



www.ntpcug.org

North Texas PC News

2ND SATURDAY
Microsoft Las Colinas
7000 Highway 161
Irving, Texas

3RD SATURDAY
King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway
Dallas, Texas

December 2007

VOLUME 26 • NUMBER 12



Chris Koenig of Microsoft presenting their new products for the Web designers and programmers

—
Expression Studio and Silverlight

Elections

NTPCUG Board Elections Occur each January

Don't forget that we are ramping up for our 2008 elections. When you look at the members our current Board of Directors (<http://www.ntpcug.org/contacts.shtml>), consider that three of the seven elected members (Chris Morgan, Tom Perkins & Chuck Fiedler) are in their first year of Board participation. Charles Rem is in his second year on the Board, while two others (Bill Parker and Doug Gorrie) are past Board members that returned after "retiring" some years prior. Our current President, Birl Smith, has been a recurring Board member for several recent years.

My point? There is considerable diversity on our Board, with both new and old blood being represented. **YOU** can be part of that diversity. Being a Board member is interesting, fun, work, educational, or any combination of the above. There is much to be gained by being a participant, even if for only a single year. We strongly urge you to consider offering some of your time to help make our User Group better, even if only for a short time.

Chris Morgan is leading the nominating committee. If you "might" be interested, Chris will be more than glad to discuss the various positions with you. You can reach Chris at chris.morgan@ntpcug.org.

Fresh ideas are always welcome. Please consider giving it a try.

Membership

Your Board of Directors has decreased dues to:

Individual — \$36 per year

Family — \$60 per year

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Special Interest Groups (SIGs) ...

2nd Saturday

Visual Basic .NET — 9:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

At our December 8th meeting, the presentation will cover debugging .NET 2.0. Please join us for this very informative session.

Object-Oriented Analysis and Design (OOAD SIG) — 10:00 am

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

Object-Oriented Analysis and Design SIG meets 2nd Saturday (December 8, 2007) at the Microsoft Irving Campus, 10:00am -11:30 am

December's Meeting Topic

Chapter 9 of the Head-First OOAD Book covering Test-Driven Development, Iterative approaches to Development and Programming by Contract.

SharePoint — 11:30 am

Ram Yadav
ram_yadav@hotmail.com

MOSS-WCM Web Sites

Ram Yadav has 12+ years of experience in the IT industry (10+ Microsoft Env). He has been working on Sharepoint for 5+ years (including Frontpage server extension and Sharepoint team services, WSS v2, SPS 2003, WSS v3 and MOSS 2007).

Microsoft Certification SIG — 2:00 pm Saturday at Nerdbooks

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

Meets 2nd Saturday (December 8, 2007) at Nerdbooks (1681 Firman Drive, Richardson) — 2:00 pm

In December, we are continuing our study of Web Services and ADO.NET Exam-type questions on Remoting.

3rd Saturday

Alphabetically

Adobe Photoshop — 12:30 pm

presented by Hillary Morgan Ferrer

Chris Morgan, SIG Leader
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

Last month, we touched on a difficult, but very powerful and useful feature of Photoshop — Layers and Masks. This month, we will look into this some more and do some additional demos on how to use this technique.

Building Web Sites — 8:00 am

Bill Parker, SIG Leader
bill.parker@ntpcug.org

We will focus on strategies for linking to other pages within a site or across sites without bleeding page rank in the process.

Digital Photography — 11:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

Goal — to capture better pictures.

Whatever the task is, we remind ourselves that better pictures are the **product of the photographer**. As well as knowing the limitations of our camera – we make ourselves aware of framing, working with existing light and modifiers, environment, and having people show their best attributes.

Foremost is our understanding that we are working with light and its: hues, intensity, saturation, balance, and mood. Without light – there is no picture.

Proper tools for the capture of a photograph must be adequate but not necessarily pricey. We will occasionally discuss fine equipment costing \$1,500.00 per component as being necessary even though most pictures can be taken with \$150.00 to \$350.00 digital cameras.

We remind ourselves that if we do not capture the details – no photo editor can replace something that just wasn't there in the digital capture. We know that some corrections can be made for our image errors but they will always be better when *captured properly*.

We can and will edit many of our images but mostly for special effects, removing blemishes, sizing, and for poetic and artistic license. (See: Digital Photo Editing SIG for more information.)

Whether we are the beginner, amateur, or professional — our users group provides for sharing of information for learning and enjoying the era of digital photography.

Our time is divided between proper use of camera and ancillary equipment versus the desirability and need for capacity and intricacies of newer devices. When we lapse into our dream world and listen to marketing hype explaining how happy we could be if... we were to merely update or replace.... to the new and improved..... we can enjoy these moments. When reality returns, we may hold off until we really have a valid need for that new gadget but we will discuss them here anyway.

When one *must* use high-end equipment is important, especially when initial costs are nearly prohibitively high and obsolescence comes much sooner than comfortable (or profitable). Remember, we can occasionally rent or lease when appropriate.

As a parting thought, just how many times have you carefully selected from your files a picture you carefully captured using proper composition, background, exposure, focus, just to have your friend view this and say, "This is good — your camera takes good pictures."

Have a pleasant capture!



Glynn Brooks making a presentation and demo of TechSmith's Snagit and Camtasia Studio projects.

Digital Photo Editing Software

— 10:00 am

*Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org*

Goal — Make the digital image best suit its final and finest purpose.

Most of us primarily use low-cost editors (ranging from those free ones to \$400.00 to accomplish our goals. When we believe there is need for higher priced editing tools — it is for their combined functions which reduce steps in our work flow, speeding up the process, and perhaps adding more pleasure to our art. One of our foremost goals is remembering that editors cannot put things back into an image if they were not captured to begin with.

Learning the language and definitions within photo edit programs is a constant part of our users group program. Whether for business or pleasure — we will practice several forms of image editing to: enhance projects from our cameras, scanners, restorations, and imaginative creations.

Using image editing for specific purposes require us to know where to find those tools and tool kits required. Almost all digital editors use the same basics as does other basic computer programs for mathematics, writing, searching, comparing, sorting, and elements of manufacturing. With more complex digital image editors — we discover several ways that expert programmers have cleverly integrated image elements and imaging techniques of basic tasks into more simplified and versatile macros and otherwise small but very useful programs. With these — we use and modify our workflow techniques to speed up our editing into faster turning our efforts into pleasurable results.

Image editing, on a step-by-step basis, is easy to learn. We can only make it more difficult by skipping some of the basics along the way. Many of our free (with purchase of hardware) editors are excellent tools to allow progressive learning at a reasonable pace. These basic introductory programs allow you to use and have pleasure with your photography and image manipulation. When you are ready for more advanced tools — go for it but in steps, i.e.,

1. Use freebies for an introduction
2. Use more versatile beginning editors for more complete editing
3. Take advantage of free professional tools from Google (Picasa 2)
4. Purchase low-cost, however complete, editors as: Corel, Paint Shop Pro and Adobe Photoshop Elements.
5. Adobe, Photoshop "C" series, Microsoft Publisher, Corel Draw, DXO, and others.

If the basic learning steps get out of order or an element missing with the basics of light, lenses,

paper, colors, we might assume the process is too difficult. Instead, we should back up, fill in the missing parts, and then enjoy creating of new images that develop pride (and money).

As we design our *digital work flow* —

1. Allocate ample time for eliminating *unnecessary* editing tasks by properly shooting inside the camera
2. Edit images to correct or hide flaws that are inherent in environment
3. Edit good pictures for mood and effect as necessary.

Use an image editor to modify *good* images to suit specific purposes:

- building a photo album
- story book
- magazine cover
- documentation
- advertising
- creating an icon or logo.

Spend time practicing and learning procedures. This will work better than merely buying and installing programs that may not be mastered.

Bring some ideas to share within our users group. Bring your questions and concerns too.

Happy editing to you.

Excel— 8:00 am

Frank Tubbs
ftubbs@sbcglobal.net

A specific request has been made to cover charting checkbook balances from a personal account. We will create a sample dataset and see how it is charted.

Our Priorities

First, to learn the common tools within Excel to become broadly skillful in the use of the application. It seems like imagination always provides more opportunity to employ the basics, and so foundation building is always underway.

Second, to become more efficient at using the product. We are at work learning to accomplish more work with fewer keystrokes, or to design our spreadsheets to get the job done faster.

Third, to employ significant tools provided by Excel to do more sophisticated analysis. These tools require little or no development by the user. Filtering, sorting, validation, all come to mind.

Fourth, to employ Visual Basic for Applications (VBA). This powerful subset of MSVisualBasic can be used to further the power built into Excel, as well as allow the spreadsheet to integrate with the rest of the MS Office suite for even further functionality.

Internet — 10:00 am

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

In this session, I'll show you how to avoid lugging a laptop with you. We'll look at ways you can carry your favorite software and files on a thumb drive, and safely use them on any PC that has access to the Internet!

Making Money on the Internet — 9:00 am

presented by Alan Lummus
Bill Parker, SIG Leader
bill.parker@ntpcug.org

See how two members are progressing in making profits, and how you can do so also on your own website.

Microsoft Access SIG — 11:00 am

Larry Linson
larry.linson2@ntpcug.org

This Month

December 15, 2007: Reports Can Make Your Database More Useful, Part II: This month SIG Co-Leader **Larry Linson** will demonstrate creating adding some “grouping” on initial letters in the multicolumn report from last month to ease finding the information. Then he'll create a grouped report, with detail records for each group, a format often needed in business processing, and personal financial databases. These reports will show some ways to arrange and present information in a useful format for viewing and reviewing.

Last Month

In November, 2007: Reports Can Make Your Database More Useful, Part I: SIG Co-Leader **Larry Linson** demonstrated creating some reports, all in the category of simple lists. The first was single-column created with the Wizard and then modified for the look of a simple list, instead of a graphic designer's idea of a report; the second recreated that same simple list but starting from design view rather than the wizard – and surely enough, it was just as simple as “fixing” the wizard's output. The final demonstration increased the number of records, used a copy of the second report, and formatted it as a three-

column report. These are appropriate for a phone list, address list, inventory summary, or other list..

Look Ahead

Please continue to think ahead, and be thinking as we talk, about other topics that will be of interest and useful to you – other types and configurations of Forms and Controls to fit your database requirements. We could do at least one more presentation on Reports, and another suggestion, high on our list of potential topics, is *Searching More than One Field in Your Database on User-Supplied Criteria* – it is tentatively scheduled for our November presentation. As we have done lately, we will address this issue before our presentation and Question and Answer period just to make sure we don't "shortchange" this vital part of our meeting.

Valuable Prizes

It's, like, back to the old days! Courtesy of Microsoft Corp., we have two full retail copies of **Microsoft Office 2007 Ultimate Edition** which we will be giving away. That is the edition that includes so many software packages: Word 2007, Excel 2007, PowerPoint 2007, Outlook 2007 with Business Contact Manager, Publisher 2007, Accounting Express 2007, Access 2007, Groove 2007, OneNote 2007, and InfoPath 2007. Confess, now – you didn't think of all of those as "part of Office," now did you?

This is the first big month! Co-SIG Leader **Jim Wehe** will be doing the honors. We began in October, putting our names in the "hat", continued in November. In December, you'll have another chance to put your name in, and we will draw for the first copy at our December meeting. Wouldn't that be a nice Christmas present (whether or not it's a holiday you celebrate)?

Then, we'll keep the names and draw again in January for the second copy. Winning that should pull anyone out of the *post-holiday blahs!* NOTE: The December winner is not eligible for the January drawing.

Larry extends his thanks for the software to **Microsoft**, and especially to **Chris Koenig**, South Central District Developer Evangelist, and sponsor of the South Central Developer Guidance Council, of which Larry is privileged to be a member.

REMEMBER OUR ACCESS SIG SHAREPOINT SITE

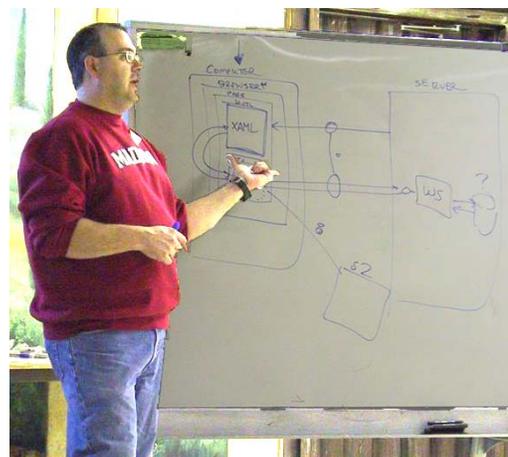
Go to <http://mail.ntpcug.org/accesssig/default.aspx> to visit the **Access SIG SharePoint Web page**. You will find an announcement

containing the information that's in this newsletter article, and any last-minute changes, corrections, or adjustments. As yet, there's no downloadable material for which you would need to sign in as an NTPCUG Member, but we expect that to be in the "Coming Soon" category.

SEE YOU REAL SOON!

We're looking forward to seeing you at the **Microsoft Access SIG**, 11:00AM (check the Info Desk for room assignment and any last-minute changes) on Third Saturday, December 15, 2007 at the **King of Glory Lutheran Church**, 6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas.

Thanks for reading



Chris Koenig presenting
Expression Studio & Silverlight

Microsoft Certification — 2:15 pm at Nerdbooks

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

We still meet at Nerdbooks, 1681 Firman Dr, in Richardson. We are currently studying Web Services and ADO.NET. Exam-type questions on ADO.NET.

Microsoft Expression Studio — 10:00 am

presented by Chris Morgan
Interim SIG Leader

This month we will start building an entire web site from scratch. We will begin with the Expression Web template feature to get a quick start. Eventually, we will add user logons and data access features to this site.

Visual Basic for Applications — 9:00 am

Dave MacKenzie
bigmack9@verizon.net

In December, we have a special two-hour presentation — from 9:00-11:00 am. We will cover the details of how to create an Excel macro to collect data and place it in a summary spreadsheet.

Windows Tips & Tricks — 8:00 - 9:00 am

Gil Brand — gb1@ntpcug.org
Chuck Stark — chuck.stark@ntpcug.org

Remote Assistance Demo!!

Need to help someone far away with their pc? Need someone to help you? With Remote Assistance, included in Windows XP, you can. And it's pretty easy. Gil and I will demo this utility at our December meeting. As always — live, no net! Join us.



Glynn Smith presenting SnagIt and Camtasia

Windows Vista Inside Out — 12:30 pm

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

In this session, we'll look at the ways you can improve Vista performance, with both hardware and software tweaks.

Wireless Communications — 11:00 am

Birl Smith
birl.smith@ntpcug.org

This month, we will talk about the use of unsecured retail networks.

Word — 9:00 - 11:00 am

Diane Bentley
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

I'm on vacation ... enjoy another SIG this month! I'll see you next year for ...

January 19, 2008 PowerPoint

From 9:00 - 10:00 am, from the Microsoft Office Suite, we'll take a look at PowerPoint along with your questions. Then, in February, we're back to Word.

January 19, 2008 Word Macros, Session 4

Microsoft has given us Macros as a way to extend the functionality of the office suite.

From 10:00 - 11:00 am, **Dave Mackenzie** will complete his presentation of Word Macros.

Troubleshooting Toolbar & Menu Bar in Word 2003

- I can't find the "paint brush"
- I can't find the button that permits or represses the display of paragraph marks, spaces, etc.
- Just recently, the option to insert page numbers disappeared from my "Insert" menu

Regarding the first two items: right-click any toolbar, and be sure "Standard" and "Formatting" are checked. If any others are checked, you can probably uncheck them (one at a time) unless you intentionally want them displayed.

The missing buttons should now be available; if not: right-click any toolbar | Customize | on the Toolbars tab, scroll to, and **select**, the "Standard" toolbar | click: Reset | Close.

Regarding the Insert menu: right-click any toolbar | Customize | on the Toolbars tab, scroll to, and **select** Menu Bar | click: Reset | Close

WordPerfect — 11:00 am

Diane Bentley
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

I'm on vacation ... enjoy another SIG this month!

WP X3 & Windows Vista

Fully patched WP X3 is the only version designed for Vista.

Addresses Automatically Placed on Envelope

When using the Envelope feature, WordPerfect will automatically search the document for a return address and place it in the envelope.

Continued on page 7

SharePoint Information Worker Conference 2008

**February 4 - February 6,
2008, Nashville, TN**

**Looking for a non-technical SharePoint
Conference?**

One that is end-user friendly?

Look no further - you've found the only one!

This conference is the world's only 100% non-technical conference on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS 2007) and Windows SharePoint Services (WSS). Brought to you business person-to-business person by the experts at SharePoint Solutions

**Choose from over 30 sessions
spanning three tracks and visit
exhibits from industry-leading
providers of value-added SharePoint
add-ons and services. Expert
speakers include:**

- Jeff Cate, Founder and President, SharePoint Solutions

**Gaylord Opryland Resort and
Convention Hotel**

- Zach Wahl, Knowledge Management Practice Director, Project Performance Corporation
 - Kevin Pine, V.P. - Training, SharePoint Solutions
 - Dino Dato-on, SharePoint Architect, Microsoft Corporation
 - Ben Hutchins, Intranet Product Manager, LDS Church
 - Asif Rehmani, SharePoint Server MVP, SharePoint Solutions
 - Tony Bierman, Windows SharePoint Services MVP, SharePoint Solutions
- and many others

Attend Sessions and Tracks such as:

- New tools for content re-use in MOSS 2007 (Content Management track)

3rd Saturday SIGs...
Continued from page 6

WordPerfect follows a rule to find the recipient's address on a letter.

If no text is currently selected, it looks for the last block of three to six consecutive lines on page 1 that each end with a hard return [HRt] code, and are followed by a blank line ending with another [HRt]. If text is selected, it will try to use that selection for the address.

Therefore, don't type a multi-line "letterhead" at the top of the first page, above the recipient's mailing address. If you do, WP might get confused. If you use such a letterhead, use your mouse or keyboard to select the recipient's address first. A better solution is to put such multiple-line letterhead information inside a header, text box, or watermark.

Also, multiple "RE:" or "SUBJ:" lines below the recipient's address could be erroneously selected by the program instead of the address, since they might be the last block on the page that fits the rule.

One solution for this problem is to get in the habit of using the Format, Paragraph, Indent feature instead of ending each reference or subject line with a [HRt]. These lines will then wrap to a single, terminal [HRt].

Another solution is noted above: select the recipient's address first.

*Most of this information was copied from
Barry MacDonnell's Toolbox for WordPerfect for
Windows — Macros, Tips, and Templates
<http://wptoolbox.com/tips/MailingAddress.html>*

— an awesome place to visit! dkb

This Month in Our History

by Chuck Fiedler

Here it is December and the holiday season is in full swing. So it's time to review the happenings reported in the December 1987 and 1992 issues of *PC News*.

As noted last month, we now have a full archive of *PC News* from November of 1987 to date. If you have any copies prior to November of 1987, we sure would like to see them and reprise that earlier history.

December 1987 had a major article by Reagan and Connie Andrews on COMDEX/Fall 87 in Las Vegas. In case you didn't know, **COMDEX**, the Computer Dealer's Exhibition, was held in Las Vegas each November through 2003. It was reported to be one of the largest computer trade shows in the world, second only to one in Germany.

The first COMDEX was held in 1979, with 160+ exhibitors and 3,900 attendees. By 1987, there were 90,000 visitors and more than 2,000 displays at seven exhibition sites. The biggest exhibitors were Microsoft, IBM and Borland. Microsoft demonstrated *Word 4.0* and its new "Page View" reported as "very close to real desktop publishing standards."

IBM's big feature was its OS/2 operating system, and Borland demonstrated its new "Quattro" running on both OS/2 and Windows. It was stated that, "Lotus better be on their toes 'cause there will be a real blood-bath in the three-way spreadsheet battle between 1-2-3, Quattro and Excel."

New at the 87 Fall COMDEX were laser printers, many of which were apparently shipped to the venue sans documentation, resulting in the booth personnel not knowing how to set up these "strange" machines. Somehow, I don't remember similar problems with my recently-purchased Samsung printer – one power cable, one USB cable, one power switch and *voila*, it printed. Really didn't make me nostalgic for the "good old days."

"Fast 80386 machines" running at 20 MHz were the "screamers" at this show, displayed by COMPAQ, AST and Tandon. It was noted that AST's machine was an outstanding performer but had not yet been certified by the FCC for home use.

Laptops were very evident at this show, with Toshiba and Grid Systems both showing 386

machines *with hard disks.* Also, Amstrad was showing a C-cell powered PPC640 which had the "advantage" of "getting away from expensive, rechargeable NiCads." To add to the excitement, this machine even had a built-in 2400 Baud modem! WOW!

There was excitement over the new 3.5" hard disks ranging from 100-200M and featuring the RLL encoding system to boost capacity.

In December 1992, it was reported that many vendors were about to make major announcements at the COMDEX/Fall 92 gathering, although the writer had apparently written his column before actually attending the exhibition.

WordPerfect was expected to introduce *WordPerfect 6.0 for DOS*, and Microsoft was expected to feature *Word 6.0 for DOS* as well as *Windows 3.1 for Workgroups (WFW)*. In fact, at NetWorld, a vendor show held in Dallas in October of '87, many vendors were displaying products designed to work with *WFW*. It was noted that there was a need to network the small, three to ten member workgroups which had begun to be very popular in the business world.

WFW really finally enabled computer networks in the home. All you needed was a number of network interface cards (one for each computer) and a bunch of coax cable. Sounds fun, doesn't it? None of this foolishness about security on a wireless network like today. <G>

There were three vendor presentations at the December '92 User Group meeting. Logitech demonstrated their Fotoman Digital Camera, ScanMan color 24-bit hand held scanner, ScanMan 256 gray scale scanner, CatchWord Pro OCR software, and the MouseMan and TrackMan line of pointing devices. Attendees got forms to order Logitech products at special user group prices, and there was even a drawing for a MouseMan cordless mouse and TrackMan combo.

Software Publishing Corporation made a presentation on their *Superbase 2.0 for Windows*, "their award winning relational database and development product... recognized by most leading magazines as the leader in Windows relational databases,

application development and data access tools.” Again, there was a drawing for free products.

After the business meeting, Computer Associates, who had “more Windows products than Microsoft,” presented *CA-Uptodate*, a groupware manager; CA-Cricket Paint, the “ultimate” paint and image processing system; CA-Cricket Graph, graphics for Windows and Mac; and spoke of the direction of CA-Clipper. Still more drawings for free products.

The December '92 issue of *PC News* had a one-page article titled *NTPCUG Community Services*, which spoke of the User Group working with The Dallas Computer Literacy Program (DCLP) to recycle old computers to set up “computer centers” where those who could not afford their own computer could have access to one to learn computer skills. DCLP put computers in churches, community centers and

schools located in inner city neighborhoods. DCLP and User Group members offered free computer classes to local residents and students.

The DCLP project sounds a bit like the Texas Center for the Physically Impaired (TCPI) project we currently have, where we solicit used computers, refurbish them and send them to the physically impaired. Just as members were solicited to donate their old equipment in 1992, today we need your cast-offs for TCPI. If you or your employer have old machines to discard (and receive a tax deduction in the process), contact our refurbishment volunteer, Gil Brand at gil.brand@ntpcug.org.

I hope you have found this information of interest. If you have reflections to offer, contact chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org and we will consider them for future issues.

Tips, Tricks and Web Sites

Tips and Tricks

Member **Gil Brand** provided the following tip.

To avoid typing long phrases, I use the AutoCorrect feature of Word to replace short strings of characters with a much longer phrase.

Examples: “;tc” for Texas Center for the Physically Impaired and “;nt” for the North Texas PC Users Group (www.ntpcug.org).

Try it for other long phrases that you type on a frequent basis.

To add words or phrases to the AutoCorrect table,

1. Open a new message in Outlook and click Tools, AutoCorrect Options.
2. Type the short string in the Replace box, the long phrase in the With box, and click OK.

That’s all there is to it! When you type the short string (plus a blank space), Word will automatically replace it with the long phrase!

Shortcuts

Interested in shortcuts you can use from the keyboard? Some are general in nature and work almost anywhere in Windows, while others are unique to specific programs. There are LOTS of shortcuts out there, but unless you use them regularly, it’s easy to forget which ones are available

One source (among many) is at Microsoft. Take a look at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/301583> for a VERY long list. If you experiment with the ones you are interested in, you will find that they can save you a lot of time and make your use of Microsoft products quicker and more “user friendly”.

A New Spam

In late October, word came out about a new round of PDF spam that is pretty dangerous in nature. The exploit can occur when PDF documents are opened using an un-patched version of Adobe’s Acrobat, as well as the commonly used Acrobat Reader. Adobe issued a patch for recent versions of both products on October 22nd, so it is vitally important that you apply the patch if you have not done so already. If in doubt, start Adobe Reader, go to “Help – Check for Updates.” Just as good – don’t open unknown PDF files, even if the patch is applied.

But even with Adobe’s patch, you’re not out of the woods. Internet Explorer 7 (when executing on Windows XP and 2003 systems) has a similar concern. (A detailed article is at <http://blogs.technet.com/msrc/archive/2007/10/10/msrc-blog-additional-details-and-background-on-security-advisory-943521.aspx>). As it turns out, there is a vulnerability in the way Windows handles URLs, and unless you keep your Windows patches and antivirus software up to date, there

is a serious concern that your PC may have “rootkits” installed. Without going into details, “that is very bad.”

As of this newsletter, it has been over a month since this PDF spam became a BIG problem, yet there doesn't appear to have been a Microsoft patch for this issue. So NOT opening PDF file is still heavily recommended.

For what it's worth, IE 6, Firefox and older Windows operating systems are not at risk. Go figure.

Microsoft Posters

Member Larry Copeland also pointed out a great location for Microsoft AD and Server 2008 posters – see:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=c236336d-ab43-44b1-ad6f-a2f668fb8c02&displaylang=en>

If you are interested in learning, member Larry Copeland has pointed us to a lot of good material, mostly free, at <http://learning.microsoft.com/Manager/Catalog.aspx>. See the “Free Products” link in left frame, and go from there.

DNS Tool

Larry Copeland passed along another link some time ago – a great tool for helping with DNS issues. See <http://www.robtext.com/dns/>. The site contains the “robtext swiss army knife”, and can extract all kinds of information about sites based on the domain name, an IP address, etc. It can be used to see if an IP address is blacklisted on any of multiple sites. Try it out.

New SIGs for January !!

As the New Year approaches, we have suggestions for TWO new Special Interest Groups that could start in January.

The first is tentatively titled **Professional IT Administration**, or perhaps **SysAdmin SIG**. It will focus on the administration of Windows servers, and will be led by one in the business – member Larry Copeland.

Larry advises that the SIG will be aimed at professionals responsible for administering medium to large networks of computers. To get things started, Larry will have an exploratory/organizational meeting on the 3rd Saturday in January. We're sure Larry will be looking for ideas and presenters, so come prepared to make suggestions, and even to volunteer. That's where the fun is – in contributing to the SIG's success. Specific times for this first meeting will be announced in January.

The second SIG being considered will focus on **Mobile Computing**, and will also be led by Larry Copeland. This SIG is still in the development stage, but Larry envisions that it would focus on laptop and Pocket PC issues, and may include Blackberries, Palm Pilots, or whatever else our the membership uses.

To get these two SIGs started, we need to determine our member's level of interest. Larry expects to be at the Business Meeting on December 15th to answer your questions and count hands. We would also appreciate getting e-mail from members if these are SIGs you would like to participate in. Just e-mail Larry at Larry.Copeland@ntpcug.org.



2nd Saturday — December 8th

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

Gang,

This is a reminder that this coming Saturday, December 8th is our regular monthly meeting. Be sure to read all the email, because I'm trying something new and changing up this reminder... This month's schedule will be at the very bottom of this email.

Crazy giveaways

Of course I will have a couple of books to give away, and of course, I will have the latest issue of **ASP.NET** Pro magazine to give away (actually I have last month's issue to give away as well), and I'm sure that you can pry a few books out of me at the drawings. Now NTPCUG Members who bring a friend will get **one** extra ticket for the drawings!!! Bring **two** friends I'll give you **two** extra tickets. Now, I'm going to say this month that the limit is three tickets, unless someone can really prove me wrong and bring **three** guests to the meeting.

Software to giveaway (or you can download the latest version for free...)

This month, I also have some CDs with the Visual Studio Express **2005** editions on them. These are the free version of Visual C# Express, Visual VB.NET Express and Visual Web Designer. If you already have Visual Studio **2005** (or Visual Studio **2003**), you probably don't really need these versions. OR if you have a good high speed internet connection you can download the very latest **2008** version at <http://www.microsoft.com/express/product/>

Join the NTPCUG

Not a member, well then it's time to join! Anyone joining or renewing on Saturday, I'll give not one, but **two** extra tickets for the drawings. So let's see if you join, you'd get one ticket for attending, two tickets for renewing, and if you brought two guests then you'd get another two tickets, and if they joined, then they would get tickets, and A guy could go crazy thinking about this... fortunately, as everyone already knows, I'm already insane, so that is not an issue with me...

DON'T FORGET TO BRING A FRIEND!!! WE WANT OUR USER GROUP TO GROW!!!

Lessons from the Real World... Don't throw away those trial CDs!!!

I am currently doing some work for a client where I was given a sandbox for development. Now, I needed to install a copy of Visual Studio 2005 on this instance. I couldn't approach the client about this need (mostly because it would be time consuming) and I wasn't about to install a "real" copy that I would then have to register and remember to remove once the gig was over. However I happened to have a CD copy of an evaluation copy VS 2005 (good for 90 days). So I was able to install the trial version w/o any problems whatsoever.

Another reason not to dispose of trial editions... This week I dusted off an older machine that I wanted to use for a test server. Well, all my "real" copies of Windows 2003 Server are on DVD, but this machine only has a CD drive. Since this is an exercise in frugality, I wasn't about to go spend another \$40 on a DVD drive, or spend the time having to rebuild the server. That sort of defeats the purpose, don't you think? Well, I did have a 180-day evaluation version on CD so I was able to install w/o any problems whatsoever.

The moral of the story is: *Save those trial versions of software... you never know when they will come in handy...*

Now if you have any "Lessons from the Real World" that you would want to share with your other User Group members, be sure to send them to me at tgoodwin@ntpcug.org, and I'll add them to the next reminder email.

Recommendations from the Real World

Jim Hoisington sent me this recommendation for a series of video presentations on the benefits and pitfalls of implementing Service Oriented Architecture. They broke the presentation up into five parts so each part is not a big download. **THANKS JIM!!!**

InfoWorld Video:Events:5 things to avoid with SOA - part 1:SOA

InfoWorld Real World SOA blogger **David Linthicum** discusses the strategic advantages and pitfalls when embarking on the journey of SOA.

www.infoworld.com/video/Events/SOA/5-things-to-avoid-with-SOA—part-1/video_1842.html

Now if you have any “Recommendations from the Real World” that you want to share... well, you know what to do...

Advice from Robert Heinlein:

For those of you who might not have heard of *Robert Heinlein (1907 - 1988)*, he was one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. Heinlein, *Isaac Asimov*, and *Arthur C. Clarke* were known as the “Big Three” of science fiction. (His novel of interstellar warfare, **Starship Troopers**, is considered required reading for 2nd lieutenants. Not because it was science fiction, but because it was at its core about loyalty, service, and duty among the infantry.)

Anyway, at home I have a framed copy of this text, taken from one of Heinlein’s books that I thought I would share with you.

Do not confuse “duty” with what other people expect of you; they are utterly different. Duty is a debt you owe to yourself to fulfill obligations you have assumed voluntarily. Paying that debt can entail anything from years of patient work to instant willingness to die. Difficult it may be, but the reward is self-respect.

But there is no reward at all for doing what other people expect of you, and to do so is not merely difficult, but impossible. It is easier to deal with a footpad than it is with the leech who wants “just a few minutes of your time, please – this won’t take long.” Time is your total capital, and the minutes of your life are painfully few. If you allow yourself to fall into the vice of agreeing to such requests, they quickly snowball to the point where these parasites will use up 100 percent of your time – and squawk for more!

So learn to say No – and be rude about it when necessary.

Otherwise you will not have time to carry out your duty, or to do your own work, and certainly no time for love and happiness. The termites will nibble away your life and leave none of it for you.

(This rule does not mean that you must not do a favor for a friend, or even a stranger. But let the choice be yours. Don’t do it because it is “expected” of you.)

Monthly NTPCUG Meeting Flyer – Can You Help Distribute?

Our newest Board member, Chuck Fiedler, along with Chris Morgan, has implemented a monthly flyer that members can distribute to friends, family members, colleagues, etc.

The flyer will contain as much information as possible regarding the topics to be covered in each month’s SIG meetings. With your help, we hope to generate interest in User Group activities, thereby helping us grow.

Chuck Fiedler will repeat the process each month, soliciting input from SIG Leaders, formatting the information into something easily read by others, then getting the final product out to all members well before the subsequent meeting.

The result of Chuck’s initial effort has already been forwarded to our members by e-mail. However, the project is far from over, because getting the flyer to our members is only half the battle. Chuck is relying on members, SIG Leaders, Board members and volunteers to share the information with others. We also need to you to consider new options beyond the obvious – bulletin boards, etc.

But this process will only be effective if we all work together. We’re asking SIG Leaders to provide him information about the upcoming month’s activities as expeditiously as possible if we are to get the word out early enough to be useful. Then, our membership needs to think of a couple of places they can post it, or e-mail it to anyone who may be interested. In other words, make it a regular thing when it first arrives.

Our thanks to Chuck for taking on the recurring effort of creating our monthly flyer.

Where have you sent the December flyer?

Highlights from Lisa '07

by Gil Brand
gbrand@ntpcug.org

One of the premier computer conferences came to Dallas last month – LISA '07, the Large Installation Systems Administration Conference. It is a lot like our Third Saturday with several 1½ hour sessions (over three days), but with topics such as these:

“The LHC Computing Challenge” – CERN’s Large Hadron Collider (think Waxahachie Super Collider – now in Switzerland thanks to the US Congress). How would you like to design and install a 15PB per year storage system (yes, petabytes = 1,000,000 gigabytes), 5000-node GRID computing network across 30+ countries, that is capable of allowing a scientist to access ANY data for either bulk data transfer OR real-time data analysis? Fascinating! And I thought I had capacity & throughput problems!

“ATLANTIDES: An Architecture for Alert Verification in Network Intrusion Detection Systems” - I skipped the sessions with titles longer than most of my full presentations.

“BGP Prefix Hijacking and the Spam Wars”. Basically a rogue ISP hijacks an unused IP address (yes, only about 70% of the available addresses are assigned), tells its neighbor router that it is that address, sends a ton of spam, and resets the address in less than SEVEN minutes. Very little time for the good guys to analyze and take action. The presenter’s recommendation was that EVERYONE stop using delivery filters (SPF, blocking IPs, etc.) and use only content filters (buzzword scans). VERY controversial. Most of the audience disagreed. Bottom line: the spammers are still winning.

But the most interesting for me was “The Biggest Game of Clue You Have Ever Played” by Don Scelza. Don has an extensive background in IT, but currently is a principle in the CDS Outdoor School, where he teaches wilderness pre-hospital medicine, wilderness search and rescue techniques, and medicine for austere environments.

Don presented the approach he uses in search & rescue operations, and contrasted that with resolution of a computer outage. Surprisingly, the skills, methods, & processes for finding a lost hiker or for solving a major computer outage are very similar, or at least they SHOULD be. I have seen a couple of mid-sized outages get completely out of hand due to NOT following these recommendations.

What you need is:

1. A command and control procedure.

2. Human/animal resources (boots-on-the-ground, dog-noses-in-the-air vs. geeks & suits) and hardware/software resources (vehicles, airplanes, copters, boats, walkie-talkies, etc. vs. network sniffers/analyzers, spare parts, etc.).
3. People with very different skills: control center coordinators, experienced manhunters to hit the trails, a wordsmith to talk to the press).
4. A database of historical events and support software to manage it (still in the works). If you have an interest in helping to develop such a database system for Search & Rescue missions, contact Don at info@cdsoutdoor.com.

But the key information to me was the process of discovering clues and tracking them. Without the discipline of keeping accurate records of the events, an analysis team can cover the same ground (physical or cyberspace) more than once with little or no results.

In the physical search – has someone gone missing in this area before? Where was he found? Search there first.

In the cyber search – have we had a similar outage? What was the cause / resolution?

For 30 years, I have “preached” long and often to my IT teams about the importance of logging EVERY action and its results when diagnosing a system outage. As an outage continues for hours or days, every attempt to remediate the problem, especially ones that fail, will be important to the team members who take over for those that have burned-out. Many techies got it, although the prima donnas didn’t, seeing “documentation” as a waste of diagnostic time.

The importance of good recordkeeping while solving problems recently came home for me in a big way. A client called with a problem. It seemed vaguely familiar, but I could not solve it over the phone, nor could I find the answer immediately when on site. A few minutes on Google yielded nothing.

At that point, it seemed even MORE familiar. More googling with better search arguments provided a solution. And then the slow realization: I had SOLVED this problem before, not once but twice! But... did not record the symptom / problem / solution.

Lesson for the day from George Santayana: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”.

Lesson for the day from Gil Brand: Record your successes. They will pay dividends tomorrow. And the corollary: the older you get, the more important the records.

Finally these tidbits:

I had forgotten who is considered the Father of Spam – Gary Thuerk in 1978. For those of you who don't know the story, here is a good recap: <http://www.templetons.com/brad/spamreact.html>

New buzzwords I first heard here:

- § PIO - Public Information Officer
- § Meg-A-Second - megabytes per second, but more like miles-an-hr vs. miles-per-hr. I know, you don't get it. Neither did the others to whom I described it. Still, it's nice shorthand. Example: DSL is 1.5 meg-a-sec.

And this item: Did you know that there are “air scent” dogs as well as “track scent” dogs? First one to email me with a good explanation of how they differ wins a FABULOUS prize!

For more information on the conference, see:

<http://www.usenix.org/events/lisa07>

Wireless Router

If you have a laptop computer with wireless capabilities, feel free to bring it along with you to our 3rd Saturday meetings at King of Glory.

Our wireless routers allow seamless roaming. Users do not have to disconnect from one access point and reconnect to another as they roam from room to room — moving around should be “transparent to the user.”



Volunteering

Every board member, officer, chairman, and SIG leader is a volunteer. No one in this organization receives any payment for their work. Without our volunteers, NTPCUG would not exist.

Please consider volunteering for one of these important jobs:

Information Desk — Charles Rem

crem@ntpcug.org

Assist with check-in process at 3rd Saturday. One or more hours will make a difference.

Mentoring — Tom Sweet

tom.sweet@ntpcug.org

Communicate with new members to ensure they are aware of the benefits, SIG opportunities and help them in numerous ways to feel welcome and to know that we care about them.

Program Director

Identify and arrange program topics for our vendor presentations.

Discount Coordinator

Communicate with vendors offering discounts on their products.

Volunteer Coordinator

Coordinate permanent and temporary volunteer participation.

Newsletter — Doug Gorrie and Diane Bentley

doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org

Prepare, contribute to and distribute the monthly newsletter.

Virus Hoax Becomes Real Virus

By Gil Brand

Well, it FINALLY happened. A clever virus writer created a real virus that *appears* to be a previously reported virus hoax (on www.snopes.com). We have been expecting this for several years.

Unlike the original hoax which had no links, this new threat *does* have a link to a malicious web site, but is *disguised* as a link to a legitimate “e-greeting” web site. If you click on it, your computer is probed for several potential vulnerabilities, ALL of which you should have already been prevented by patches installed by Windows Update. Hence, no infection.

But... if you have not applied all the patches, your computer may be infected and messages may be sent to all the names in your address book!

Once again, here are the rules about links in emails:

1. No matter who the sender is, be suspicious. “FROM” addresses can be forged.
2. If you are using Outlook as your email program, hover the mouse over a link BEFORE clicking on it to see if it actually points to the web site in the displayed text. It may point to a malicious site instead.
3. If in doubt, ALWAYS verify an email message sent to you by visiting www.snopes.com, or simply “Google” the message subject, BEFORE sending it to anyone else.
4. When sending an article to others, such as the Snopes article described below, NEVER send the

entire message; send ONLY a link to the Snopes report on the virus and/or hoax.

Need some examples of how a link may be forged? Here are two:

1. Imagine that you got an e-mail announcing that a special on-line Greeting Card is waiting for you, and to just click on “Greeting card from a friend” to see it. You eagerly click on it, and a special wiz-bang graphic or video appears. Neat !! But unfortunately, the URL associated with the “Greeting” phrase said “<http://spam-R-us/greeting>”. Viola - you’re infected.
2. What if you were presented with an actual URL to click on, perhaps saying “<http://www.seasonsgreetings.com>”. Sadly, the same issue applies, and you are whisked back to your “friends” at Spam-R-Us. Same result.

How can this happen? Web pages, as well as e-mail generated using http (HyperText Transfer Protocol), are all designed to be visually friendly. HTTP allows the user to display some friendly text in place of potentially long, convoluted URLs. But spammers are using the concept to deceive you into infecting your computer. What you see may not be what you get !!

Moral of story: always be suspicious, and cautious, before clicking on any links sent to you by e-mail.

For more on the Snopes article, see:
<http://www.snopes.com/computer/virus/postcard.asp>

Happy computing!

Fort Worth .NET User Group End of Year Celebration

Mark your calendars for the Fort Worth .NET User Group End of Year Celebration that will be held on Tuesday December 11th at Main Event (<http://www.maineventusa.net/newsite/broadband/ftworth/index.html>) off of I-20 and Bryant Irvin!

Come join your fellow FWDNUG members for a night of socializing, gaming, and Tons of prizes! Exact

details will be emailed out soon, but ***please respond to this email by EOD Wednesday if you think you will attend***. The FWDNUG will pay for a portion of the night’s activities and knowing approximate attendance figures will help us budget how much we can spend on each person. Until the details have been finalized, please email us with any questions you might have.

Fight Bac

Submitted by Jane Webber

A reminder from member Jane Webber that the Internet has lots of non-geek information available. The attached "Fight Bac" flyer is very timely as we go into the Christmas season. So, stay healthy !!

Season's Greetings

It's the holidays! Time for decking the halls with boughs of holly and roasting chestnuts on an open fire. This season of goodwill and giving thanks is also a festive celebration of food. With so many delightful foods to choose from, it's important to keep holiday treats safe from BAC (a.k.a. bacteria). Join in the festivities and ensure a safe holiday feasting season for you, your family, and your friends by following these food safety tips.



Keep Food Safe From Bacteria!

Food Safety for those . . .



Glorious Holiday Goodies!

Here's how to protect festive treats from BAC.



Beware of BAC

This holiday season, be aware of BAC and these facts:

The Invisible Enemy
You can't see, taste, or smell bacteria, but it can be on food and multiply rapidly in moist, warm conditions. If consumed, harmful bacteria can cause foodborne illness.

Be Egg-s-tra Cautious!
Around the holidays, people eat a variety of foods, some of which may contain uncooked or lightly-cooked eggs. But even grade A eggs with clean, uncracked shells can be contaminated with *Salmonella* Enteritidis bacteria. That's why it's important to cook eggs thoroughly to kill any bacteria that may be present.





Happy Holidays!

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Partnership for Food Safety Education • 655 15th St. NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20005

Have an Idea for a New SIG?

If you have an interest in a specific topic, most likely others will too.

If you have a potential SIG topic in mind and would like to be the SIG leader, send a six-month outline of meeting topics to Glynn Brooks.

A specific explanation will make it easier to ascertain a need, as well as target an audience, for a SIG.

Contact Glynn Brooks:
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org
or any Board Member

WANTED:

Tips, articles, product reviews and special web sites for our next newsletter. Please think about what you would like to see that hasn't been included yet, and send it to us now, at:

newsletter@ntpcug.org

Let us know if you win a drawing, and we'll put it into next month's newsletter. **Your input counts.**

Dallas.Net User Group 2007 Year-end Party!!!

Thursday December 13th, 2007 - 5:30 PM

Come join us for an evening of fun, networking, food and prizes!!

We have asked **Metroplex Casino Parties** to help us put this event together for your entertainment. It is our way to say thank you for another great year. We will also have an XBOX 360 console for attendees to test and demonstrate their gaming abilities. A lot of software and other things to give away (sorry, we ran out of books).

You can bet your poker chips this event is made possible thanks to our sponsors.

We hope to see you there. Be prepared for a much better year in 2008, with plenty of free training directly to you from the officers at DDNUG. We have great plans in the making for the group, including more 2-session nights, more code-rich presentations with real life how-to's and much more...

Where: Microsoft Office
7000 Hwy 161
Irving, TX 75039

Agenda: 5:30 - Welcome
6:30 - Event Kick-off
9:15 - Cash-in for tickets
9:30 - Door prizes

Thank you!

from your

Board of Directors and Officers

President: Birl Smith
birl.smith@ntpcug.org

President-Elect: Chris Morgan
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

Directors: Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org
Doug Gorrie
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Charles Rem
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Treasurer: Chuck Stark
chuck@metroplexcomputerservices.com

Secretary: Jo Ann Jackson
jajjmj@quixnet.net



by Birl Smith, President
birl.smith@ntpcug.org

Check back for Prez Sez next month

Calendar

December	January	February
8 9:00 am—Noon 2nd Saturday at Microsoft 2:00 pm Certification SIG at Nerdbooks	12 9:00 am—Noon 2nd Saturday at Microsoft 2:00 pm Certification SIG at Nerdbooks	9 9:00 am—Noon 2nd Saturday at Microsoft 2:00 pm Certification SIG at Nerdbooks
15 8:00 am—2:00 pm 3rd Satur- day at King of Glory 2:15 pm Certification SIG at Nerdbooks	19 8:00 am—2:00 pm 3rd Satur- day at King of Glory 2:15 pm Certification SIG at Nerdbooks	16 8:00 am—2:00 pm 3rd Satur- day at King of Glory 2:15 pm Certification SIG at Nerdbooks

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