP3 music; not all of them have music that you can download legally – so be warned that you may be breaking the law if you download. If you know little about MP3 recordings then the first site listed is the one you need. Many of the sites I looked at were very confusing to follow. If you follow the instructions carefully, you should be successful in listening or downloading. I did not include any sites that are blatantly illegal. Some sites just link you to other sites, some you pay for, some require or want you to download their player; most require you to register, sometimes you can listen but not download. If you are real music fan of any kind of music it will probably be worth your while to persevere. If you have Dialup Networking be prepared for slow appearance of sites and long downloads.

**GUIDE TO MP3** <http://www.cmj.com/mp3> – This site has the simplest explanation of MP3 in the FAQ section. Read it before you do anything with MP3's. There is also information on players, MP3 to WAV, MP3 to CD, utilities and much more.

**MP3.COM** <http://www.mp3.com> – Download Music Match Jukebox, then download your selection from 16 categories of music. What are MP3's; keep your selections online in your own page; trouble shooting; legalities. For a lot of information click on FAQ.

**eMUSIC** <http://www.emusic.com> – Requires a monthly fee of \$9.99/month for 12 months to download after a 30-day free trial period. You may cancel at any time during the 30 days and there are no charges. There are 170,000 songs, 14,000 albums, and 8000 artists – all MP3 and it's all legal.

**BESONIC** <http://www.besonic.com> – Another site with 16 categories of music. You need to register and log on. You can set up your own song collection and listen anytime you want.

**EXCITE MUSIC** <http://www.music.excite.com> – Here you find a large selection of songs. Most of them you need to pay for, but a few are free. Excite does not download the music but directs you to other MP3 sites, then you need to follow their directions to listen or download.

**LYCOS MUSIC** <http://www.music.lycos.com> – At first glance this is an easy to download site, but I was unable to download anything. Like Excite Music, Lycos does not download switches you to a pertinent site. If you follow directions carefully you will probably be more successful than I was.

**PLAYJ** <http://www.playj.com> – Some free songs may be downloaded; you pay for the rest. Read all directions carefully and register.

**MINISTRY OF SOUND** <http://www.ministryofsound.com> – After registering you can listen or download various tracks from artists such as Jakarta, Moby and many others – no classical music.

**PEOPLE OF SOUND** <http://www.peoplesound.com> – Listen to various modern artists and download free MP3's,

**VITAMINIC** <http://www.vitaminic.com> – The heading states "Free MP3 Download." To my surprise that is exactly what you get – no hard to follow instructions, no registration, just listen and/or download. Most songs seem to be from foreign artists, bands, etc. There are many emerging artists who are promoting their works on this site.

**EPITONIC** <http://www.epitonic.com> - This is the source of cutting edge music [At least they call it music.] – rock, electronica, Hip Hop, Experimental and more.

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## Sending Photos With Email

by Don Edrington, PCChat  
from Orange Bytes, May 2001,  
North Orange County User's Group

I continue to get questions from folks regarding problems with email attachments. Most say they've downloaded an attachment, which is often a photograph, but then can't open the file. As more and more PC users are acquiring scanners and digital cameras, more and more photos are being attached to email letters. The problem is that photos come in several different graphic formats - and not everyone has the software to recognize every format. The various formats can be identified by the three letter extension on a file name, some of which are JPG, TIF, GIF, PSD, PCX and EPS.

However, there is one format that will be recognized by any computer running any version of Windows: BMP (bitmap picture).

Try this: go to Start, Find, Files and Folders and type \*.BMP. The asterisk is a wild card that will find all files with the .BMP extension. Double-click any file to have it displayed in the Windows Paint Brush program. Some will be photos, while others will be images of background patterns.

Repeat the experiment with \*.JPG and/or the other extensions to see if you have software that will open them. Scanners and digital cameras always come with an image editing program, such as Adobe PhotoDeluxe or Corel Photo House. If you have one of these, or another image editing program, it will be launched by double clicking any file name whose extension it recognizes.

Once you've opened such a program, and brought up a scanned photo or one taken with a digital camera, there will be a point at which you're asked to name the file, normally with the Save

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## what's new

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Theoretically, DDR SDRAM will be able to transfer data at a rate of 200 MB per second when timed with a 100 MHz clock, according to Raymond.

Alan was sporting his new USB Light, which illuminates the keyboard and plugs into the USB port in back of the laptop. Very Cool! It has an LED bulb, and is easy on the battery.

On the question of what software was included in Alan's new laptop, he listed Lotus Smart Suite 123, DVD express, and Quicken. Ray explained that DVD CDRoms contain different views of the same movie, one side in landscape or wide presentation, and the other side in a narrow, TV screen style. To change views, you flip the disc to the opposite side. Alan learned this at SLOBYTES !

As for software news, Adobe Acrobat 5 has been released, on March 27. It may be needed to view some of the newer documents on websites. Bob Ward explained that Acrobat Distiller is necessary to create a PDF [Portable Document File] from a Postscript file, such as our HARDCOPY newsletters. The Adobe Reader is free, [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html) , but the complete program is \$249, on Adobe's website.

William Avery mentioned that there are free 56K winmodems at Staples, which cost \$20, but have a \$20 rebate. The latest hard drives, also at Staples, are 7200-RPM / ATA 100 devices, which decreases the access time specification, but raises the cost. The lowest cost 15 GB drive had a 5400-RPM / ATA 66 specification, with a \$20 rebate which brought the price down to \$59 retail! We heard an explanation of why access time is related to drive speed, which made it clearer that the faster systems need faster hard drives, also. Ray noted the current ad offered 30 GB drive for \$99. Alan asked if anyone knew how large the current specification for a single platter might

be, and one member noted that 80 GB drives have 4 platters, or 20 GB each, as state of the art. Hard disk cache is also a factor, with 4 MB being available on some drives, which will speed up access time somewhat.

As a last topic, we discussed viewing JPEG files. Sometimes the basic viewers will not see the file, whereas Adobe

Photoshop will handle them, even from Mac sources, according to Bob Ward, who said they are viewable, after saving them in Photoshop. Netscape will view JPEG, also.

A trivia question posed by Alan, was where is Aladdin Software located? Answer: Watsonville, CA, which happened to be known by this author, because of their frequent email product announcements.

Alan demonstrated ACDSee [www.acdsystems.com/index.htm](http://www.acdsystems.com/index.htm) , his favorite graphical viewer, which is not freeware, except for a trial download. Another favorite viewer is IrfanView - Freeware Graphic Viewer, [stud1.tuwien.ac.at/~e9227474/english.htm](http://stud1.tuwien.ac.at/~e9227474/english.htm), which show JPEG files easily.

There was one unanswered question about the ALL CAPS filename problem, which is associated with CDRW files, at least for one member. Apparently Windows Explorer converts the CDRW filenames to CAPS when reading the directory of a CDRom, and this can be a problem when transferring the information to a case-sensitive system, such as a UNIX-based website. We were unsure of the cause or cure for this problem.

Our calendar for May included a meeting of the SLOBYTES Internet SIG, at Ralph Sutter's home on Tuesday, May 8 at 7PM, and the SLOBYTES Linux SIG at Ray Miklas's home on Thursday, May 10 at 6:30 PM. Ralph's group was introduced to HTML Tables, and Alan demonstrated the latest release of Linux-Mandrake 8.0, and using KDE 2.1.1 graphical desktop.



Guest speaker Bruce Fries answering a question posed by member Celina Penalba

After the Coffee and Cookie SIG, hosted by Nancy in the Break Room, we returned to the Main Hall for our special presentation by Bruce Fries, author of The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook, with Marty Fries, audio engineer. The book is

available online at [www.MP3Handbook.com](http://www.MP3Handbook.com), and in paperback from: TeamCom Books in Burtonsville, MD (phone : 301-847-7600 and Fax 301-847-7638). His visit to SLO included a talk to the Cal-Poly Audio Engineering Society. The Cal Poly Music department has adopted his book as a text for a Computer music class. His brother, Marty, helped their mother with recording some ballroom dance background music on CD, and then Bruce got involved. His interest in computer audio was limited until he decided to convert his music CD collection to MP3 format, which compresses audio files and still preserves their quality. Uncompressed PCM files for a 4 minute song can use 40 MB of hard drive space, whereas with 10 to 1 compression under MP3, the same file is now 4 MB. It does this using perceptual intelligence , taking advantage of the fact that human hearing is not linear. For example, loud sounds often mask softer sounds at

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similar frequencies, so software removes those softer sounds, since they would not be heard anyway. This compression allows the smaller files to be convenient and portable, and hopefully almost as good as the CD sources. With a data CD, and a burner, you can record about 200 songs on one disc, about 12 hours of music! As a replacement for music cassette tapes, there is no comparison. Some car stereo manufacturers are beginning to include MP3 compatible players in their stereo equipment. Life ratings on CD discs compared to tapes are 100 years versus 5 years on average. (Now how do they know that since CD's haven't been around that long. Digital CDs include error correction, not available in the analog mode on tapes and records. A razor blade scratch on a CD will not make any difference, but will ruin an analog record. Broadcast digital radio is also coming in the near future.

Microsoft has a new format called WMA, Windows Music Audio, which is almost as good as MP3. Real Audio is used for Internet Streaming Audio. RIO 800 players will hold 128 MB of storage, and record about 12 to 20 hours of voice! The average music compression rate allows about one minute per megabyte of compressed music. RIO 500 has about 64 MB of storage with a slot for Smart Media Card. It takes about 10 minutes to move the files from your computer to the card. The cost is about \$100 per card. Bruce played a sample of RIO music on his portable stereo with Cambridge speakers, and the sound was quite good. The response to the rest of his presentation was very good, and members lined up to take advantage of his group rate booksale with music CD included, for \$20. You may contact him via email at: [Bfries@TeamComBooks.com](mailto:Bfries@TeamComBooks.com).

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## graphic formats

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and where you will use your image (e.g., the Web or a print publication.)

Graphic file formats can be broadly categorized into bit-mapped formats and vector formats.

### Bit-mapped formats

This format is a representation, consisting of rows and columns of dots, of a graphics image in computer memory. This is sometimes called raster graphics. The value of each dot, whether it is filled or not, is stored in one or more bits of data. The density of the dots, known as the resolution, determines how sharply the image is represented. This is often expressed in dots per inch (dpi), or simply by the number of rows and columns, such as 640 by 480.

To display a bit-mapped image on a monitor or to print in a printer, the computer translates the bit map into pixels for monitor screens, or ink dots for printer. Programs that manipulate bit-mapped images are called paint programs.

Following are descriptions of some commonly used bit-mapped file formats:

**BMP:** The Bitmap file format is used for bitmap graphics on the Windows platform only. Unlike other file formats, which store image data from top to bottom and pixels in red/green/blue order, the BMP format stores image data from bottom to top and pixels in blue/green/red order. This means that if memory is tight, BMP graphics will sometimes appear drawn from bottom to top. Compression of BMP files is not supported, so they are usually very large. When saving a file to the BMP format, add the ".bmp" file extension to the end of its file name.

**GIF:** The Graphics Interchange Format was originally developed by CompuServe in 1987. It is one of the most popular file formats for Web graphics

and for exchanging graphics files between computers. It is most commonly used for bitmap images composed of line drawings or blocks of a few distinct colors.

The GIF format supports 8 bits of color information or less. In addition, the GIF89 file format supports transparency, allowing you to make a color in your image transparent. (Please note: CompuServe GIF87 does not support transparency.) This feature makes GIF a particularly popular format for Web images. GIF is a "lossy" file format. It reduces an image's file size by removing bits of color information during the conversion process. The GIF format supports 256 colors or less. When creating images for the Web, be aware that only 216 colors are shared between Macintosh and Windows monitors. These colors, called the "Web palette," should be used when creating GIFs for the Web because colors that are not in this palette display differently on Macintosh and Windows monitors. When saving an image to the GIF format, add the ".gif" file extension to the end of its file name.

**PCX:** Originally developed by ZSOFT for its PC Paintbrush program, PCX is a common graphics file format supported by many graphics programs, as well as most optical scanners and fax modems. When saving an image to the PCX format, add the ".pcx" file extension to the end of its file name.

**TIFF:** Tagged Image File Format is a standard file format for storing images as bit maps. It is used especially for scanned images because it can support any size, resolution, and color depth. When saving an image to the TIFF format, add the ".tif" file extension to the end of its file name.

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**New Member**  
**George Powers**

# graphic formats

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## Vector Graphics

The other method for representing images is known as vector graphics (or object-oriented graphics.) With vector graphics, images are represented as mathematical formulas that define all the shapes in the image. Vector graphics are more flexible than bit-mapped graphics because they look the same even when they are scaled to different sizes. In contrast, bit-mapped graphics become ragged when they are shrunk or enlarged. Programs that enable the user to create and manipulate vector graphics are called draw programs.

Images stored as vectors look better on monitors and printers with higher resolution (bit-mapped images always appear the same regardless of a device's resolution.) Another advantage is that images in vector graphics often require less memory than bit-mapped images. Almost all sophisticated graphics systems, including CADD systems and animation software, use vector graphics.

Following are descriptions of some commonly used vector graphics file formats:

**EPS:** The Encapsulated PostScript file format is a metafile format; it can be used for vector images or bitmap images. The EPS file format can be used on a variety of platforms, including Macintosh and Windows. When you place an EPS image into a document, you can scale it up or down without information loss. This format contains PostScript information and should be used when printing to a PostScript output device. The PostScript language, which was developed by Adobe, is the industry standard for desktop publishing software and hardware. EPS files can be graphics or images of whole pages that include text, font, graphics, and page layout information.

**JPEG:** Like GIF, the Joint Photographic Experts Group format is one of the most popular formats for Web graphics. It supports 24 bits of color information, and is most commonly used for photographs and similar continuous-tone bitmap images. The JPEG file format stores all of the color information in an RGB image, then reduces the file size by compressing it, or saving only the color information that is essential to the image. Most imaging applications and plugins let you determine the amount of compression used when saving a graphic in the JPEG format. Unlike GIF, JPEG does not support transparency. Use JPEG for scanned photographs and naturalistic artwork with highlights, shaded areas, and shadows. The more complex and subtly rendered the image is, the more likely it is that the image should be converted to JPEG.

JPEG, like GIF, uses a "lossy" compression technique, which changes the original image by removing color information during the conversion process. The JPEG file format supports millions of colors. In theory, JPEG was designed so that changes made to the original image during conversion to JPEG would not be visible to the human eye.

Most imaging applications let the user control the amount of lossy compression performed on an image, so you can trade off image quality for smaller file size and vice versa. Be aware that the chances of image degradation when converting to JPEG increase proportionally with the amount of compression you use. When saving a file in the JPEG format, add the "\*.jpg" file extension to the end of its file name. Use the JPEG file format for images with only a few distinct colors, such as illustrations, cartoons, and images with blocks of color, such as icons, buttons, and horizontal rules.

**PICT:** The Picture file format is for use primarily on the Macintosh platform; it is the default format for Macintosh image files. The PICT format is most commonly used for bitmap images, but can be used for vector images as well. Avoid using PICT images for print publishing. The PICT format is "lossless," meaning it does not remove information from the original image during the file format conversion process. Because the PICT format supports only limited compression on Macintoshes with QuickTime installed, PICT files are usually large. When saving an image as a PICT, add the file extension ".pct" to the end of its file name. Use the PICT format for images used in video editing, animation, desktop computer presentations, and multimedia authoring.

**PNG:** The Portable Network Graphics format will likely be the successor to the GIF file format. PNG is not yet widely supported by most Web browsers. Netscape versions 4.04 and later, and Internet Explorer version 4.01 and later, currently support this file format. However, PNG is expected to become a mainstream format for Web images and could replace GIF entirely. It is platform independent and should be used for single images only (not animation.) Compared with GIF, PNG offers greater color support and better compression, gamma correction for brightness control across platforms, better support for transparency, and a better method for displaying progressive images. When saving an image to the PNG format, add the file extension ".png" to the end of its file name.

**CGM:** The Computer Graphics Metafile is a format developed by several standards organizations. CGM is supported by many PC Software products. When saving an image to the CGM format, add the file extension ".cgm" to the end of its file name.

**DXF:** The Data Exchange File is a format developed by Autodesk. Almost all PC-based CAD systems support DXF.

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**GEM:** The graphics file format used by GEM-based applications. GEM is a graphical user interface (GUI) developed by Digital Research.

**HPGL:** Hewlett-Packard Graphics Language is one of the oldest file formats. Although it is not very sophisticated, it is supported by many PC-based graphics products.

**IGES:** Initial Graphics Exchange Specification is an ANSI Standard for three-dimensional wire frame models. IGES is supported by most PC-based CAD systems.

**PIC:** This is a relatively simple file format developed by Lotus for representing graphs generated by Lotus 1-2-3. PIC is supported by a wide variety of PC applications.

**PICT:** Developed by Apple Computer in 1984 as the standard format for storing and exchanging graphics files. It is supported by all graphics programs that run on a Macintosh.

**WMF:** The Windows file format is used for exchanging graphics between Microsoft Windows applications. WMF files can also hold bit-mapped images.

The debate over which format is better still surfaces once in a while. My opinion is that each format has its place, just as the native format of the various paint-and-draw programs. One format may be better than others in terms of quality; at other times, another format may be better in terms of size. The best way is to take the time to view and store your images in different formats and select the one optimum for your needs, storage capability, and ease of use.

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*This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG)*

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## photos

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As: command. As you type in a name look for a box that says something like Save As File Type: Choose BMP to be sure that the file can be opened by any other Windows user. Some programs use Export: in addition to or instead of Save As. Adobe Photo Deluxe makes it even more complicated to choose something other than its own PDD format. One must go to File, Send To, Format, Save As: in order to choose BMP. Despite the fact that BMP files can be universally opened and edited by all PC users, JPG has become the most popular format among photo-editing professionals. Why? Because JPGs can be compressed to make their file sizes smaller while maintaining quality close to their original appearance. Compressed files can be uploaded and downloaded faster and they take up less disk space. So why hasn't JPG become the default photo format for Windows? The problem is that not all JPG files are created equal. Not only can JPGs be compressed, they can be compressed at different size/quality ratios and different image editing programs use different systems for doing this. It is not uncommon for me to have to try three different programs before I find one that will open a particular JPG. Then I will very likely convert the JPG to a BMP before emailing it to someone else unless I'm sure the recipient has the same JPG-compatible software I do.

Another popular format for images is GIF. GIFs tend to be smaller in size than other formats and are used extensively on web pages because they materialize faster on the screen. The downside of GIFs is that they are limited to 256

colors, whereas other formats can display literally millions of colors. GIFs are used almost exclusively in the clipart type drawings seen on the web. The animated drawings you see on the web are also GIFs and can be downloaded by right clicking them and choosing Save Picture/Image As. The trouble is that once you've downloaded the animation, it will be a non moving drawing when viewed via most programs. However, some email programs now let you enclose an animated GIF that can be seen in motion by a recipient using a similar HTML powered program. More PC tips can be found at <http://www.pcdon.com> and calls are welcome at (949) 646-8615 or (949) 646-4167



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The final event was a raffle of CDs, with the Pic'n'Win program, restored to life using a new floppy.

Next month, on June 3rd, we will learn about Windows XP with Alan Raul in the Early Meeting, while Randy Whittle will present MGI Graphics software, and will talk about CD-Recordables as an addition to his presentation in the Main Meeting room. See you there.

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## surfboard

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**LOOK4MP3** <http://www.look3mp3.com> You can find hundreds of artists, etc. very quickly here, but you need to use an FTP site to download. I found the directions very poor and confusing. You might fare better than I did.

# Microsoft Windows Tips

The Interface, May, 2001  
Newsletter of The Long  
Beach IBM Users Group

## RAM AS A WAY TO SPEED YOUR COMPUTER

A member wrote in to say that his computer became progressively slower as he used it. His computer had only 32 MB of RAM, which explained the problem. As you open and close applications on your computer, sometimes the applications fail to "free up" the RAM they were using, and your system has to make do with a little less. When you're already on a computer with little RAM, it won't take long before your system is crawling. You can always return things to normal by restarting, but the best long-term fix in this case is to buy more RAM. It isn't as expensive as it used to be.

## GETTING RID OF THE WINDOWS PASSWORD

How to get rid of the Windows password every time you start your computer. If you're the only user, having to press Cancel every time your computer starts is a real pain. Fortunately, it's easy to turn off the Windows password. Go to Start, Settings, Control Panel and open the Passwords icon. Then click the Change Passwords tab and click the Change Windows Password button. Make sure all three fields are completely blank and click the OK button to save changes.

## BEGINNER TIP: SCANDISK

Windows has a utility called Scandisk built into its operating system. This utility will actually run a check on your entire hard disk to find and try to resolve problems before you ever see them. To run Scandisk, from the Start menu, choose Programs ... Accessories... System Tools...Scandisk. You'll want to run scan disk for your

hard drives periodically. And once a month, you should also perform a Scandisk with the "Surface Scan" option turned on. This scan will perform a much more robust check of your hard drive.

## GETTING TO THE WINDOWS FOLDER WITH THE RUN COMMAND

If you're the type of user who regularly tinkers in his or her Windows file, you know what a pain it is navigating to the Windows folder via the mouse. Well, using the Run dialog box, there's a lightning-fast way to open the Windows folder. Go to Start, Run. Type OO (that's two periods) in the Open box and click OK. The Windows folder pops open for you instantly.

## PUTTING FIND ON YOUR QUICK-LAUNCH TOOLBAR

If you like, you can put the Find command on your Quicklaunch Toolbar so it'll be available with a single mouse click. First, open Find by going to Start, Find, Files Or Folders. Here you'll want to set up the Find parameters so they'll be most useful to you, selecting the drive or folder you think you're likely to be looking in. Then select File, Save Search and an icon with the search criteria appears on your desktop. Simply drag this icon to your Quicklaunch Toolbar and your Find command is always easily accessible.

## HOW TO GET RID OF THE SHORTCUT ARROWS

To get rid of the shortcut arrows on your desktop shortcuts. The safest way of doing so is by using the TweakUI program. This free program is available at free download sites like <http://download.cnet.com/> and it gives you a bit more control in customizing your Windows interface. Once you've downloaded TweakUI (make sure to get version 1.33), just open the program and go to Explorer. Click the None button under Shortcut Overlay and then click OK to save changes.

## SHORTCUT FOR THE RUN COMMAND

When you're opening programs like regedit, the best way is to use the Run command. Normally, we point you in that direction by telling you to go to Start, Run. But there is a keyboard shortcut. Just press Windows Key-R to open the Run command.

## BACKSPACE KEY

If you're navigating through folders and you want to jump quickly to the level just above the current one, remember that you can always use your Backspace key. Just press it to correspond to the Back button and move up a level.

## ANIMATED CURSORS

Do you use one of those cute little animated cursors when you're using your PC? I must admit, they're neat to watch and most of the time pretty funny. However, this amusement comes at a rather large cost. Many of the people who write these little trinkets do not care about saving memory or resources, and so resources often suffer.

If you're having a problem with your computer's speed and you use an animated cursor, turn off the cursor and see whether the situation improves.



## 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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Direct all correspondence and newsletter submissions to:

**BOB WARD, SECRETARY**  
2100 Andre Ave.,  
Los Osos, CA. 93402  
(805) 756-2164



## 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 promptly 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/](http://WWW.THEGRID.NET/SLOBYTES/)

## slobytes officers

R. Miklas (Pres)   rmiklas@bigfoot.com  
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B. Ward (Sec.)     bward@thegrid.net  
M. Baxendale (Tres) marvin@surfari.net  
B. Ward, editor

### for sale

Do YOU have some computer-related item you would like listed in this space? Contact Bob Ward, Editor at 756-2164.

## treasurer's report



may 13, 2001

### OPERATING FUND

Beginning Balance	\$2,202.88
Income	
Membership Dues	125.00
Refreshments	17.25
Dividends	10.20
Expenses	
Room Rent	75.00
NL Xerox	32.10
Refreshments	38.18
New Balance	<u>\$2,210.05</u>

### SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Beginning Balance	\$151.66
Dividend	0.44
New Balance	<u>\$152.10</u>



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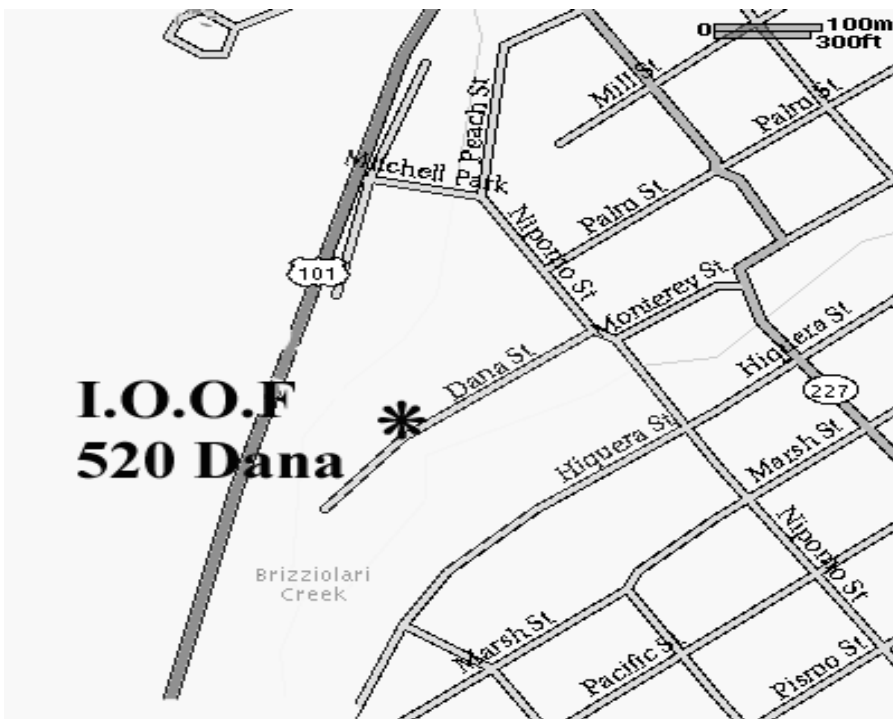
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SLO Bytes PC User's Group  
c/o Marvin Baxendale  
543 Gularde Road  
Arroyo Grande, CA. 93420



Next Meeting  
**Sunday**  
June 3rd  
  
1:00pm  
Early SIGS  
2:30pm  
MGI Graphics  
CD Recordables