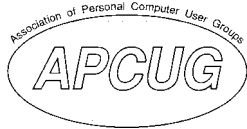




THE WYSIWYG



June 2006

Volume 18, Issue 6

STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385

Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

\$3.00

TUESDAY June 6

Main Meeting 7:30 PM

“Internet Security for the Home User,” presented by Michael Northup of Macomb County Computer Repair, L.L.C

There will be no regular club meeting or SIG meetings in July and August. The club meetings will resume in September.

The President’s Pen

by Don VanSyckel



Prices continue to fall. I check the newspaper ads most weeks for three items:

- 1) hard disks (regular ATA type)
- 2) memory sticks a.k.a. USB thumb drives
- 3) laptops

Hard drives. Every PC has at least one. People seem to have quite a thirst for more and more disk storage so many people have either added a second hard drive or replaced the original hard drive. I tend to 'abandon' the original hard drive to the OS (Windows for most of us) and add a large second drive for data. I can remember when I was waiting patiently (well maybe impatiently at times) for hard drive prices to creep down to \$1 / Gbyte. This was great. Now a few years later I'm not only waiting for hard drive prices to get down to 30 ¢ / Gbyte and also for the size to go up to 500 Gbytes or more. To put this into perspective, at \$1 / Gbyte a 250 Gbyte hard drive would cost \$250 and at 30 ¢ / Gbyte the same hard drive would cost \$75. Quite a difference. The hard drive size is so I don't have to have too many little 160 and 250 Gbyte drives mounted in the PC.

USB thumb drives. Many PC users have found USB thumb drives very handy to move files from one PC to another and to have certain files be portable, such as pictures. A couple of

years ago I was thrilled to get a 256 Mbyte USB thumb drive on sale for \$100. Now you can get 1 Gbyte USB thumb drive for \$30 and the new 2 Gbyte USB thumb drive for \$80. Wow on a byte basis each byte costs 5% of what it used to.

Laptops. Many people these days have a laptop if they travel or move around a bit. When we travel my laptop helps in unloading pictures from the camera, let's me make notes about the trip and the activities we do, plays DVDs, and let's me check my email. There's nothing wrong with my laptop but I would like a larger screen, a screen that is day-bright, and a larger hard drive. I haven't seen just what I want yet at a price I'm willing to pay which is lower than if I had no laptop at all. I have seen laptops as low as \$500 but not with any of the features I want. I would settle for \$800 price tag with the features I listed above. The closest I've seen is in the \$1200 range. Price continue to fall.

This month SHCC welcomes Mr. Michael Northup from Macomb County Computer Repair, L.L.C. who will present “Internet Security for the Home User”. Mr. Northrup brings years of experience with him and this promises to be an interesting presentation.



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Guests and visitors are welcome. People can attend any SHCC meetings during two consecutive months before deciding to become a member or not. Meetings include the main meeting and SIGs. July and August don't count since there is no main meeting. Membership includes admission to all SHCC functions and the newsletter. Membership is open to anyone. It is not limited to the residents of Sterling Heights.

DUES: \$25/YEAR

CLUB ADDRESS: PO Box 385, Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385
CLUB E-MAIL ADDRESS: Info@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org
CLUB WEB PAGE: http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org

Resource People:

Family Tree	Rick Schummer
Firefox	Don VanSyckel
FoxPro	Rick Schummer
Internet Explorer	-
MS Publisher	Rick Kucejko
MS Word	Rick Schummer
WordPerfect	Jim McNeil
Spreadsheets	Rick Schummer

SHCC Coordinators:

Associate Editor	Rick Schummer
Net/Comm. SIG	Betty MacKenzie
Door prizes	Jerry Hess
Greeter	Lindell Beck
Newsletter publisher	Rick Kucejko
Novice SIG	Don VanSyckel
PC SIG	Jack Vander-Schrier
Program Coordinator	Jerry Hess
Publicity	Patrick Little
Resource People	open
Vendor Press Rel.	Jim Waldrop
Web Page	Don VanSyckel

2006 SHCC Officers

President: Don VanSyckel V. President: Open
 Secretary: Pat Little Treasurer: Ed Trombley

Four Month Meeting Schedule:

JUNE 2006	AUGUST 2006
6 - SHCC- "Internet Security for the Home User," presented by Michael Northup of Macomb County Computer Repair, L.L.C	SHCC- No meeting in August
7 - COMP meeting	2 - COMP meeting
11 - SEMCO meeting	6 - SEMCO meeting
12 - Net/Comm SIG	No Net/Comm SIG in August
19 - Novice SIG	No Novice SIG in August
28 - PC SIG	No PC SIG in August
JULY 2006	SEPTEMBER 2006
SHCC- No meeting in July	5 - SHCC- "Home Networking, Wireless Access Points, part 3" by member Don VanSyckel
5 -COMP meeting	6 - COMP meeting
9 - SEMCO meeting	10 - SEMCO meeting
No Net/Comm SIG in July	12 - Net/Comm SIG
No Novice SIG in July	18 - Novice SIG
No PC SIG in July	27 - PC SIG

Other Computer Clubs:

As a member of SHCC, you can attend meetings of other clubs where we have reciprocating membership agreements, at no charge.

Computer Club of Marysville and Port Huron (COMP)
 Time: 1st Wednesday, 7:00PM
 Place: Mackenzie Bldg, Room 201, St Clair Community College, Clara E McKenzie Library-Science Building, 323 Erie St.
 Port Huron, (810) 982-1187
 Web Page: http://www.bwcomp.org
 Reciprocating: Yes

South Eastern Michigan Computer Organization (SEMCO)
 Time: 2nd Sunday at 1:30PM
 Place: ArvinMeritor Complex, 2135 W. Maple Road in Troy, across from Troy Motor Mall; 248-398-7560
 Web page: http://www.semco.org
 Reciprocating: Yes

The OPC (Older Persons Commission) Computer Club
 Time: Every Tuesday at 10:00
 Place: OPC in Rochester 248-656-1403.
 Web page: http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Village/1904/
 No cost for residents to join or attend meetings. \$150 fee for non-residents
 Reciprocating: No

Special Interest Groups:

MS-DOS (Main)	IBM compatibles
Net/Com	Computers communicating with other computers
PC	Intermediate users discuss various topics
Novice	Those starting out

Contact Information:

Lindell Beck	586-939-4278	ljaybeck48312@yahoo.com
Jerry Hess	586-566-6166	jhess@comcast.net
Rick Kucejko	248-879-6180	rick@kucejko.com
Patrick Little	586-264-1497	pblittle@wideopenwest.com
Betty MacKenzie	586-254-0677	mackenzie79@comcast.net
Rick Schummer	586-997-1451	rick@rickschummer.com
Ed Trombley	586-254-1172	ejtrombley@comcast.net
Don VanSyckel	586-731-9232	don@vansyckel.net
Jack Vander-Schrier	586-739-7720	jvanders@myself.com
Jim Waldrop	586-731-6481	jwaldrop@tir.com

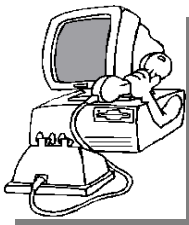
Newsletter submissions are due 10 days before the club meeting, but the earlier the better. They should be sent to :
 WYSIWYG Publisher
 5069 Fedora, Troy, MI 48098
 OR at the e-mail addresses: newsletter@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org

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SIG Meetings

Net/Comm SIG



The next meeting of the Internet/Communications (Net/Comm.) SIG will be Monday, June 12, 2006, starting at 7:00PM at the Macomb County Library. The SIG meeting days are generally the second Monday of the month.

There will be no SIG meetings in July and August.

Each month the members of the Net/Comm SIG discusses topics to help members of the SHCC learn more about the Internet.

For more information about the SIG, call or e-mail Betty MacKenzie (phone number is on page 2), or check the club web site.



Novice SIG



The next meeting of the Novice SIG will be Monday, June 19, 2006, starting at 7:00 PM at the Macomb County

Library.

There will be no SIG meetings in July and August.

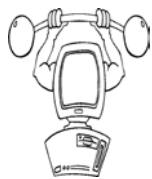
We are using WinXP as the version of Windows to focus on. Since we are dealing with novice topics, virtually all of the information is directly usable by

whose using other versions of Windows, Win98, WinME, and Win2000.

For more information about the SIG, call or e-mail Don VanSyckel (phone number is on page 2), or check the



PC SIG



The next meeting of the PC SIG will be on June 28, 2006, starting at 7:00PM at the Macomb County

Library. The SIG meeting is generally the fourth Wednesday of the month.

There will be no SIG meetings in July and August.

Intermediate level topics are discussed, aimed at users with some knowledge of computers. During this meeting, questions and answers regarding your computer will be discussed.

For more information about the SIG, call or e-mail Jack Vander-Shrier (phone number is on page 2), or check the club web site.



Summer Meetings

There will be no regular club meetings, or SIG meetings, in July and August. The regular club meeting, and the SIG meetings will restart in September. Enjoy the summer break, and happy computing.



Club Record Changes

To update your e-mail address, phone number, etc., please e-mail the club secretary at: Secretary@SterlingHeightsCom-puterClub.org. Using this address will provide the smoothest and quickest venue for any changes.



Advertising Space in the WYSIWYG

Pages, or fractions of pages are available for commercial advertising for a reasonable advertising fee. If interested in details, contact the WYSIWYG publisher at the address shown on page 2.



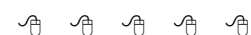
Directions To The Macomb Library

The Macomb County Library is located at 16480 Hall Road, in Clinton Township, between Hayes and Garfield, close to the light at Garfield, on the south side of Hall Road. A large red sign says "Macomb County Library". The phone number is (586) 286-6660.



SHCC Emergency Shutdown

If a club meeting is canceled an email will be sent to members by an officer or the coordinator if a SIG meeting at least an hour before the scheduled start of the meeting. If you have an issue with your email call one of the officers of the coordinator of the SIG. Don't call too early, the decision might not be finalized yet. All members are encouraged to keep the club up to date with their email address.



SHCC Business

“Ask The Experts”

by Jack Vander-Schrier



Please send questions to “Ask the Experts” at the club’s PO address, or e-mail your question directly to the Expert at the club e-mail address: AskTheExpert@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org.

Q: Dear Expert:

Every time I get an error in my Windows XP system it asks me if I want to send this information to Microsoft, I always say no. Isn’t there a way I can turn this message off for good?

Sincerely
Tired of Clicking

A: Dear Tired:

This will solve the problem:

1. Right-click My Computer and choose Properties.
2. Click the Advanced tab on your System Properties dialog box.
3. Click the Error Reporting button on the Advanced tab.
4. Place a checkmark next to “Disable error reporting.”
5. Leave the other radio button unchecked next to the text labeled, “But notify me when critical errors occur.”
6. Click OK.

Expert

Q: Dear Expert:

Every week I go through and delete my temporary Internet files. Should I continue to do this?

Linda

: Dear Linda:

AIf you delete these files, you’ll just end up downloading them again the next time you visit the Web pages. If the pages are on your hard disk, however, they’ll load more quickly. If you clean out these directories too often ~ say, weekly ~ you’ll waste time downloading the same pages over and over.

Expert



Resource Person Coordinator

The club is looking for a “Resource person Coordinator”. There is a list of people to call for help on various topic (see page 2). This coordinator position involves looking for people to fill in call support positions that become vacant. If you are interested in doing this function, or have questions about the position, talk to Don VanSyckel.



Last Month Meeting

At the May meeting SHCC member Jack VanderSchrier presented "Home networking, wireless access points, and all that stuff, part 2". Thanks to Jack for an informative presentation.



**VISIT THE SHCC WEB PAGE:
<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>**

A Ride In From The Parking Lot

For those that have a problem with the walk from the parking lot into our new meeting location for our monthly club meeting, Jerry Hess will operate a “shuttle service” from the parking lot to the front door. To do this, Jerry will need to be notified before noon of the meeting day, that you will be there and need a ride. He can be contacted by email at jhess@comcast.net or by phone at 586-566-6166. He drives a black Chrysler van and will be at the parking lot around 7 pm. You will need to arrange with him how you both will make contact in the parking lot.



Michigan Computer User Magazine

The "Michigan Computer User" magazine has not been available at club meetings for a few months.

The publisher has changed its distribution channels, and it is no longer provided in bulk to computer clubs. It can still be picked up at high-volume booksellers, like B. Dalton's and Little Professor, though.

Free mail subscriptions are available in select U.S. cities. Fortunately the Detroit area is one of these locations. Club members who wish to receive the magazine may have a copy delivered to their "business address" by subscribing with the form at:

<http://www.computeruser.com/about/subscribe/compsub.php>.



Why Do You Get So Much Spam?

by Vinny La Bash, Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.
labash(at)spcug.org www.spcug.org

The earliest recorded instance of what may be described as spam occurred on May 3, 1978. A sales representative for Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) named Gary Thuerk sent a message to everyone on the Arpanet data base (now known as the Internet) on the West coast of the United States. Thuerk wanted to notify the recipients of an open house that his company was hosting a demonstration of new models of the DEC-20 computer.

In 1978 the Arpanet had a certified "acceptable use policy" which said it couldn't be used for anything except research and education. Thuerk's action was a very clear violation, and when DEC got a very strong response from the Arpanet community objecting to the misuse, the company promptly promised to stop. Spam would not appear again for many years.

Today, estimates of the amount of email that is defined as spam range from 66% to 94%. Whatever the actual figure is, the good news, if you want to call it that, is that spam appears to be leveling off.

Congress has passed anti-spam legislation. Spam receivers are angry, Internet Service Providers try to filter out spam messages, and spammers are loathed by the general community of internet users. Why do spammers continue to operate in the face of all this general repugnance?

In an article for Wired Magazine, Brian McWilliams provides a very depressing answer. McWilliams discovered a security flaw on a website operated by a group selling pills guaranteed to enlarge the male sexual organ. The reporter found that over 6,000 orders for the product had been placed in a

time span of about a month. Business and medical professionals, athletes, and even women bought the pills. Many buyers made multiple purchases at \$50 per bottle, despite an obvious lack of credit card security on the site. The web site provided no way to contact the company except by placing an order.

Being a good reporter, McWilliams was not deterred by the company's efforts to hide behind fake registration data, disconnected phone numbers, and phony email addresses. Eventually he revealed that the company was owned by a 19 year old high school dropout, and a neo-Nazi adherent.

The business appears to be highly profitable, net costs being about \$15 per bottle of pills, but according to the FDA, there is no credible evidence that the product works.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



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AMD's Visionary Gamble

by Jim Hinwood, Monterey Bay User's Group - Personal Computer (MBUG-PC)

We computer enthusiasts have been the spectators in what I like to think of as a grand race. Leaving all the David and Goliath analogies aside, I like to think of the computer revolution like a car race. Different technologies race around the track – if one pulls a little too wide on a turn, it falls behind, only to make it up on the straightaway later. One "spinout" and you can be permanently out of the race.

There have been some grand reversals in this past year, quite unlike what I've seen in any other business. Quick and decisive changes leading to huge differences in market share. When I first started to play with computer hardware, Intel was king. For 35 years AMD (Advanced Micro Devices) was the "Beta" to Intel's "VHS": a lot of people would only buy computers with Intel chips even though in many ways AMD was the better value. The prob-

lem that Intel ran into was the buildup of heat, and the gamble by AMD on the 64-bit processor. Intel ran their chips as close to 4 GHz as they could, but they couldn't seem to crack the 4 GHz ceiling. A lot of gamers did, by going to water cooling, but nobody in the mainstream wanted to deal with water cooling.

Then, multimedia computers came in as the next best thing. With Microsoft wanting to make headway into your living room, they came out with a new operating system, XP Media Center. Now we had an operating system strictly for a media center PC in your living room, but without a solution to the heat problem, we had water cooling, or a computer with a CPU fan that sounded like a leaf blower. You don't want to watch a movie when the computer running all of your media devices sounds like someone starting a two-cylinder motorcycle.

The other problem is obvious – you don't want laptops that will burn anybody foolish enough to use it on their lap (and eventually you won't be calling it a "laptop" anymore). Intel found a solution in the **Pentium M** for the laptop, reducing clock speeds and heat, and increasing battery life. AMD focused on 64-bit computing. When AMD presented 64-bit architecture, there weren't going to be any applications to really take advantage of 64-bit computing for a long time and no operating system in sight, but the AMD chips had immediate and substantial gains in performance for gamers and they started to trounce the Intel chips in any performance face-off.

Also, clock speed doesn't remain as important when you have a 64-bit pipeline. Instead of continuing to increase clock speeds, 64-bit computing doubles the amount of data that can be processed per clock cycle. 64-bit architecture also means exponential amounts of memory that can be addressed. The best home computers can address 4 GB of RAM if the motherboard can handle it, but with 64-bit computing you can run 1 terabyte (1,000 GB of RAM). RAM is very fast and this adds substantial gains to the whole package. AMD then went to a true dual core processor which put two chip cores on the same die, the equivalent of two microprocessors in one. Then you need fewer clock cycles to process the same information – speed can remain the same with double the processing power and running 250 times the RAM.

With the addition of dual core processors and the expected increases in performance that come from splitting the processing of information between chips, AMD has again raised performance without increases in heat. These three things: 64-bit architecture, larger amounts of RAM, and splitting the processing between dual lower clock cycle cores have, for the moment, catapulted AMD from a distant second to

an over 50 percent market share in personal computers. AMD is in first place for the first time in their 35-year history.

Does this mean the end for Intel? Not anytime soon, with Intel being seven times as large as AMD and with 34 billion dollars in revenue. Intel earns in 11 days what AMD will earn all year. Intel also sits on 14 billion dollars in cash, to AMD's 1.1 billion. This gives them a huge advantage in research and development and in building state-of-the-art production facilities. AMD's surge in market share is due as much to the stumbling of In-

tel as it is to its own genius. The only thing that seems to be holding AMD back is the refusal of **Dell** to use AMD chips. If consumer demand becomes great enough for AMD chips and Dell makes a reversal, it could mean huge gains for AMD. It remains to be seen if Intel can soon regain the summit on which it once stood firmly.

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Computer Power Protection

by Ira Walker

Now that summer is coming, and our air conditioners will seem to cycle on and off endlessly, we may notice our computer screens flicker or shrink ever-so-slightly for a moment when the AC compressor powers on. With our intermittent yet common summer thunderstorms, we may notice our lights flicker, occasionally accompanied by a power outage of varying lengths. While these and similar effects may be an emotional strain upon us personally, they may also be an indication that we may need to protect our computers from unseen electrical damage.

The most basic form of electrical protection for our computers, which should be considered as mandatory for all computers, including notebook computers used away from the home or office, is a surge suppressor. Power surges, also referred to as spikes, are short term increases in voltage, often occurring when major electrical equipment, such as air conditioners or freezers are turned off. These surges and spikes can damage sensitive electronic devices such as computers, TVs, microwave ovens, and other devices. Surge

suppressors to minimize the risk of damage are readily available in a variety of forms and prices, ranging from an inexpensive suppressor in the form of a power strip, to large box shaped devices that provide surge protection with line conditioning and a battery backup function. A recent review of the selection available locally at the office supply, electronics, and discount stores indicated a vast array of power strip type surge suppressors, ranging in price from about \$3 to almost \$100. One caveat is appropriate here; many users have a standard power strip connecting their computers to the wall plug. While almost all power strips offer some form of overload protection, typically with a circuit breaker, standard power strips offer no other protection for power related problems, and need to be replaced with a decent quality power strip that has a surge suppression function with a UL 1449 rating.

The ability of a surge suppressor to dissipate the surge or spike is measured in "joules", with a higher joules rating indicating a greater ability to absorb and dissipate the excess voltage from

the surge. Almost all surge suppressors have a limited life expectancy, and may wear out. Many of the better ones have an LED or other device indicating the proper functioning of the surge protection. It is a good practice to frequently inspect your surge suppressor, and to immediately replace it if there is even a hint or suspicion of malfunction. Power surges are one of the major killers of computers and other electronic devices. In my house, each of my major electronic devices, including TVs, microwaves, stereos, cordless phones, and of course computers, is connected to a functional surge suppressor. I also carry a good quality surge suppressor – power strip in my notebook computer case which is always used whenever my notebook is plugged in.

While the primary function of a surge suppressor is to protect plugged-in electrical devices from surge related damage, many of the suppressors on the market also provide additional functionality. Common in most better suppressors is an electronic noise filter, which reduces the electrical noise, often referred to as “RFI” or “EMI” interference, carried through the power lines. This electronic noise may be thought of as a type of static, and commonly comes from a variety of transmitters, welding devices, printers, lightning, or other sources. This type of line noise can cause errors in computer programs and data files, and possibly also damage some hardware components. In purchasing a surge suppressor, I recommend that one be purchased that includes electronic noise filtering.

I have repaired countless computers where the modem was “fried”, or destroyed by a power surge. It is widely known in professional circles that power surges and spikes can also come through a phone line, as well as a coax cable, network cable, or other form of data connection. Many surge suppressors also include one or more pro-

tected lines explicitly for a phone or fax cable, TV or satellite cable, or other types of network cable. For those of us that still use dialup connections to the internet, or use fax machines, a surge suppressor that has a phone jack should also be a necessity. The phone plug from the wall connects to the jack in the suppressor, and another cable is used to connect the suppressor to the modem or fax machine. Generally, there is no significant degradation of signal while connected to a fax machine, but some 56K modems may suffer a slight degradation of signal or speed. This slight performance is a small price to pay for the added protection provided by the suppressor. All of my phone lines and cable TV coax is connected to the same surge suppressor that protects the device they are connected to.

As an added benefit, many models of surge suppressors also carry some form of insurance coverage to repair or replace devices connected to them from covered perils, often including lightning. The amount of coverage provided is often high, but is sometimes used as a marketing gimmick. As with all types of guarantees and insurance, be sure to read the fine print, and follow explicitly the directions for filing a claim.

Better safe than sorry.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



The New, The Best, And The Worst

Collected by Pim Borman, Website Editor, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.
<http://swipcug.apcug.org/> [swipcug\(at\)sigecom.net](mailto:swipcug(at)sigecom.net)

Talking Turk-ey.

If you've ever earned some pocket money stuffing envelopes, the advent of e-mail may have put you out of business. But the Internet giveth what it taketh away.

Much of the unanticipated success of the Internet is due to the contributions made by selfless volunteers. Businesses then realized the importance of the Internet to advertise themselves, and Wile E. Coyote would now be able to order his Road Runner catchers from www.acme.com (there actually is such a Web site). Nevertheless, volunteers expect to derive some form of satisfaction from their efforts, and the equivalent of envelope stuffing for free does not draw many aficionados.

The Internet would not be more than a large flea market were it not for the

powerful search engines capable of retrieving information almost instantly. The retrieval algorithms depend on vast indexes maintained by constantly culling millions of Web sites world wide. Only computer-readable text is indexable. Yet, there are many other types of valuable information on the Web that are not computer-readable, such as hand-written documents and graphical images. It is almost impossible for a computer to distinguish a picture of Picabo Street in her ski outfit from Mother Teresa in her nun's habit. A human can distinguish them at a glance. Hand-written documents must be retyped, as many genealogy indexers know. Thus there is a great need for indexing graphics and hand-written information that requires human input. There are many other instances where human input is required, such as rating the validity of computer-generated keywords

describing search targets, or retrieving numbers from scanned documents, such as transfer deeds.

Amazon, with its interest in computer searching with its A9.com search engine, has established a program that enlists human help for such tasks. The program is called Mechanical Turk, after a mechanical chess-playing automaton in 1769 that defeated nearly every opponent it faced. It featured a life-sized wooden mannequin, adorned with a fur-trimmed robe and a turban, seated behind a cabinet. It confounded such brilliant challengers as Benjamin Franklin and Napoleon Bonaparte. What they did not know was the secret behind the Mechanical Turk: a human chess master cleverly concealed inside.

Amazon has set up a Web site (<http://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome>) as a link between programmers looking for “artificial, artificial intelligence,” and paid volunteers providing human inputs to perform the requested tasks, referred to as HITs. These are typically of a simple, repetitive nature and pay a minimal amount, a penny or so, for each input. For instance, I saw a HIT listed to look up deed records on a Web site and find the transfer taxes. The volunteers that complete such tasks are rated on their proficiency and accuracy and build up a reputation that qualifies them for somewhat more challenging and higher-paying HITs.

It is an interesting concept that may catch on as it is further refined. (Mentioned in Bill Machrone’s column in *PC Magazine*, February 17, 2006).

Oldie Tribulations

I own a 6-year old former dream machine, once briefly the envy of friends and relatives, a Dell desktop with a 600MHz Pentium III processor and a 20GB hard drive. Over the years I added another 20GB hard drive,

upped the RAM to 256 MB, and upgraded from Windows 98SE2 to Windows ME. Lately I have been using this computer to evaluate a variety of Linux distributions that I installed on the second drive in separate partitions.

Recently I took advantage of a special offer to update my version of Xandros (Linux) Desktop Open Circulation to the DeLuxe Edition. I wanted to install it in a clean 10 GB partition, but as a result of the many installations of different operating systems, the second hard drive could not be repartitioned any longer because of a faulty partition table. I could read and write to the disk, but neither Partition Magic nor any other disk software was able to repartition the drive, or even to reformat it. It was time for drastic measures.

I discarded the faulty slave drive, bought a new Western Digital 80GB hard drive, installed it as the master, and relegated the original 20GB master drive to slave status. All I needed to do was reinstall Windows ME and then repartition the disk to make room for Xandros and Linspire, my favorite Linux distributions. Easier said than done, as it turned out. I’ll try to summarize the lessons I (re-)learned.

- Windows ME only upgrades from Windows 98, not from DOS.
- Read the manual about the proper location of the itty-bitty jumpers that determine if a drive is the master or the slave. Don’t just go by the markings on the drives. Apparently all drives are different.
- Re-use the old IDE cable if the new cable doesn’t reach both drives.
- Even the most recent BIOS version for this computer available from Dell (dated 2000) is not able to recognize more than 32 GB of the 80 GB drive.
- Believe it when it says on the box that the drive requires Windows XP or better.

- The special software, provided by Western Digital, to reach and repartition all 80 GB on an old computer must be used before installing the operating system.
- After using the special WD software to set up the hard drive, don’t use Partition Magic 8.0 to further repartition the drive. You won’t be able to reboot and will have to start all over again.
- The computer won’t boot any longer from the old hard drive, reinstalled as the master. In computing too, you can’t go home again.
- After protecting the system with a ZoneAlarm firewall and F-prot antivirus you think it is safe to go online to update Windows ME and install Internet Explorer 6.0. You’ll still receive half a dozen instances of a spy program called Alexa, courtesy of Microsoft. AdAware will identify and remove it for you.
- All’s well that ends well. The computer now has 20GB of Windows ME, 30 GB of Linspire 5.0, and 30 GB of Xandros DeLuxe Edition, complete with boot manager.

Maybe I should just have bought one of those cheap Dell computers. But removing all the junk programs they come with might have been just as frustrating. I’ll hold out for a system using the 64-bit AMD chip. That excludes Dell, which uses Intel only. Linux has long since run on 64-bit processors, and Windows Vista is just getting around to it. Now is not the time; later this year, maybe. I might have a local dealer built one to order.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



WYSIWYG WEB WATCH (www)

By Paul Baecker

webwatch@sterlingheightscomputerclub.org



This column attempts to locate sites containing valuable, amusing and free content, with no overbearing pressure to purchase any-

thing. Send your favorite entertaining, helpful or just plain useless sites (a description is optional) to the e-address noted above, for inclusion in a future WYSIWYG issue. Also check the SHCC web site ("Web Page Reviews") for previous gems.

Free utility to modify message composition windows on-the-fly to allow for correct quoting and appearance in MSOE.

<http://home.in.tum.de/~jain/software/oe-quotefix/>

Extensions, plug-ins, themes for Firefox.

<https://addons.mozilla.org/firefox/>

Practical, easy help for setting up and debugging a network. Troubleshooting tips. Reviews of LAN products.

<http://practicallynetworked.com>

Opening dialogues from last night's TV talk shows

<http://newsmax.com/liners.shtml>

Dozens of downloadable symbol fonts.

<http://dingbatpages.com>

International Federation of Competitive Eating - contest schedules, winners, records. At-home training not recommended.

<http://www.ifoce.com>

Fast, fun tool for creating architectural models, images, and walkthroughs,

from sketches to presentations. Free download. Click on "Lite".

<http://www.artifice.com>

Zoom from satellite altitude into any place on Earth. Experience terrain in visually rich 3D, just as if you were really there. Free download.

<http://worldwind.arc.nasa.gov>

Bumper sticker sayings.

<http://bumperwise.com>

Magazine subscriptions at discount prices.

<http://discountmagazines.com>

A handsome canine.

<http://samugliestdog.com>

Collections of entertainment reviews - film, DVD, music, TV, books, games.

<http://www.metacritic.com>

Check your Internet connection speed using various global sources.

<http://www.testmyspeed.com>

Free games to play online or download.

<http://www.freeonlinegames.com>

Interactive news trivia quiz game.

<http://www.newseum.org/newsmania/>

Play interactive keyboards to produce sophisticated music with orchestral effects or rap scratching.

<http://www.pianographique.net>

How gas prices work.

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/gas-price.htm>

Pics from ghost towns of the southwest.

<http://www.ghosttowngallery.com>

Various text and visual quizzes for movie addicts.

<http://www.filmwise.com>

Pics and interior/exterior details of old calculators. Some calculator history.

<http://www.oldcalculatormuseum.com>

Large collection of micro cars. Pics and videos.

<http://www.microcarmuseum.com>

Online cards for all occasions.

<http://www.funny-ecards.com>

A discussion on fighting email spam.

<http://www.spamprimer.com>

Daily summaries of the Mad Money TV show.

<http://www.madmoneyrecap.com>

Free software to track household inventory.

<http://www.knowyourstuff.org>

Research airlines' safety records.

Crash database sorted by country/airline.

<http://aviation-safety.net>

Kodak offers free Easyshare software to find, organize, fix, and share photos.

<http://www.kodak.com>

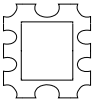
Local web site(s) of the month; sites of interest in and near SE Michigan. Look here each month for another interesting site from our area.

Coupon savings from local and on-line merchants.

<http://www.couponcabin.com>

Connect to groups of people who share similar interests and live nearby.

<http://www.meetup.com>



**STERLING HEIGHTS
COMPUTER CLUB**
PO Box 385
Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385



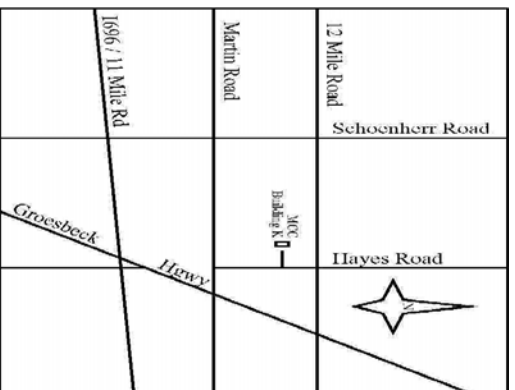
June AT SHCC:

TUESDAY JUNE 6

Main Meeting. 7:30PM

Macomb Community College
South Campus
14500 E 12 Mile Road, Warren
John Lewis Community Center
(Building K)
(Enter from Hayes Road)

“Internet Security for the Home User,” presented by Michael Northup of Macomb County Computer Repair, L.L.C



SIGs

MONDAY

NetCom SIG

June 12

7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

MONDAY

NOVICE SIG

June 19

7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

WEDNESDAY

PC SIG

June 28

7:00PM at the Macomb County Library.

September : “Home Networking, Wireless Access Points, part 3” by member Don Vansyckel