North Texas

North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

NTPCUG

PC NEWS

It's that Time Again!!! Have You

Checked your Surge Protectors?

Online Edition

D E A D L I N E
Copy deadline for May
North Texas PC NEWS:
Friday, April 30, 2004

Meeting Dates:
April 17, 3rd Saturday
May 15, 3rd Saturday
June 19, 3rd Saturday

In This Issue...
Articles and Announcements:

Special Items:

Submit Newsletter articles to: *newsletter@ntpcug.org*
Visit the North Texas PC Users Group Web page:
http://www.ntpcug.org

Submitting Articles and Stories to the Newsletter

The North Texas PC NEWS is now on-line—and it's more important than ever that the NTPCUG newsletter contain timely and informative content of interest to our members. We will welcome pertinent "How to do it" articles, book reviews, software reviews and other materials that would be helpful and interesting to NTPCUG members.

For prospective authors, there are a few, but very important, "Do's and Don'ts" involved in article submission to the newsletter, first of which is accuracy. Be sure of your facts (unless you report them as "rumors") and always remember to report the source(s) as well.

Please don't submit articles that are taken from another source without crediting the source in your article, i.e., if you excerpt something from the Microsoft (or other) Web site, please state that in the article.

Remember to "sign" your article/ story at the bottom. A simple "by Your Name" will be quite helpful, particularly if the editors have questions or suggestions about the story.

Please don't submit the article or story in HTM or .PDF format. It can make editing and formatting quite time consuming and difficult.

We can accept MS Word 97, most WordPerfect files and ASCII .TXT files. The absolutely latest version of any word processor may not convert gracefully to our format and may have to be rejected as a result.

Graphics should be submitted in one of the "standard" formats, i.e., .TIF, .EPS, .GIF, .PCX or .JPG files. While "native" CorelDraw (CDR) files are also OK, other graphics editor native formats may not be convertible.

Again, we want your articles and thank you in advance for your input and cooperation.

Finally, submit as e-mail attachments to: *newsletter@ntpcug.org*, or to *reagana@ntpcug.org*

Reagan Andrews

NT PCUG
NORTH TEXAS PC USERS GROUP, INC

PROGRAMS & PRESENTATIONS . . . Linda Moore

Hmmmmm....

There's
No Vendor
Presentation This Month!
Why not visit NTPCUG's
Business Meeting @ 12?

April 17, 2004

Corporate Donations
To NTPCUG in 2003

During 2003, NTPCUG has had **$19,972** donated to it by six corporate sponsors. The six corporate sponsors for 2003 were

❖ **Adobe**, (InDesign software for newsletter),

❖ **Data Projections** (audio/video equipment for 3rd Saturday),

❖ **Ipswitch** (Imail for email),

❖ **Microsoft** (latest software for updating the NTPCUG infrastructure),

❖ **Panda Software** (enterprise anti-virus software), and

❖ **PowerQuest** (V2i Server backup software).

The Adobe donation was conditional on **Reagan** agreeing to write a product review of InDesign. Part 1 of 2 was published in the October 2003 newsletter. Part 2 will be published within the next couple of months.

As you all have probably heard, the 3rd Saturday room rental rates are increasing substantially. Data Projections loans us 2 projectors for every 3rd Saturday meeting. Ipswitch donated a copy of Imail to NTPCUG, so that we could upgrade from SLMail. Microsoft donated copies of Windows Server 2003 and SQL Server 2000, so that we could upgrade our infrastructure. It is because of their generous donation that we are now evaluating implementing the latest version of their SharePoint technologies. We now have a 16-member team working on this effort and one-third of the team has multiple Microsoft certifications.

Following **Jon Murphy's** presentation on Panda's end-user and enterprise anti-virus solutions, Panda USA donated enterprise AV software to NTPCUG. Then last summer, when PowerQuest announced their new V2i desktop products and version 2 of the V2i server produce, **Gil Brand** offered to write a product review of the V2i server product, if I could get PowerQuest to donate a copy. Gil is currently working on that product review, so that should be available within the next month or so.

This $19,273 donation to NTPCUG is the equivalent of each member receiving a $55.32 donation. In other words, this is $55.32 cost that does not have to be included in each member's dues.

Prez Sez
Linda Moore

As you can see, the NTPCUG board is working hard to keep NTPCUG technologically up-to-date, but keeping our costs to a bare minimum.

New SIGs?

There is a new **Small Business Server group**, which has just started to meet at Microsoft on the 4th Thursday of the month from 6:00 – 9:00 PM on April 29. I have proposed that this group come under the NTPCUG umbrella but the group has not made a decision on that yet.

There are also two other new SIGs, which are in the formative stages and they are a **Security SIG** and a **SharePoint Technologies SIG.** There will be more information on this later, when the details are finalized.

Membership Dues

1997 was the last time that the NTPCUG dues were raised. If the dues had been raised each year, just enough to cover the current rate of inflation, our dues would be **$39** a year instead of $30 a year. If you are concerned with maintaining the current dues level, then this is what every member needs to do.

Every member needs to get three (3) of their friends to join NTPCUG by June 30, 2004. So, in essence, you need to get one new member a month starting this month. Just think of your friends and neighbors, who are always asking you questions about this or that computer problem. There are also the small busi-

Every Member

NTPCUG

Get a New Member

ness owners that you do business with, which are also good prospects. Think NTPCUG. Talk NTPCUG to everyone that you know.

Every member also has their own favorite tips and tricks but have you posted these in the **Tips and Tricks** conference in WebBoard forum area of the website, so that other members can see the neat things that you have discovered.

Every member also has discovered software jewels, which may be freeware, shareware or retail. Have you started a thread in the **Shareware and Freeware** conference in WebBoard to tell other NTPCUG members about your discoveries? Be sure and post what you really like about your new discoveries.

Free Microsoft Security Update CD

Go to the URL below to order your free Microsoft Security Update CD. There are not even any shipping charges.

http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect/cd/order.asp

NTPCUG Website

How long has it been since you visited every page on the NTPCUG website. There are lots of additions and changes, which **Mary McWilliams Johnson** has worked very hard on. By visiting every page, you will also see the many membership benefits, which NTPCUG provides its members.

PrezSez ... Ctd.

Interesting websites to bookmark

The website below is a Windows XP Fix it website but it also has lots of information pertinent to the other Windows operating systems. You might want to check it out.

http://www.winxpfix.com/Windows-Software-Page38.htm#aped

This is a tech support website, which has over 70,000 registered members.

http://www.virtualdr.com/

It's Spring Time

It is that time of year, when everyone is surveying their gardens and deciding what they need to do this year. Well, I have discovered a real gardening bargain. A professional garden photographer- writer started this project. It seems that millions of top quality plants go to waste every year, if they are not sold. Until I heard about this project, I did not know that nurseries destroy all of the nursery stock that they are unable to sell.

This project uses disabled people to package the plants for shipment, and the total cost per plant unit is **only $6.95.** This is another website that you will want to bookmark because the plant offerings change periodically.

http://www.freetreesandplants.com/

This project will not only save those plants and help beautify our gardens and yards, it also benefits sheltered workshops. This project is self-supporting except for the shipping and processing costs. It is not a non-profit charity and they do not ask for or accept contributions. Reservations for your free plants can only be made through the website above.

Linda Moore
Linda.Moore@ntpcug.org

New Members - News

NTPCUG is very pleased to extend a warm welcome to our newest members to the NTPCUG family.
- ❖**Chuck Bealke**
- ❖Alan Charbonne

- ❖Edison Howlett
- ❖Craig Sheppard
- ❖William tucker

Remember to contact **Doug Gorrie** about your "free" NTPCUG email account, *doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org*.

Bill Tucker has already completed a volunteer assignment to update one of our webpages. Thanks Bill for stepping up to the plate.

Linda Moore
Linda.Moore@ntpcug.org

Legalized Hacking - A Review of Mile2 CEH Training

by Joe Merle

The difference between an ethical hacker and the hackers that we hear about in the news is that the ethical hackers do it legally (with written permission) and validate the security set in place by an organization.

When you think of hacking, do you only think of a lone person behind a computer using his wits and a computer to break into a server or network of computers? That was the classic stereotype of a hacker. Today there is so much free software out there that can help the hacker gain inside access to a computer network and the systems have become so complex makes new ways of entering them; but wait, there is also the human approach. This is where a hacker gains a person's trust and gains information from an insider that shares confidential information about the network architecture or about secret pass codes.

How can knowledge of the network architecture be a benefit to the hacker? By knowing the architecture the hacker can choose the software tools geared towards it and save a great bit of time on doing the research. The information also helps the hacker know if there may be holes in the network due to software patches not being implemented or exploiting known holes in older applications or operating systems he finds on the network.

The first thing that you must do when taking the Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH) course is agree that you will not use the information in any illegal acts.

The class teaches you the process in which hackers attack systems. There are five basic steps to the process: 1) Reconnaissance, 2) Scanning, 3) Gaining Access, 4) Maintaining Access, and 5) Clearing Tracks.

By knowing the process and what each step may entail, you gain knowledge of how a hacker can build on each step in the process to gain access and control to a network.

The Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH) class that Mile2 teaches prepares you for the exam. However, you learn more than that when you have an instructor that has actually done the work, so he knows the strengths and weakness of the different methods used in each of the process steps.

There is a lot of material covered in the five day class. There are the two two-inch binders and two CD-ROMs worth of reading and lab material. You also receive a 778 page book that gives examples and more information about what is covered in class. The labs are done in class on the SMU in Legacy campus network. The instructor sets up virtual servers that you can attack.

I found the class to be most intriguing and a little disconcerting on how hackers can gain access to networks and information stored on them. It just proves that Information Technology people can never stop learning and need to know how to protect against such attacks to avoid a catastrophe. Of course, it depends on how valuable or challenging a hacker finds what you are trying to protect.

The CEH is a new certification designation, one that for no other reason would give a talking point in an interview, because it is such an intriguing subject. I would recommend putting something about Network or Internet security on a résumé instead of using the term "HACKER."

I believe having reference to Internet Security on my latest résumé was one of the reasons I received a two-part interview with Microsoft. I did not make it to part three, but it was a good experience in going through interview process.

I recommend the Mile2 CEH training. Although I did not take the CEH exam, I believe with a little more study, I would have had no problem passing the exam. Is it worth the $1950 price tag? It depends what your goals are. I definitely believe that it is worth it, for an organization to send at least one IT person to teach them the basics of what a black hat hacker could do to their information network, given the motive and opportunity. This person would also learn about the counter measures, which include following good company policy, keeping software patches current, never using wireless connectivity inside a secure part of the network, and continually learning more about this evolving subject online.

Joe Merle

BIGSHOT Screen Magnifier, v2.1O

IN SHORT:

PC software for Windows that magnifies your desktop or laptop screen to make reading easier and reduce eye strain and fatigue.

You may need a patch to use it effectively, depending upon the particulars of your system, but, all in all, it works as advertised, and technical support is great.

Highly recommended.

Current Price: $99.00 Introductory offer. 20% discount available to NTPCUG members.
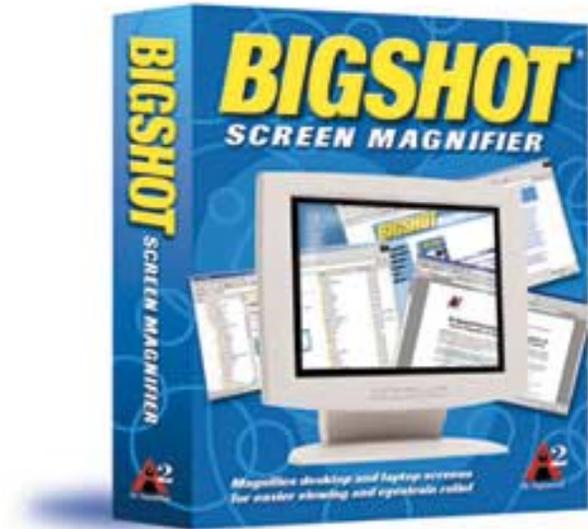
IN DEPTH REVIEW:

Alan Lummus, Product Review Coordinator, North Texas PC User Group

BigShot Screen Magnifier is an interesting new product, especially if you've ever suffered from eye strain or fatigue while working at your computer screen.

Happily, I've been blessed with good eyes and large screen monitors. Even my laptop has a 16" screen! Generally, I can work all day in front of my computer without difficulty. From time to time, though, I find myself rubbing my eyes or taking a walk, just to get away from the computer display And then there's the ache in my neck and shoulders that comes from sitting at a desk all day typingbut that is another story and I digress.

Like many of us, you've probably seen and/or tried the stick-on, clip-on, or magnetically held-on screen filters/magnifiers, but they offer only a small amount of magnification, if any. Worse, they are often hard to read through, totally defeating their intended purpose of making your life easier.

Enter "BigShot Screen Magnifier" from Ai Squared. BigShot is a software solution to those small icons and tiny type. It makes reading easier by increasing the apparent size of your computer's display, whether desktop or laptop, in 20 even increments from 105% to 200%.

Using what Ai Squared describes as "variable magnification technology", the product magnifies your choice of either your active window or the entire screen, and then enables you to zoom around by simply moving your mouse. The software scrolls your screen automatically to keep your work in view, even sensing drop-down menu selection, etc. Whether you are typing, using your mouse, or entering control codes, BigShot keeps your current work in focus, whether you're working in a spreadsheet, word processing program, database program, or virtually any windows based program.

My copy of the software arrived on CD-ROM, and after reading the installation instructions and complete User's Guide in about 10 minutes (Yes, I'm one of those anal-retentive personalities.), I completed a successful installation in about 5 minutes. During the installation, you are urged to create a "restore point" before proceeding with the installation, and you can do so without having to leave the installation program. You can also choose whether to put an icon on your desktop or load the software each time Windows loads. I chose to create a restore point and place an icon on my desktop.

As soon you load the program, a small "always on top" toolbar appears that provides easy access to all of BigShot's options, including zooming (intelligently

moving around) the full screen or active window, enable/disable zooming, magnification level, exit BigShot, more settings, and close the taskbar. You can easily move the toolbar to any location on your screen, making it easy to use, and the key combination ALT-HOME is a toggle hotkey to alternatively hide or show the BigShot toolbar.

I then loaded and ran several pieces of my personal productivity software, and all went well until I decided to see how the program worked with a different screen resolution setting. Now, I usually keep my monitors at 1024x768 as I do a lot of web design work. I can take most of my monitors up as high as 1600x1200 and as low as 640x480, and I often do when testing the appearance of different designs for different viewer monitor settings. Suffice it to say that I was most troubled to find that with BigShot loaded, any time I tried to access the Settings tab of my Display Properties, my system rebooted!

I uninstalled the BigShot software and my system returned to its perfect working order. Upon reinstalling the software, the problem occurred again and then disappeared once I performed another uninstall.

Perplexed, I called technical support for Ai Squared-dand I was astounded! While they didn't provide an 800 number for me to call, a real, live person actually answered my voice mail selection asking for technical assistance, and did so in about 30 seconds! I can't remember the last time I got through to a real, live, knowledgeable and truly helpful technical assistance person without running my blood pressure through the roof as I sat on hold listening to their dreaded elevator music!

Maurie Hill listened to my description of my system and problem, and immediately diagnosed an incompatibility of their software's installation routine and my NVidia video card operating under Windows XP. She quickly emailed me instructions and a simple program that removes a system driver their software installs during installation. It took me another 6 or 7 minutes to again install the BigShot

software and then run the driver deletion routine, and all was well! Now BigShot worked as it should and I could easily access and change my Display Settings. Maurie explained that the problem was common to systems running NVidia cards in systems running under either Windows XP and Windows 2000 operating systems. She said Ai Squared was working on a fix for the BigShot installation program, but hadn't gotten it completed yet.

From that point on, I kept the software installed for several days on my main production computer, using it with a variety of programs including: Microsoft's WORD, Excel, FrontPage, Outlook, Outlook Express, PowerPoint, Adobe's Acrobat and PhotoShop, Cool Edit Pro, Quark Express, WINZIP, WinFAX, Synchromagic, Nero Rom Burning Software, and a host of other software titles, and everything worked properly.

Now, most modern software titles have come a long way in the area of accessibility for sight handicapped, with many offering user selectable display settings of the working area. For example, WORD allows you to select up to 500% magnification of your working area. The problem with most of those "built-in" solutions is they don't have any effect on the toolbars and drop down menus that have become so crammed with tiny icons on higher resolution computer screens, and this is why BigShot can be such a big help even on the latest computers running the latest software.

For the small screens of most laptops and desktops under 17", I would consider BigShot Screen Magnifier a "must have" product for anyone who spends more than a hour or two a day staring at the screen.

BigShot Toolbar — Close / Exit BigShot / Settings / Active Window Zoom / Full Screen Zoom / Enable/Disable Zooming / Magnification Level
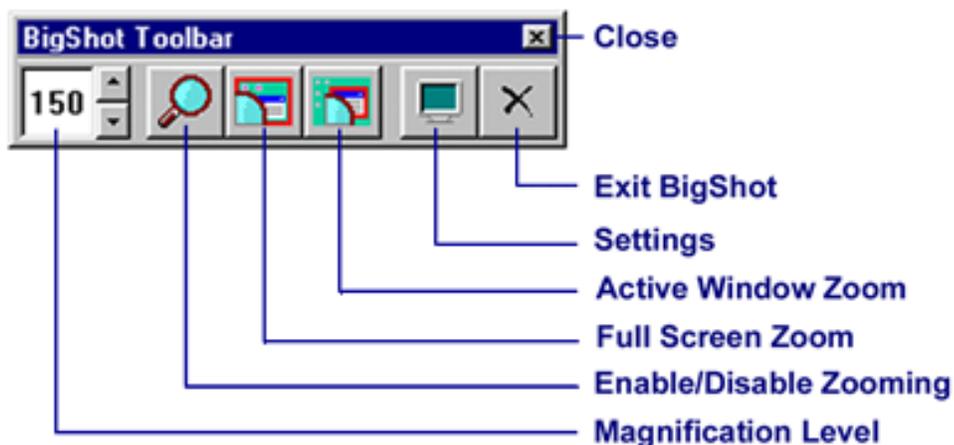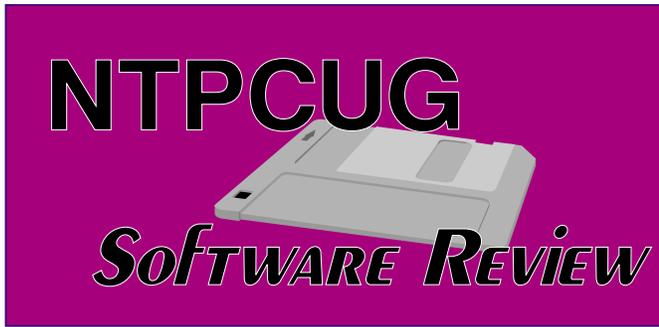
Turning to a review of the competition was quite easy: there simply isn't any! I couldn't find any other product that did exactly what BigShot did in magnifying the entire screen or active window. I did find a handy little utility, sold under the name "VisToolBox," that provides a small window of adjustable size that provides a magnified image of the area immediately pointed to by your mouse. It's a handy tool for graphic artists seeking a quick and easy way to view an image or portion of an image they want to examine at resolutions up to 500%, but it would be cumbersome indeed to use when you were typing or doing other date entry.

Now there are several much more expensive programs aimed at vision impaired folks that build upon BigShot's magnification functionality. Ai Squared, publishers of BigShot, also sell "ZoomText," which provides magnifications ranging up to 1600%, advanced edges smoothing, voice screen reading, etc., at prices ranging from $395-595, depending upon whether or not you want integrated screen zooming and voice page reading, and their website for those products is: www.aisquared.com. Other companies offer products that compete with ZoomText at comparable prices, but no one else seems to have developed a product that clearly is designed for most computer users rather than sight handicapped persons.

In summary, I really liked this product. At its retail price point of $99.00, BigShot Screen Magnifier is a real bargain if you value your eyesight, spend long hours in front of a computer screen, and don't want to invest in a 30" monitor!

If you suffer eye fatigue or strain, I highly recommend you check it out. With a free, fully functional 30-day trial version downloadable from the Internet, coupled with really great technical support, what have you got to lose besides your tired eyes?

NIT PICKING:

Upon first opening the software distribution box, I found the following message on a sealed envelope: "By opening this sealed package you are accepting the terms and conditions of the **Software License Agreement** stated in the product documentation. If you do not agree to the terms of this license, please return this product to the place of purchase for a full refund." Since the Software License Agreement and the software CD was located *inside* the sealed envelope, there was no way to know what you were agreeing to before you opened the sealed envelope! Maybe the publisher meant the warning only as a request that you actually review the agreement as soon as you open the package, so that you know what you are agreeing to; however, as I first read it, it seemed to me I'd need to return the package before opening it to get a refund Oh, well

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

The author of this review, Alan Lummus, is the SIG leader for three NTPCUG SIGs, which include Professional MIDI-Audio, FrontPage and e-Commerce. He is also a commercial webmaster, developing and managing several commercial websites and affiliate programs selling a wide range of products. Alan is also a member of and the audio archivist for the Dallas Symphony Chorus. Alan began using PDP 4s, 8s and 11s and IBM mainframes during his college education at the University of Texas at Austin in the 1960s, and he's been using mini and micro computers ever since.

Test System configurations included:

Primary Desktop: 1.6 GHz Athlon XP processor, 512 MB DRAM, 100 GB ATA100 hard drives, CD-R/RW, DVD, SCSI 30 GB DAT Tape Backup, 3 " Floppy Drive, 10/100 Ethernet Adapter, 56K Modem, NVidia TNT/Pro Video, Yamaha AC97 audio, Windows XP Professional (all updates and patches installed).

Secondary Desktop: 450 MHz Pentium II, 512 MB DRAM, 80 GB ATA66 hard drives, CD-ROM, CD-R/RW, 5 " Floppy, 3 " Floppy, 10/100 Ethernet,

56K Modem, Digital Audio Labs CardDeluxe audio, Windows 2000 Professional (all updates and patches installed). External SCSI CD-R/RW.

Tertiary Desktop: 1.8 GHz Athlon XP processor, 512 MB DRAM, 100 GB AT133 hard drives, CD-ROM, CD-R/RW, Yamaha AC97 audio, Windows 98 Second Edition (all updates and patches installed.)

Gateway Laptop: 2.0 GHz P4 processor, 512 MB DRAM, 80 GB ATA 100 hard drives, DVD/CD-R/RW combo drive

Wired and WiFi LAN/WAN: D-Link DI-614+ and ADSL.

XEROX Tektronix Phaser 860 printer, HP 1000-C printer.

HP 6350 Scanner with Automatic Document Feed

PUBLISHER/MANUFACTURER INFORMA-TION:

Copyright:

Ai Squared (a d/b/a for Algorithmic Implementations, Inc.)
P.O. Box 669
Manchester Center, VT 05255

Current Price:

MSLP: $99 Introductory Offer
Free 30 day trial available from:
 http://www.bigshotmagnifier.com
(800) 859-0270

10-20% discount available to members of NTPCUG (see Member's Benefits page for details)

Contact Information:

Sales: *sales@bigshotmagnifier.com*

Phone: 800-859-0270
Phone: 802-362-3612

Technical Support

support@bigshotmagnifier.com

802-362-3612

Website:

http://www.bigshotmagnifier.com

System Requirements:

Processor: Pentium or compatible processor with MMX (generally, 300 MHz or faster)

Windows XP, Windows 2000,Windows Millenium, Windows NT 4.0 and Windows 95/98

High Color (16 bit) or True Color (24 bit or 32 bit) display driver

Minimum of 32 MB of system RAM

Summer's Killing Heat Spells "Danger" for CPU's

It's no secret that heat is the biggest enemy faced by current high-speed PC's. Current CPU's must be equipped with heat-sinks and fans, and adequate case ventilation is also a must, especially with 1GHz+ CPU's in the box. It doesn't matter if the CPU is from Intel or AMD, good cooling is vital to the system's continued good health.

Probably the best discussion of this issue, and suggestions for appropriate system cooling can be found in the Support section of the AMD Web site at *http://www.amd.com*. You'll find a significant amount of material on heat-sinks and fans in a PDF document prepared for downloading—23794.PDF which addresses cooling issues for the AMD Athlon CPU's.

It's worth visiting the AMD site and downloading for reference. Tips there could save a lot of $$$ if the user's system isn't adequately ventilated and protected from the heat.

Reagan...

How Do You Get People to the NTPCUG Business Meeting?

Free Pizza & Drawings!

At the December, 2003 meeting, it was a combination of drawings and Free Pizza. All the photographs shown in this issue, with one or two exceptions, were taken at the December 2003 NTPCUG meeting at North Lake College.

Here's a small hint to photography buffs attempting to do similar shots at this location—it's really, really dark inside and I don't think any of the current digital   cameras would do very well without flash. These were shot on Fujifilm *Superia* color negative film rated at ISO 1600. It could be rated at ISO 3200.

The Photo at Left ...

The B&W photograph at left is obviously somewhat older than the color shots above. The gentleman on the far left is many-times NTPCUG President **Jim Hoisington.** The robust fellow on the right is the late **Dr. Neil Bennett,** one of the first NTPCUG Advanced Programming SIG leaders. I'm not sure who the kid in the middle is ... I'm pretty sure he isn't Steve Ballmer.

!!! Mark Your Calendar !!!

Future Newsletter Deadlines and
Meeting Dates

Please Note: The March meeting
will be on April 17 at Building "C"
on the North Lake Community Col-
lege in Irving, TX.

Our main meeting presentations [and
most SIGs] will be on the **third Sat-
urday** of each month. The **newsletter
deadline** each month will be **fifteen days before**
the main meeting. See the schedule below at right
for a listing of those dates.
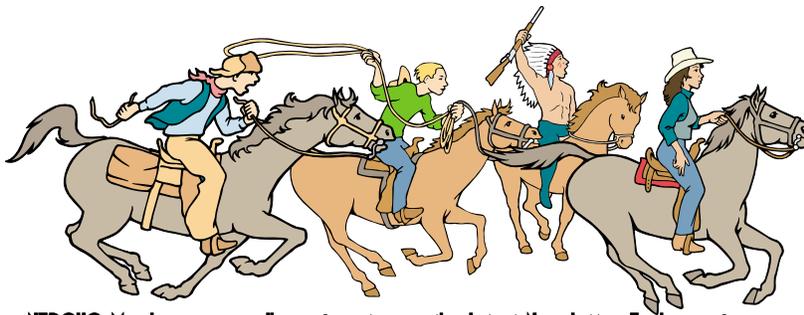
NTPCUG Members are really anxious to see the latest Newsletter Exchange Issues...

Newsletter Deadline	Meeting Date
April 2	April 17, 3rd Sat.
April 30	May 15, 3rd Sat.
June 4	June 19, 3rd Sat.

Off-Site SIGs

The North Texas Microsoft Developers SIGs Be-
ginning Visual Basic, Advanced Visual Basic, Ac-
cess, and Application Developers Issues SIGs) will
meet the **second** Saturday of each month at Mi-
crosoft Corporation's Building #1 located at 7000
State Highway 161 in Irving, Texas.

Up-to-date Information

Make it a habit to check our Web site at
http://www.ntpcug.org for any last minute
changes. Keep informed through our Web site.

The Perfect Gift!

Looking for a last-minute gift that's quick,
easy and keeps on giving for the entire year?
Take a tip from Doug Gorrie and consider giv-
ing a one-year membership in the North
Texas PC Users Group. This is an especially
appropriate gift for a friend or relative who is
new to computing and interested in learning
how to use and enjoy the PC.

Point out the Genealogy SIGs to people who
are collecting information about their fami-
lies, tell friends how much the Internet SIGs
can help in easing their way into really using
the Web, and the benefits of friendly, early
computer lessons in the Introduction to the
PC SIG.

More experienced users would appreciate
value of vendor presentations in making im-
portant software and hardware decisions dur-
ing the year.

If you have a friend or relative who con-
stantly "borrows" your copy of the latest
North Texas PC News, a gift membership
might be especially welcome.

Doug Gorrie

Every Member

NTPCUG

Get a New Member

The Joys of IT Work 2

Employment in the field of technology, and in particular, employment in computer support is filled with incredible joy. Where else can you experience the following?

All those wonderful people with problems and quick questions ensure that your place in society ranks right up there with emergency medical technicians, firefighters, and police officers. But they care about you, truly they do. So much that they will be certain to make every effort to see to it your ego doesn't skyrocket to the level of all those bosses.

Cutbacks? Okay. Let's get rid of some of the Computer People. We don't need four. Raises? For the Computer People? They're already too expensive. Why, we have four of them!

Another benefit of being in the legal field and having all those bosses is that they're so smart! They know all about everything, yes they do. And they'll help you out any time they think you could use a hand. If six minutes have gone by since you checked e-mail, you can be sure one of them will call you to say "The network is running really slow today. Please defrag the server."

Aaahhh, what a life...

WHY...

Why does the sun lighten our hair, but darken our skin?

Why can't women put on mascara with their mouth closed?

Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?

Why don't you ever see the headline "Psychic Wins Lottery"?

Why is "abbreviated" such a long word?

Why is a boxing ring square?

Why is it called lipstick if you can still move your lips?

Why is it that doctors call what they do "practice"?

Why is it that rain drops but snow falls?

Why is it that when you're driving and looking for an address, you turn down the volume on the radio?

Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavor, and dishwashing liquid made with real lemons?

Why is the man who invests all your money called a broker?

Why is the third hand on the watch called second hand?

Why is the time of day with the slowest traffic called rush hour?

Why is the word dictionary in the dictionary?

Why isn't there a special name for the tops of your feet?

Humor Line

Selected SIG Reports . . .

News and meeting notes of Special Interest Groups
*Further background information about a SIG is available from the SIG's
Web page at http://www.ntpcug.org*

Access

The *Microsoft Access SIG* meets with other developer SIGs on the *Second Saturday* of the month, at Microsoft's facility in Irving on the President George Bush Parkway (State Hwy. 161), just North of State Highway 114. If you exit Highway 114 going North, stay on the access road and you'll find the Microsoft entrance before you reach the first tollbooth entrance onto the President George Bush Parkway. The Access SIG website at *http://members.tripod.com/ntaccess/* has directions, a link to a map, and meeting times.

Larry Linson

Communications

Networking your home computers

The standards for networking changed when Microsoft introduced Windows XP. Microsoft dropped support for NetBEUI. NetBEUI can be used with Windows XP but no technical support is provided. Microsoft recommends TCP/IP protocol because it is more secure. TCP/IP was not included with Windows 95 but it can be added.

Windows XP professional and Windows XP Home look and operate similarly, but networking is not the same. There is a substantial difference in price and network functionally. If you need to connect to a business network or want a secure network, buy the Professional edition. If you are buying a laptop and connect in different environments, buy the Professional edition.

The Home and Professional edition both have the NTFS file system. The Windows XP Home edition sets poli-cies automatically while the Professional edition is defined by the administrator.

The Home edition has Simple File Sharing and a shared documents folder. Windows XP Professional has Simple File Sharing and Access Control List.

If you buy a Windows reference book make sure it specifies the version of XP refereed to.

In XP Home, to access shared files and printers, you must be an administrator.

In Windows XP Professional, there is full user management and Security Policies. In Windows XP Home, there is no security or privacy, as everyone has access to all shared data.

In Windows 95/98/Me , you can assign passwords to a shared disk or folder, so only people who know the password can gain access. One password per disk drive works in a home environment because passwords are not frequently changed.

Microsoft recommends their Home Networking disk for networking computers. Technical experts recommend adding XP to a network by letting XP configure itself to the network. Microsoft recommends connecting to the Internet with their ICS (Internet Connection Software) or a router (NAT).

To network with file and printer sharing, the built-in Internet Connection Firewall must be disabled. Use the same protocol for File and Printer sharing on all computers. Un-bind File and Printer sharing from protocols not used to network your computers. If you can

SIG Meeting Schedule

8:00
    Microsoft Networking
    Hardware Solutions
    Excel/Spreadsheets
  e-Commerce

9:00
    Communications
    Operating Systems
    PC Concepts
    Dallas Corel
    Microsoft FrontPage
    Microsoft Word

10:00
    Access – Beginning
    Alpha Five Data Base
    PC Concepts (Continued)
    Microsoft Word (Continued)
    Personal Digital Assistants
    Professional MIDI and Audio
    Rhino 3D

11:00
  Internet
    Web Design
    PC Concepts (Continued)
    WordPerfect for Windows
    Digital Photography
    Perl

12:00
    NTPCUG Business Meeting

12:30
    Investors
    DSDA
    Linux
    The Master Genealogist
    Family Tree Maker

1:30
    DSDA (Continued)
    The Master Genealogist
      (continued)
    Linux (Continued)

SIG meetings are listed by time for the April 17 meeting. Times may change, and members are advised to check the NTPCUG Web site for latest listings. Room locations will be posted on the day of the meeting.

The following SIGs are meeting at separate locations, and are not included in the schedule above. Check the SIG notes for time and location.

Meets on 4/10
    Access
    ASP.net
    Visual BASIC - Advanced
    Visual BASIC - Beginning

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use the Internet on all computers, your network should be complete.

Microsoft just released an article on File and Printer Sharing for 98/Me/NT/2000/XP. The article is available for download at *http://www.microsoft.com/down-loads/details.aspx?familyid=87c0a6db-aef8-4bef-925e-7ac9be791028&dis-playlang=en.* Another source of information is Practically Networked (*http://www.practicallynet-worked.com/sharing/troubleshoot/*).

This is a huge subject, so it is not possible to cover everything, but you will have an understanding of operating system differences. Microsoft, other tech organizations and individuals have written recent articles on networking, so there are still many tricks and traps to networking.

If you have additional questions bring them to the SIG.

Birl Smith

Dallas Corel

April Meeting
Bob Wright and **Marsha Drebelbis** will present the April SIG program. Selected demonstrations will be chosen from the new DRAW 12 features, in particular several shared in Rick Altman's recent seminar on DRAW 12. Held in Dallas in March, it was a magnet for the area's advanced users. From all indications to this point, the consensus is that 12 is a stable release, and enthusiasm for its features keep it in the forefront of graphic software choices.

March In Review
Martin Hellar showed a CD produced by Software Cinema. Software Cinema in partnership with Adobe is offering Free CDs to Users Groups each quarter that show in detail certain procedures in Photoshop 7. This was an opportunity for the Dallas Corel SIG to view

the contents and speakers of Software Cinema and to decide if we want to continue receiving these Videos.

Since a lot of the members already use Photoshop as well as Corel Photopaint and Draw, we decided to continue using one of our monthly meetings each quarter to talk about Photoshop. Some topics covered in the six movies on the presentation CD were Crop Techniques, Liquify Tool, Soft Focus Technique and The Healing Brush.

The four promotional CDs that were supplied with this months meeting have been included in our SIG library of CDs. They can be checked out with a $45.00 refundable deposit. The Titles are: Essential Post Production by Dave Montizambert, The Basics by Todd Morrison, Advanced Techniques II by Todd Morrison Retouching Advanced by Jane Conner-ziser

February In Review
Our speaker was **Marsha Drebelbis**, President and founder of a graphic design firm in Dallas called Litigation Graphics. The firm creates trial exhibits for litigation attorneys that help them win in court. As a Demonstrative Evidence Specialist, Ms. Drebelbis provides visual strategy consultation and exhibit design. Deliverables are posters, animations, 3-D models, and videos. The firm also provides multimedia presentations in the courtroom, using today's technology. We peeked into the Litigation Graphics studio at its new location via slide show.

Since CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 12 became available only days ago, naturally we were curious to try a few of its new features. First, after installing the upgrade, we noticed that one's own custom Workspace from DRAW 11 was accessed in 12 as the default Workspace. Very convenient. A new Workspace option is available for MS Word users, joining the Adobe Illustrator users option. Four CD's come in the box. CD number 4 with the application is an

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easy-to-use training movie that clearly demonstrates the new features and introduces the basics to new users.

In our SIG we used the new "Smart Drawing Tool", as it recognizes over 20 basic shapes, plus "perfect" shapes. Even using a mouse instead of a stylus (which would be handy), it was easy. The enhanced "Eyedropper Tool" fascinated us all when it picked up size, fill, outline, position and effects (such as drop shadow) features from another shape. When adjusting object rotation, the shadow follows it. The tool even transcends the application, allowing you to touch another object on the desktop to get a color. Impressive.

The enhanced ".PDF Publisher" inside DRAW now offers so many more options, you may think you're using Acrobat Distiller. Other new and enhanced features we look forward to exploring another time are "Dynamic Guides", "Export to Office Products", and the "Import Cursor".

Rick Altman, author of many instructional books on Corel graphics products and veteran CorelDRAW seminar producer, will include Dallas on his spring seminar tour. March 23 will focus on CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 12 and March 24 will go in-depth into MS PowerPoint. Now uniquely compatible with each other, these two popular apps are state-of-the-art graphics creation and presentation tools. To learn more and sign up for one or both days at Rick's always-popular seminar, visit *http://www.altman.com*.

January In Review
Gene Brown put on real show all about archiving graphics and data in general on CDs. Basically, Gene said all CDs are not created equal and they don't give equal results. He did quite a bit of research on the subject and

shared it with our SIG. How they are made, what makes one better than another, which are the best to use, and how do you know that you have the best CDs for your application. Well, there is some freeware that Gene showed that will tell you all you need to know about the CD you are planning to use. Gene's choice for all around best CD (for long life) is Mitsui's MAM-A Gold Standard CD-Rs with Gold reflective layer and patented organic Pythalocyanine dye. These are available on the web at *http://www.inkjetart.com/mitsui/index.html.*

Gene also told about his experience of having one of his CDs go bad. With a little research he found a recovery program which can save a lot of the data on a bad CD. This program "isobuster" is a freeware/shareware program and is available on the internet at where else *http://www.isobuster.com*?

December In Review
Since I was not able to make the December meeting, I asked **Cynthia** to not only make the presentation, but to also take charge and give me a summary of what happened. As usual she did everything up in high style. Her summary follows verbatim. Simply to good for me to mess with it.

"In December we discussed creating calendars in Corel with a VB plugin included in version 11, (also available for use with CD10 as a shareware down-

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load from *http://www.oberon-place.com/products/calendarwizard/index.htm* and as a script for versions 7-9 at *http://www.oberon-place.com/draw/drawscripts/index.htm*) We discussed the basic steps involved and Viola! just ten seconds till you have a custom-made calendar which can be further designed and decorated in Corel's limitless fashion-traditional calendars, magnetic calendars, weekly planners, scrolling calen-

dars, 3D calendars and in sizes ranging from the whole year on business cards to poster size wall hangings. A calendar is yet another irresistible opportunity to combine basic utilitarian function with creative expression limited only by the scope of your imagination. Don't settle for the generic insert-your-photo-here calendar when you have a tool like Corel waiting to serve your self-expression. It's kind of like taking the bull by the horns--make it your goal for 2004 to master the tool and make it serve you instead of frustrating you because of its vastness. Have a prosperous New Year!"

2004 Program Schedule

January   Gene Brown

February   Marsha Drebelbis

March   Martin Hellar

April   Marsha Drebelbis & Bob Wright

MayMarsha Drebelbis & Bob Wright

For Support on all Corel Products, access Support at Corel at *http://www.corel.com/support/ftpsite*

For past program information Access Dallas Corel's full Web site and archives at *http://www.ntpcug.org/sigs/corel/new/meet.htm*.

KnockOut 2.0 Now Available at: . Foster D. Coburn III prebuilt catalogs for all versions of CorelDraw clipart CDs, going back to version 6, and also CGM (Corel Gallery Magic library of 200,000 images). They are available for you to download FREE via *http://www.unleash.com/articles/romcat.*

Martin Hellar

Perl SIG
    Larry Martin .... (972)-783-4548
    larry.martin@acm.org
    Gil Brand............. (214)-341-7182
    gb1@ntpcug.org

Personal Digital Assistants
    Birl Smith .... (214) 616-6458 w
    birl.smith@ntpcug.org
    Craig Winder....... (469)-667-6626 w
    c.winder@ntpcug.org
    David Martin
    davidm@attbi.com

Rhino 3D
    Bob Campbell ..... (817) 540-1273
    bob@campbelldesigns.com

Visual Basic .NET — Beginning
    Tuc Goodwin ...... (972) 345-9934
    tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

Visual Basic .NET — Advanced
    Stephen Johnson (214) 532-9788
    stephen@rsj-services.com

Web Design - Programming
    Steve Shanafeldt (972) 523-4846
    steve@developercourses.com

Web Design
    Hollis Hutchinson (214) 328-2251
    TutorsOnTap@aol.com
    John McNeil,
    john.mcneil@ntpcug.org

WordPerfect / Windows
    Cindy Adams ...... (817) 481-1300 wM
    cadams11@earthlink.net
    Diane Bentley ..... (972) 724-0855 w&h
    diane.bently@ntpcug.org

Dallas Software Developers Assn.

We will not have an April Meeting at Microsoft. Instead, we will have a meeting at the North Lake College on April 17th, starting at 12:30.

We need all members to be present, and visitors are welcome. We will be discussing the direction that we want to take in the immediate future, as we have lost our sponsor at Microsoft.

We will also have a "tips and help" session. Bring your computer and let's get started with ASP.NET programming.

Minutes of DSDA Meeting
Thursday, March 18, 2004
Microsoft Irving

Present

Sharon Bell, J.E. Edwards, Jeff Frauenheim, Martin Hellar, Tom Perkins, Tom Sparks, Bob Webber, Art Yasui

DSDA Business

IMPORTANT COREL ADDRESSES & PHONE NUMBERS

**Corel Corporation
1600 Carling Avenue,
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1Z 8R7**

❖Technical Support Representatives...................... 888-267-3548

❖G1 Release, CD-Rom only(latest "fixes" and patches for Corel products)
    800-772-6735

❖Customer Service Representatives
    800-772-6735

❖IVAN (Interactive Voice Answering Network)...................... 613-728-1990

❖24 Hour Automated Fax System
    .... 613-728-0826 Ext.3080

❖Technical Support hours are 4AM to 8PM (EST) excluding holidays

❖To obtain our catalogue please request document #2000

Bob Webber opened the meeting. He suggested we do some meeting planning. **Martin Hellar** mentioned that we can use the Saturday sessions as 'ask the experts' day. He suggested we think about migrating the Web site to ASP.NET. We can use the experts within DSDA and NTPCUG to help us learn.

Martin and Bob remarked we need to get greater participation at the Saturday meetings. This Saturday, we'll get MDSE answers. Other topics of interest to members can be addressed. We start at 12:30 pm and can go as late as 4:30 if needed.

On another topic, the *DSDA.org* Web site competes with several others (one in the U.K.). We need to figure ways to draw the attention of the search engines. Bob mentioned a site, *http://bookmatestore.com*, that suggests improvements. Everyone noted their favorite search engines, but **Tom Sparks** impressed everyone by mentioning Alta Vista.

Bob talked about the issues surrounding placing a database on our Web site that might be exposed to the public.

The calendar up there now is an .mdb file that **Tom Perkins** updates periodically. Martin also can update it. We need to find an easier way to access the database through the Web site. Another issue is who can have access to the database.

Martin also formats the minutes before publishing them to our Web site. He suggests that those writing the minutes contribute them in HTML format to avoid reformatting Word documents in Adobe Pagemill. The preferred format is that of the February 19, 2004 minutes.

Members Speak

J.E. Edwards spoke about his work. He manages several large ongoing systems for Citibank's factoring and leasing operations.

There are 1,100 persons in his area. His systems account for multi-million dol-

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lar revenue streams. One system manages the leasing of 30,000 vehicles, scheduled to grow to 50,000 vehicles this year.

J.E. has an interest in setting up a wireless home network and is investigating Microsoft's new virtual machine software.

Tom Perkins is an independent contractor and college educator who writes in VB for one large client. Another client he is involved with monitors kidney diseases. He is working on some Web applications. His interest is in usability – easy to use packages.

Today, Tom noted, the consultancy market is still somewhat tight. He frequently uses VBA in Access, CSS and ASP, He teaches at UNT. Tom relies on his reputation –word of mouth – to obtain new clients and work. He likes the challenge of new projects.

Presentation

Tom Perkins presented our topic for this meeting on Taglines. In a few words, the site has to tell what it is about and why people should care – all in about 10 to 15 seconds. The taglines usually appear to the right or below the Site ID.

An example Tom mentioned was "Books you never thought you'd find!" Bad taglines are vague. They should be only 6 to 8 words long. An example is "Google: searching 4,567,789,654 pages."

A suggested methodology to create a good tagline is to poll similar sites. Notice what is good about the taglines. Rewrite your tagline to differentiate your Web site from other similar sites. Tom suggested a tagline for DSDA.org: "Improving software development skills through member involvement."

Tom will post his presentation to his folder at DSDA.org and include references for members. One particular reference Tom likes is Neilson's site at *http://www.useit.com.* Another is a book, "Don't Make Me Think", New Riders.

Tom presented a second, related topic: "How Users Read on the Web". Tom's opening remark was, "They don't. Eighty percent scan." As a result, it is wise to use scannable text, such as hyperlinks, typeface variations and color.

Create meaningful subheadings and bulleted lists. Include only one idea per paragraph. Start with the conclusion, such as "Frames – Just Say No!" Then, add more information or links to more information.

Users start at the tip of the pyramid and work their way into more detail if they wish. The rule of navigation is to never let the user get more than 3 clicks away.

Good Web pages establish credibility. They use high quality graphics and expose good writing with outbound links.

Don't use promotional language because it holds up the user. The user tends to stop and mentally argue against the hyperbole. That's a distraction.

References include Jacob Nielson's Alertbox column at *http://useit.com,* several works by Isaacs and Walendowski's series, "Designing From Both Sides of the Screen." Other references include "Don't Make Me Think", "Designing Web Usability", Kevin Mullet and Darrell Sano's "Designing Visual Interfaces" and Alan Cooper's "The Inmates are Running the System".

The members thanked Tom for his excellent presentations. **Sharon Bell** started a good debate by asking which
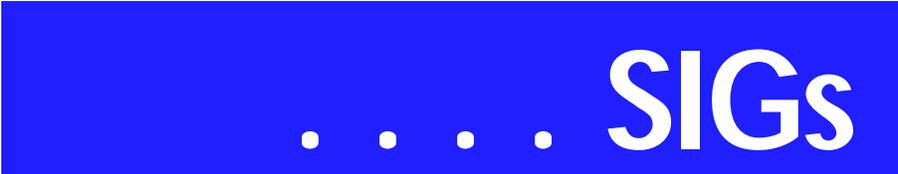
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is better to migrate to from Windows 98, Windows 2000 Professional or XP?

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Frauenheim
March 20, 2004

DSDA Meeting Minutes
February 19, 2004
Microsoft Irving

Present

Sharon Bell, J.E. Edwards, Jeff Frauenheim, Rick King, Tom Perkins, Vern Six, Bob Webber, Art Yasui

Web Site Discussion

Bob Webber opened the meeting with a review of attractions and benefits of joining DSDA for new members. These Benefits can be viewed in his folder on the DSDA Web site (FTP).

Bob asked for feedback on what information members would want posted on a member database. Bob suggested we each make up tag lines and circulate them among the membership.

Thanks to Vern's suggestion, Tom and J.E. volunteered to give 5-minute talks (or less) about themselves at the next Thursday meeting, March 18th, at Microsoft.

J.E. asked whether we want the 501(c) to appear on the site.
Vern volunteered to mention DSDA or put out information at his seminar in March. He anticipates 250 attendees.

J.E suggested we present our work on the Web site at our meetings to expand input among other members. Tom reminded members that a great deal of work has gone into the site already, notably Martin's contributions.

We discussed design elements of the DSDA Web site. Tom mentioned that people scan Web pages – they don't read them in detail. The text we use should be succinct.

We discussed whether *DSDA.org* logo should be reduced in size and be accompanied by "Dallas Software Developers Association". DSDA.org, not DSDA, is our legal reserved name due to restrictions by an owner of a similarly named organization registered with the state of Texas.

Tom presented a graphical idea, as a suggestion, for a logo with the tag line "Improving software development skills through member participation." He mentioned that "Don't make me think" is a good book about what makes a Web site work.

Discussed Future Organization Activities

Tom added we might pursue pro bono work as a group. It has the added benefit of enhancing each participating member's credentials.

Vern thought DSDA could be identified with accomplishing good works in a tag line such as improving the professional lives of software developers. We can showcase members' skill sets with examples such as J.E's Web site effort for his high school class.

Vern thought doing something good is more important than positioning DSDA as a group of gurus. We might not want to set ourselves up as experts but as a group willing to lend a hand.

Tom said he learns best by teaching. Tom volunteered to teach an MSDE class or a specific topic such as objects. He reinforced Vern's remarks by observing that experience can be developed with pro bono work, some of which led him to greater legitimacy and valuable contracts.

Rick suggested 'interaction' as a substitute for 'participation' in the suggested tag line. Rick thought we might benefit from speakers, among those our own members, who would present at our meetings. Vern mentioned that he is interested in coming to find out who is doing what. He wishes to benefit organizations and to network. Learning 'what are you doing' is a major consideration in his attendance.

Bob closed the meeting at 8:35.

After Meeting Discussion

In a post-meeting conversation, **John Soulis** provided a deft technique for creating connection objects: write out the connection line in notebook text, and invoke a wizard by renaming the .txt file as a .udl file. Alternatively, open the .udl file properties to specify the connection parameters.

Jeff Frauenheim

Digital Photography

In April, we return to digital still photography. I intend to show a product from nik Multimedia called Color Efex Pro which is a collection of Photoshop compatible plug-in filters. My review of this product did not make the product reviews last month. Hopefully it will be available in the reviews area of the NTPCUG web site this month.

The 8 megapixel price barrier has recently been broken with the release of quite a few new cameras. In the running are the Canon C-8080 with 8 MP and 5x optical zoom ($999.00), the Canon Powershot Pro 1 with 8 MP and 7X series L optical zoom lens ($999.00), the Nikon Coolpix 8700 with 8 MP and 8x optical zoom ($999.00), the Sony DSC-F828 Cyber-Shot with 8 MP and 7X optical zoom ($999.00) and the Minolta DiMage A2 with 8 MP and 7x optical zoom ($1099).

Given the pricing, all of these are obviously taking aim at the previously released Canon EOS Rebel Digital with 5 MP. The Rebel is of course a DSLR with interchangeable lenses, whereas the new 8 MP cameras have fixed

lenses. The new cameras are already putting pricing pressures on older cameras with fewer megapixels. Technology marches on. If any of you have one of the new 8 MP cameras, please bring it to the meeting and show it to us.

Is 8 megapixels really that much better? Let's look at the numbers and compare the 8 MP Canon Pro 1 to the 5 MP S50 I reviewed a few months before.

The spec sheets show the largest dimension for the Pro 1 to be 3264 pixels x 2448 pixels. The S50's largest image is 2592 pixels by 1944 pixels.

An image printed at 8x10 inches from the Pro 1 camera could be printed at 306 ppi with no resampling. The exact same image, shot with the s50, would print at 8x10 inches at 243 ppi. Of course that aspect ratio of 8x10 doesn't fit either bitmap, so a slight strip of about 140 pixels from one end would be cropped. Anyway that's roughly a 20% increase in resolution.

With the prints side by side, most people would not notice the difference, but I dare say the discriminating photographer would. Going bigger would show the difference even more. The image from the Pro 1 would print at 11x14 inches at 222 ppi - quite acceptable performance.

Epson has released a new wide format printer for photographers. The Stylus Pro 4000 prints up to 17 inches wide. The standard size for this printer is 17x22 inches. That's perfect for borderless 16x20 inch prints. The list price is said to be $1799.00. It uses the same Ultrachrome inks as the 2200, with the addition that it has an eighth ink holder so that either Photo Black or Matte Black is available immediately by selecting from the driver. No need to switch cartridges.

I also want to mention the Epson Stylus Photo R200 (List $99.00), R300 (list $179.00) and R300M(list $229.00) which have built in support for printing directly on the surface of CD and DVD discs.

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Epson has upped the ante again with the Perfection 4870 Pro flat bed scanner (List $599.00). With up to 4800x 9600 dpi resolution, Digital ICE and a built in transparency unit capable of scanning sizes up to 6 x 9 inches, this is probably one of the most capable flat bed scanners around. Epson claims a 3.8 DMAX. Oh well, my Perfection 3200 is now obsolete.

My e-mail address is *jdunn@Images-ByJamesDunn.com*. As always, please put NTPCUG on the subject line so I don't delete your e-mail thinking it is SPAM.

James Dunn

e-Commerce

At our April, 2004 regular meeting on the 3rd Saturday, we will continue our review of how each of your e-commerce activities are going, and we'll review the major changes in search engines and directories that have shaken up Internet marketing area of late.

Our Third Saturday meeting begins promptly at 8:00 am. Be sure to check at the sign in desk for the exact room location.

Alan Lummus

Excel

This month's topic is Excel Pivot Tables (Prior to Excel 97 they were called Crosstab Tables that can be **permanently** converted to Pivot Tables in Excel 97). These tables provide a way of summarizing stored data in a meaningful way. The stored data is any information found in an Excel list, an external database, or multiple Excel worksheets organized in columns and rows with labels at the top of each column. The stored data can also be another Pivot Table report.

In Excel terms, the stored data columns are *fields* with the identifying name for the field at the top of the column. The field is considered a category of data, such as First Name, Last Name, or Supervisor. Below the field names each entry is called an *item*. An item is considered a subcategory of data, such as James, John, or Mary in the First Name field. The calculations performed with the stored data are called *summary functions* such as sum, count, average, minimum, and maximum.

The *fields* from the stored data are used two ways in the pivot table. The first way is as groupings that determine the display of the *items*. The groupings are *row field, column field,* and *page field.* The *row field* is the broad breakdown of the data that is displayed down the side of the pivot table. The *column field* is the specific breakdown of the data that is displayed across the rows of the pivot table. The *page field* is a filtering of the displayed data so only specific items are displayed. The second way to use the *fields, data field,* is to determine what *items* display in summary form.

To insure the accuracy of the pivot table, reports check the stored data. Each column should have a unique name and the identical formatting. When working with dates use a date format that gives the desired results. Check for blank entries (Note: a blank entry can be identified in more than one way in code leading to unexpected result in the pivot table report). When working with multiple lists or tables, make sure the field names are identical. In a column with repeating entries, spell each entry the same (Example: In a department column make sure it is accounting all the time not acct or actng or any other variation). There are other cautions but this should give you the general idea.

Now that you have good data, it is time to run the PivotTable Wizard. The wizard goes through four steps to create the report. Step one (1) - choose the

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source type of the data to be used (Excel list or database, external data source, multiple consolidation ranges, or another pivot table). Step two (2) - choose the location of the data. Step three (3) - create the layout of the pivot table by dragging the desired *field* name into the desired report area (*row field, column field, page field, or data field*). Step four (4) - the final step, specify where you want the pivot table results to go. In step four you can choose to clear the copy of the source data used to create the report when it is saved to minimize disk storage space, a handy option when dealing with large amounts of data.

Once the chart is created, you can customize the report many ways, for example; the fields that make up the report can be deleted or rearranged and new fields can be added; the way data is summarized can be changed; the way subtotals and totals display can be changed; and the formatting of the report can be changed. To help visualize the workings of Excel Pivot Tables use the spreadsheet SampleSalespersonReports.xls located at web address http://mail.ntpcug.org/sigs/excel.

Source of this information is Microsoft's web site and Excel user's manual. Join us as we discuss this topic further.

Jose Rivero

Internet

What are your favorite browser shortcuts?

At the April meeting, we'll take a look at Internet Explorer keyboard shortcuts, and ways to organize your Favorites.

At the March meeting, we discussed Microsoft's model of Internet security zones and how we can use them to simplify web browsing while providing additional security. We are grateful that

Bob Webber allowed us to use his laptop for the demonstrations.

Here are the topics planned for the next few months:

May: instant messaging - how to set it up, tools to make it easier to communicate with people using different IM services

June: USENET, user communities, blogging, newsfeeds, finding the news you are interested in.

July: How to set up a personal web site.

Glynn Brooks

Investors

The next meeting is Saturday, April 17, 2004. Please double check on the day of the meeting for the room location for that specific day.

I am still looking for an assistant SIG leader.

There is not a specific topic for this meeting. It will be an open forum - bring your ideas and discuss them with everyone.

The Options Industry Council will have two seminars in the Dallas area: On May 5th in Dallas -- the Intermediate options seminar. It is suggested

that you have taken the introductory course or the online course before attending this seminar, available at **http://www.888options.com**.

On May 6th in Dallas -- the Market Directions seminar

You register for these seminars at **http://www.888options.com**.

Kathryn (Kathy) Kirby

Linux

In April, we will have a Q&A session.

If your Linux distro is giving you problems, bring your processor and we will help you debug it. You don't need to bring your monitor, keyboard, mouse, etc.

Gil Brand
John McNeil

Microsoft FrontPage

At our April, 2004, regular 3rd Saturday meeting, we will continue exploring the use of webpage templates and other automations techniques that can assist in creating and maintaining your websites.

Our meeting time is 9:00 am, and the SIG immediately follows the e-commerce SIG at 8. Check at the sign in desk for exact room location.

Whether you are a novice or an experienced user of FrontPage, come and share your experience, questions and answers as we explore both the capabilities and limitations of this software, both for personal and commercial websites.

Alan Lummus

Microsoft Networking

In April, we will have a Q&A session.

If you have any specific topics for which you would like to see a demo or presentation, send me a note.

Gil Brand

Microsoft Word

Welcome to the Word SIG — please join us each month for a terrific meeting!

MEETING TOPICS ... *are tentative and may change*

FOUNDATION - 9-10 am

APRIL — Folders and Document Properties
I continually see others' documents stored in one lonnnng *(yes, really long)* list. How do you folks find things? We're going to create folders and sub-folders, and then move documents into them. It's time to get things organized! Document Properties provides lots of information that just might be of help to you, and we're going to take a look at it.

MAY — Navigating
Yes, we all know how to move throughout our documents. The scroll bars and Browse were covered in the January meeting. But there's more! This meeting we'll take a look at some keyboard shortcuts, Go To, Go Back, and Find/Replace.

JUNE — Selection Solutions
I know ... dragging the mouse to highlight text is comfortable and non-stressful. Whether your preference is the mouse or the keyboard, there are several more ways to select text. Be assured that you will be anxious to get home to try them!

ADVANCED - 10-11 am

APRIL — Columns
Placing text in columns makes it easier to read, especially when the document *(or item)* is long. You can stop and restart columns as often as you need, *'breaking'* them wherever you prefer. You can even add a vertical line to separate the columns. Did you know you are already using columns?

MAY — Templates - Part 1
Most of us have opened an existing document, deleted the information we didn't want, added new information, then saved it as a new document. By doing this, we didn't have to set up everything in the document each time we used it. When you use a template to achieve this result, you won't have to waste your time deleting the unwanted information; and, when you save it, it is automatically saved as a new document, thus eliminating the chance of overwriting the original document.

JUNE — Templates - Part 2
Last meeting we edited the Normal.dot template. Now we will create one of our own. It is soooo easy. *(Don't you just hate it when someone says that?)*

Our newsletter, *The Word*, can now be accessed from here. Follow the links at the end of this Web page.

D R A G O N   N A T U R A L L Y
S P E A K I N G
If you would like to be part of an e-mail group to share information and experiences in learning and using Nat-Speak *(as the Pros call it)*, let me know (diane.bentley@ntpcug.org)!!

W O W!   I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Preventing Text from Separating

You know you shouldn't allow certain words to be separated at the end of a line, but how do you prevent it?

- ❖ To prevent two words from separating, press: Ctrl+Shift+space ... in place of a regular space

- ❖ To prevent a hyphenated word or number from separating at the hyphen, press: Ctrl+Shift+hyphen ... in place of a regular hyphen

If you have already typed the text with the regular space and/or hyphen, delete the existing one and replace it with the correct one.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

Got a problem with Word? Describe the problem to me in an e-mail. I will do my best to provide a satisfactory answer. I will also post the question and answer on this Web page, as well as in the next newsletter so others may benefit from the information.

WHAT'S NEW AT MICROSOFT?

Microsoft-Sponsored Technology Competitions Let Developers Showcase their Innovation

REDMOND, Wash., March 22, 2004 -- Some day, drowsy motorists may hear a voice from their car's dashboard suggesting they stop for a cup of coffee.

If so, that technological innovation might be the product of students participating in "Windows ChallengE," a competition sponsored by Microsoft and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. (IEEE) Computer Society that seeks to empower students to work together on projects that foster excellence in computer science and computer engineering. This year's competition asked student participants to address the theme of "Making the World a Safer Place" using Microsoft Windows CE .NET, an embedded operating system designed for compact computing devices.

Professor **Alan Clements**, a member of the IEEE Computer Society's board of governors, says he chose the theme of "Making the World a Better Place" to reinforce the message that computer applications can be powerful instruments for positive change. For a team of four students at California State Polytechnic University, that theme translated into working on a problem all too familiar to Californians: the hazard of motorists falling asleep behind the wheel. The team devised a system in which a dashboard-mounted webcam scans a driver's eyes for signs of "extended blinks," an indication that a motorist is becoming sleepy. When the driver's eye-flutter reaches a potentially dangerous threshold, an embedded software

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application built on Windows CE .NET kicks in, activating a warning to the driver.

The Cal Poly students were among 29 teams competing in this year's "Windows ChallengE" (the unconventional spelling is correct). Entries were due Dec. 1, 2003, and winners of Windows ChallengE were announced Sunday. "Windows ChallengE" entrants in turn are among hundreds of student and professional developers from around the world who compete for the opportunity to learn, gain recognition, win cash prizes and get a chance to market their products in a wide range of software-development competitions sponsored by Microsoft. Others include:

Imagine Cup, a technology contest that provides an outlet for students to explore their technological and artistic interests

You Can Make a Difference, a scholarship program that invites high school students to create software projects that benefits charitable organizations

The Mobile2Market Application Contest for logo-certified applications that can be deployed on Windows Mobile-based Pocket PCs and Smartphones

The joint *Microsoft and Vodafone* contest, showcasing applications that converge the PC and mobile experiences

The *BizTalk Server 2004* developer competition, which recognizes programming excellence using BizTalk Server 2004 and Visual Studio .NET

The *Tablet PC "Does Your Application Think in Ink?"* contest, officially launching today, which seeks applications that utilize the digital ink capabilities of the Tablet PC.

To help spur innovation across the development industry, Microsoft's competitions offer individual developers and independent software

vendors (ISVs)a chance at recognition for their technical skills and credentials, as well as a shot at cash prizes that can reach more than $165,000. For instance, the grand prize winner of the "Does Your Application Think in Ink" contest will win $100,000.

Diane Bentley

Operating Systems SIG

It's security time this month at the Operating Systems SIG. If our users are as cranked up as I am about these issues, then Microsoft may have a (partial) answer for all us procrastinators in the form of an update CD for Win 98 and later. It's available from MS free of charge and users can order the CD at:

http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect/cd/order.asp

You will see a screen with the text below and an offer to receive two MS newsletters. Two years ago I would have blown the newsletter offer off. Now is different and I actually want the notification(s) that MS has found some more holes allowing problems and possible penetration of my machines.

"Order the Windows Security Update CD

Updated Date: March 23, 2004

The Windows Security Update CD will be shipped to you free of charge. This CD includes Microsoft critical updates released through October 2003 and information to help you protect your PC.

In addition, you will also receive a **free antivirus and firewall trial software CD**.

This CD is only available for Windows XP, Windows Me, Windows 2000, Windows 98, and Windows 98 Second Edition (SE)."

Note the wording above—these are updates through October 2003, and are not the absolute most current security updates. It's a good idea to subscribed to the MS security newsletters as well as order the CD.

Another Security Concern

This month's newsletter cover reflects another security concern—this time dealing with hardware and its vulnerability to destruction via lightning strikes. Two major sources of electrical capital punishment to the innocent PC are the electrical lines ('mains' as the British say) and the incoming telephone lines. Both can be protected from harm. Some upper-end surge protectors do protect both sources and should used.

The problem with surge protectors is one of quality and subsequent price. A very simple and cheap surge protector may contain one or two MOV's (Metal Oxide Varistor) and nothing else. Very high-end surge protectors will contain several more components such as inductors and capacitors that are carefully balanced to smooth out the voltage spike and eliminate "noise" coming from the electrical lines.

Age of the surge protector is another variable, especially with simple, cheap units. MOV's can deteriorate with each high voltage spike the unit experiences over time. Notice here I didn't say "lightning strikes." There are many, many sources of high voltage spikes on typical home electrical circuits in addition to lightning spikes, all of which may contribute to MOV deterioration. I typically replace simple surge protectors at five-year intervals.

UPS (un-interruptible power sources) usually contain sophisticated circuitry that eliminates need for such frequent replacement. If you have one, consult your user documents for better information concerning your unit(s).

Reagan Andrews
& Chuck Stark

Perl Programming

This month the Perl SIG will introduce 'Perl Debugging' resources, tips and techniques.

Larry Martin

Professional MIDI and Audio

At our April, 2004, regular 3rd Saturday meeting, we will review the results of your various digitization projects as begun at our workshop of April 3rd. We will also explore the extensive range of computer sound cards available today, both internal and external, especially those that offer really good analog to digital conversion capabilities.

In May, we're planning to begin looking at the distribution of audio throughout your home and/or office via your computer network, including interfacing your network with your home stereo and home theatre systems.

FLASH! -- The date for our workshop has changed to Saturday, April 3, 2004, in order to accommodate more folks who wanted to attend. All other information remains the same!

The all-day workshop on Saturday, April 3rd, will allow us sufficient time to complete the entire process of digitizing your analog music source such as an LP or cassette tape, recording it on a computer hard drive, editing the recording (using both Adobe's "Audition" and Diamond Cut's DC FIVE software products) to remove extraneous noise, to enhance the recording according to various musical tastes, and to create "tracks" for recording onto a digital media such as CD or DVD. Then, we will actually recording the finished product to CD or DVD playable on

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home audio and video players, using Ahead's "Nero Rom Burner", GEAR's "Pro Mastering Edition", and Roxio's "Easy CD Creator Deluxe". For further details on the workshop, visit: *http://www.bookmatestore.com/midi-audio.htm*.

Our meeting time is now 10:00 am and will immediately follow the E-commerce and FrontPage SIGs. Come and share your experience, questions and answers about all things audio & MIDI on computer, from recording to editing to composing, arranging and playing music on your system.

J. Alan Lummus

Quicken

The 8-9 am meeting time has not proved successful so for the next few months we will be meeting with the Investor SIG at 12:30.

Phil Faulkner

WordPerfect

WordPerfect SIG Meeting Topics

April — WP11 — Save & Open Dialog Boxes
May — WP11 — Folders & Properties
June — WP11 — Navigating

These topics are tentative and may change at any time.

Our newsletter, *In a WordPerfect Minute...,* can now be accessed from here. Follow the links at the end of this Web page.

A P R I L
If you're like me, I seldom poke around in the Open and Save dialog boxes. I just name my document, click OK, and I'm

outta there. **Who has time to look through all the options? We'll take you through all of them, giving you an opportunity to determine which ones will help you in your work. You may discover a feature for which you've been wishing!**

M A Y
Are all your documents stored together ... in a long list? Do you waste a lot of time looking for a specific document in that long list? If so, it's time you straightened up and organized your documents into folders. Once that's done, we'll take a look at the Properties dialog to see all the goodies that are there.

J U N E
Whether from one word to the next, or jumping to another part of the documnt, we're ready to show you some terrific ways to move/navigate through your document. You may be surprised where we go!

D R A G O N   N A T U R A L L Y S P E A K I N G
If you would like to be part of an e-mail group to share information and experiences in learning and using NatSpeak *(as the Pros call it),* let me know at *diane.bentley@ntpcug.org*.

W O W ! I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Print Reveal Codes

If you've used Reveal Codes to help identify and resolve strange behavior in a document, you may have thought that it would be helpful if you could see a printout of them. I have. WP11 provides that option from the Print dialog box. Under the *Advanced* **tab, mark:** *Print Reveal Codes*. **The bolded and**

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shaded codes are interspersed within the text ... exactly as they appear in the Reveal Codes window.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

Got a problem with WordPerfect? Describe the problem in an E-mail. We will do our best to provide a satisfactory answer. The question and answer will also be posted on this web page, as well as in the next newsletter for the benefit of others who might have the same problem.

WHAT'S NEW WITH WORDPER-FECT?

WordPerfect 11 – Comparison of Each Version

Available at WordPerfect's Web site is an interesting comparison of the applications included with the different versions: Standard, Education, Professional and WordPerfect Family Pack 5.

Standard is the version most in our group use. WordPerfect Family Pack 5, however, has some additional applications you may find helpful. Available only in WordPerfect Family Pack 5 are:

❖ *Corel Photobook* – **Easy photo-editing**

❖ *McAfee Virus Scan Home Edition 7.0* – **Protection from viruses and personal firewall**

❖ *iClean* – **Protect your privacy online and eliminate annoying popup windows**

❖ *Genealogy.com Family Tree Maker 10* – **Genealogy**

❖ *Encyclopedia Britannica 2003 Ready Reference* – **Online encyclopedia**

❖ *Task Manager* – **Projectoriented task management tool**

Read the entire comparison at *http://www.corel.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=Corel2/Products/Content&pid=1047022702409&cid=10470 2720037*-**or- go to** *http://www.wordperfect.com*. **Under** *Special Offer*, **the fourth paragraph has a link:** *Which edition of WordPerfect is the right one for you? The Product Comparison* **is at** *http://www.corel.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=Corel2/Products/Content&pid=1047022702409&cid=10470 2720037*

Cindy Adams

North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.

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Please visit our Web Page at: *http://www.ntpcug.org*

The North Texas PC Users Group, Inc., is a non-profit, independent group, not associated with any corporation. Membership is open to owners and others interested in exchanging ideas, information, hardware, predictions, and other items related to personal and compatible computers. To join the Group, complete the application blank found on the NTPCUG Web site, *http://www.ntpcug.org,* and send with $30 membership dues to the Membership Director — address shown below. Subscription to the newsletter is included with each membership.

The Group meets once each month, usually on the third Saturday. See inside front cover for date, time and place of the next North Texas PC Users Group meeting.

NTPCUG Officers
And Volunteers
You Should Know
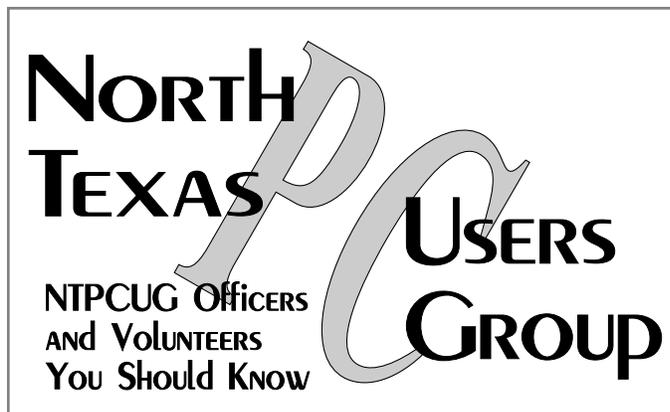
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E-mail Password problems?
    Call Doug Gorrie at............. (972) 618-8002

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Payment of dues, address changes, and inquiries about membership should be directed to:

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