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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

May 2009

VOLUME 29 • NUMBER 5

Raffle computer to be awarded this month

The April/May raffle will come to a conclusion at this month's business meeting, at Noon on May 16th. You could win a very useful desktop PC. If your PC is getting old/slow/obsolete, here is your chance to upgrade at minimal cost – as little as \$3.00.

Here are the specs for the desktop:

- Dell Inspiron 530S desktop
- Intel Core 2 Duo E4400 @ 2GHz processor
- 2GB of RAM
- 300GB hard drive
- DVD-RW / CD-RW drive.

Software includes:

- Windows Vista Home Premium Edition with SP2
- Lotus Symphony Office Suite
- Open Office xxx
- AVG anti-virus & anti-spyware
- Adobe Flash player
- CCleaner registry tool
- Foxit PDF reader
- Java Runtime 6.0.13

So how can you win? Just purchase a ticket at the check-in desk on your way in or out of the May 16th meeting - \$3 each, or for a real bargain, four for \$10. The drawing will culminate at the Business Meeting at Noon. Even better, you do not have to be present to win – we'll hold it for you.

So where does the money go? Since most of the parts come from the TCPI project (Texas Center for the Physically Impaired), the proceeds go to NTPCUG one time, and TCPI the next. Either way, there is a good cause involved.

Give it a try – you'll be glad you did.

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On Wednesday, April 22, about 30 NTPCUG and TCPI (Texas Center for the Physically Impaired) volunteers gathered at the Highland Park Cafeteria for an appreciation dinner for all who volunteer their time for the benefit of these two groups. Many good presentations were made and much discussion ensued. Each volunteer in attendance got a gift card for \$15 for the meal. The Highland Park Cafeteria made it possible for everyone to select dinner items to their liking.

The appreciation dinner is one way we can say “thank you” to those who generously give of their time to assure success of the User Group.

Dr, Bob Langford, president and founder of TCPI made a presentation on the history and purpose of TCPI. He noted how these free refurbished computers have changed the lives of the blind. To date, over 3,000 computers have been shipped under the TCPI program.

How would you like to be invited to the next volunteer appreciation dinner? Why not give some of your time to either NTPCUG or TCPI.

Volunteers are the life blood of our organization making it possible to gather and “share what you know, learn what you don’t.

More Giveaways at Third Saturday Business Meeting - April 2009

We keep giving out goodies at our Business Meeting on 3rd Saturdays. In April, we had the following winners and prizes:

- Jim Howell - Microsoft Vista Ultimate
- Bob Kirby – Laser Mouse
- David Martin - T-shirt
- Kathy Brown- SharePoint Services 3.0
- Tom Blackwell - “Geek” coffee mug

Do you like FREE hardware and software? In addition to the giveaways that our SIG Leaders always seem to have for their attendees, the User Group generally has some additional items for the monthly Business Meeting, which occurs at Noon at each Third Saturday meeting. As usual, you must be an NTPCUG member, and you must be present to win.

What will you miss out on in May if you’re not there?

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) ...

Sessions with presentations, discussion, and exchanges of information

2nd Saturday

Alphabetically

Design Patterns – 10:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org



The Design Patterns SIG started in March of 2008. This is a series sig, that is to say it will run as a set series of presentations and then it will end. It is the follow up to the Object Oriented Analysis and Design SIG that finished in February of 2008.

They are using the Head First Design Patterns book (ISBN: 0596007124) which can be obtained from Nerdbooks from this url.

For more information about the purpose and use of design patterns, Wikipedia has a short description.

The Microsoft Architecture site is here and a starting point for their use with Microsoft Technologies is here.

Date	Chapter	Topic
May 9, 2009	Chapter 14 – Appendix	Leftover Patterns

The site for the Design Patterns Study Group is:
<http://www.dotnetarchitecture.net/default.aspx>

The main SharePoint site for the Design Patterns SIG is:

<http://sptest.ntpcug.org/2ndSat/DesignPattern/default.aspx>

Microsoft Certification SIG — 2:00 pm Saturday at Nerdbooks

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

ASP.NET Fundamentals Workshop Continues

- Bring your laptop loaded with VS2008/2005 or Visual Web Developer, SQL Express
- Continuing with Login, Logout Pages, Basic Authorization principles

Questions or comments?

Contact Tom Perkins (tomperki@gmail.com) or Chris Morgan (chris.morgan@ntpcug.org)

SharePoint – 11:00 am

Ram Yadav
ram_yadav@hotmail.com



At most Sharepoint meetings, we discuss the features and current implementation of NTPCUG's Sharepoint site at <http://sp.ntpcug.org>, and we work to make improvements to this site during the meeting. Come join us as we undertake this continuing task.

.NET Developers – 9:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org



We will continue our learning in building our ASP.NET 2.0 knowledge as well as enhancing our experiences with the .NET 3.0/3.5 Framework enhancements.

I expect this to be an exciting series of topic. Of course if you want to show off your stuff, please let me know and I'll get you on the schedule.

Building upon the Beginning Visual Basic and Advanced Visual Basic SIG, this SIG now concentrates on any (and all) .NET topics. In the past we have had presentations on ADO.NET, using Code Snippets within the Visual Studio IDE, calling Web Services and introductions to ASP.NET.

Also we will be trying something radically different. The opportunity for our members to give quick 15 minute presentations called "Lessons Learned". This is a chance for everyone to sign up and share their experiences with the audience about a technique or a tool that has helped them solve a particular problem or issue. We want to make this a regular type of presentation so we've schedule the first three.

The main SharePoint site for the .NET Developer's SIG is: <http://sp.ntpcug.org/VBNETSIG/default.aspx>

Date	Topic	Speaker
May 9, 2009	Lessons Learned	TBD
June 13, 2009	Building the Web Layer using ASP.NET AJAX	Tuc Goodwin
July 11, 2009	Building the Data and Business Layers using .NET 3.5 (Part 1)	Tuc Goodwin
August 8, 2009	Building the Data and Business Layers using .NET 3.5 (Part 2)	Tuc Goodwin
September 12, 2009	ASP.NET Deployment	TBD
October 10, 2009	Lessons Learned	TBD
November 14, 2009	Windows Workflow Re-visited	TBD
December 12, 2009	Our Favorite .NET Tools	Tuc Goodwin

3rd Saturday

All meetings at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 6411 LBJ Fwy in Dallas (between Preston & Hillcrest, north side of LBJ).

Alphabetically

Adobe Photoshop — 12:30 pm

presented by Hillary Morgan Ferrer

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

No more meetings for now.

Building Web Sites — 8:00 am

presented by Alan Lummus

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



Challenges were issued in April, and we had several takers. Part of each challenge is to develop a plan for a site and to conduct keyword research relevant to that plan. At May's SIG, we'll review each participant's planning since last month's meeting and explore the best options for implementing each plan. Depending upon the applications chosen, we'll be installing one or more hand coded,

Joomla, Zencart, and/or WordPress powered sites and deciding what extensions or other applications may be needed to be added. Work with us as we create and post these new sites.

Digital Photography — 10:00 am

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



Are digital cameras capable of modifying images, completely bypassing image editing software?

Digital Photo Editing Software — 11:00 am

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



There are several imaging software packages that are useful for correcting and customizing photographs, making web pages, and brochures. The most popular editing packages are: Adobe Photoshop, Corel Paint Shop Pro, and Photoshop Elements. We will use the basic elements utilized within photo editing to learn techniques.

It's not recommended that one buys and learns the highest priced packages, but instead, one that is affordable and easily upgraded. Image workflow will be promoted to assure efficient and timely application of our images.

Excel— 8:00 am

*Frank Tubbs
ftubbs@sbcglobal.net*

For May, the Excel SIG will continue to look at the new menu structure of version 2007. We are looking at the logic of how the Microsoft Ribbon is structured so we can locate our favorite items and continue to effectively use the fine tools in Excel.

Family History — 12:30 pm

*Jim Wehe
jimwehe@gmail.com*



The May meeting of the Family History SIG will discuss collecting, evaluating, and organizing a file of Census records. We will show a book "Unpuzzling your past" by Emily Anne Croom, available in local book stores. This book lists information available in each census. Census records contain useful information, but can difficult to locate because of name misspellings. They should be evaluated by considering other sources.

Internet — 10:00 am

*Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org*



Think your cell phone bill is too high? Join the club! Let's get together in this session to compare notes, and I'll show

you how I was able to reduce my T-Mobile bill by \$20/month.

Investors - 1:30 pm

Q&A for Tips and Investors.

IT Professional — 9:00 am - 11:00 am

“John Weston from Microsoft will talk about Windows 7.”

Making Money on the Internet — 9:00 am

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



Bill Parker

Following up last month's challenge, May will concentrate on fitting the most appropriate website technology to each set of results from the keyword research conducted by challenge participants. As time allows, we'll register some domains, create one or more sites, and upload them to a hosting provider to get started. Will we use a turnkey system like WordPress, Joomla, Zencart, XCart, or build our own pages in HTML and include donation or shopping cart code such as Dansie Cart, MerchantCart, or another? Come and work with us as we set one or more challenge participants on the road to making real money on the Internet.

Microsoft Access SIG — 11:00 am



Larry Linson
larry.linson2@ntpcug.org

Jim Wehe
jimwehe@gmail.com



On May 16, 2009, first-off Access SIG Co-Leader Larry Linson will take you on a tour of our own Access SIG SharePoint Site – you can read and download everything that is currently on the site without being logged on, and, indeed, without being a member of NTPCUG. Then Larry will respond to a long-standing request to review and make available the Address Book and Information Keeper Database that we've used to demonstrate many features and functions of (“classic”, that is, Access 2003 and earlier) Access in the last couple of years. We are hoping to have the code “cleaned up” enough to post a copy of the entire demo database on our SharePoint Site and, of course, you'll have learned by then just how to visit the SharePoint Site and download it.

Looking ahead to June 20, 2009: We will continue (and maybe even finish) our review of the features and functions of Access that are demonstrated by the Address Book and Information Keeper

Database... It's possible that we'll be able to post some printable documentation describing features implemented and what to do to examine them in detail, at your leisure. (Remember, you'll be able to download the entire “open-source” database and have it “at hand” when you want to refresh your memory.)

And later...

We would still like to hear from you, too: a demonstration of an Access database you created and use, a tutorial on an Access-related topic, other Access-related material, or contact a friend of yours who'd be a good guest speaker. If you need help with organizing a presentation or with using PowerPoint to create the graphics, see Jim or Larry.

Topic Suggestions: We strive to be a user-driven SIG when it comes to subjects to cover. We solicit your suggestions at each meeting, because we do not want to “shortchange” this vital item.

Please continue to think ahead, and be ready to express your preferences, about other topics that will be of interest and useful. A year ago, we identified an interest in some topics. We have presented on some, and circumstances have forced us to eliminate a few topics for which we could not timely find appropriate speakers. **Caveat:** not necessarily listed in the order they will be presented, nor in order of importance, nor necessarily is presentation guaranteed – for some, we have to obtain guest speakers.

- Templates, in general
- Queries for end-users and developers
- Using other Microsoft Office software from Access via COM automation

Valuable Prizes

Microsoft, creators and vendors of our favorite database and office software, through their sponsorship of the CodeZone organization to support user groups, has enabled us to resume monthly giveaways. Larry extends his thanks for the software and other gifts 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.

We will have a “major prize” drawing (restricted to NTPCUG members only) and drawings for a few “minor prizes” (open to all attendees). Unfortunately, we did not get our order in for this quarter's goodies, but, fortunately, we have enough prizes to carry us through until the next ordering cycle!

In April, Barbara Merry won the major prize, a full retail copy of Microsoft Expression Studio 2 and Kathy Brown won the minor prize, a Microsoft-Logo insulated travel mug. In March, Leo Astrup won the major prize, a Microsoft Optical Wireless Mouse,

and **Kathy Brown**, **Barbara Merry**, and **Jim Wehe** all won minor prizes, *t-shirts* with various vendor logos.

DOWNLOADS and Other New Stuff:

Thanks to our friend, **Teresa Hennig**, President of the **Seattle Access Group** and the **Pacific Northwest Access Developers Group** for the following information. She expends significant time and effort each month to collect and assemble these useful notes for her user groups, and she graciously shares them with us!

For past postings and links, please check the NTPCUG Access SIG SharePoint Site at <http://sp.ntpcug.org/accesssig/default.aspx> or download previous copies of the **North Texas PC News** from the main <http://www.ntpcug.org> website to find additional information about events, resources and opportunities.

Add Pizzazz with clip art and media (March 2009)

Add a profession touch by incorporating just the right graphic or sound to your file. Select from over 150,000 free images and sounds to add to your files and projects. Nicely sorted and categorized for quick lookup ... http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/clipart/FX101321031033.aspx?ION_CL=1656

Windows 7 – Links and info (Feb/March 2009)

Windows 7 Beta 1 Tips – <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/magazine/dd451022.aspx>

Burn a disc from an ISO file!!

Ten things IT Pros Should Know <http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd350196.aspx?ITPID=tnflash>

Windows 7 – Previews and Reviews

Read ComputerWorld's rating of Windows 7 <http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9119378&source=landingpage>

CIO lists the five most talked about features for Windows 7

http://www.cio.com/article/463713/Windows_The_Five_Most_Talked_About_Features

Excel Time Savers --- (March 2009)

Using the right tool for the job sometimes means reaching out to other programs to manipulate or share data. And, since many customers also use Excel, it can be helpful to be familiar with some time saving techniques, such as quick ways to remove duplicate rows, or how to transpose data from columns to rows or vice versa. Learn about these and

other tips on MSDN at

http://blogs.msdn.com/inside_office_online/archive/2009/02/10/Most-popular-time-savers-starting-with-two-from-Excel.aspx?ION_CL=1664

Analyze data with PivotTable Reports in Excel (February 2009)

It's good to know about resources and options; after all, a combination of tools may provide the best solutions. So, you may want to check out this free tutorial on working with PivotTables in Excel. http://office.microsoft.com/training/training.aspx?AssetID=RC102058721033&pid=CR100479681033&ION_CL=1311

FREE ... Website for your small business... and there more ... (January 2009)

Office Live offers lots of free services and benefits for small businesses, for example, free website, free online folders, free phone support and too much to list here. So, free up some of your time and space by using Office Live. Visit www.officelive.com/free-website

Virtualization and Hyper-V --- a "green" light for saving time, SPACE, money and other resources (January 2009)

Ever wish you could replicate a desktop or other platform to test before deploying at a client's? That's just one of the scenarios that can be quickly and easily solved using Hyper-V. Once you've tried it, you may become a bigger Hyper-V advocate than IT!

You can download the server for free, read the white papers, take some tutorials, and put it to work.

Training and exams on virtualization, even free e-learning options www.microsoft.com/learning/virtualization/default.mspx

Learn about saving energy and resources with the Hyper-V "Green" Toolbox <http://www.hyper-green.com/>

FREE Microsoft Hyper-V Server 2008 <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=6067CB24-06CC-483A-AF92-B919F699C3A0&displaylang=en>

The best of the best --- Microsoft Office Online 2008 Top Hits List (January 2009)

Convenient links to 2008's most popular training, templates, tips, clip art and more --- as rated by the users!

http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/help/HA103338601033.aspx?ION_CL=1068

VISTA SP2 Beta (January 2009)

If you're enjoying the features in Vista, you may want to participate in the Vista SP2 Beta. In addition

to benefiting from the fixes and enhancements, you will be helping to ensure that the final release will be even better. Read more and download from:

www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=361D0CA3-4B2C-4F1C-8B3E-DE376FDB1DE8&displaylang=en

Blue skies and wispy clouds ... or Azure Services and cloud computing. (December 2008)

Learn what's available and what's coming for internet-scale services, from operating systems to developer services.

See some of the solutions currently leveraging this technology and register to try the preview at <http://www.microsoft.com/azure/default.aspx>

Windows 7 – Previews and Reviews (December 2008)

Intuitive, responsive and now offering touch-screen technology! Read the reviews and learn about the most talked about features.

Read ComputerWorld's rating of Windows 7 <http://www.computerworld.com/action/article.do?command=viewArticleBasic&articleId=9119378&source=landingpage>

CIO lists the five most talked about features for Windows 7

http://www.cio.com/article/463713/Windows_The_Five_Most_Talked_About_Features

Internet Explorer 8, Beta 2 (November 2008)

Slice n dice to order, discrete and private service. New features in IE 8 allow you to select the exact slice of a web site that you want to monitor – of course, they have to offer web slices, but that's readily apparent by the new little green icon that will be rampantly spreading through sites. And then there are the times when you'd prefer NOT to leave a trail – such as when you're using an Internet café or a colleague's computer. IE8 also have features that enable private browsing without leaving a history. There are several other security and performance enhancements. For more info and a free download visit: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/internet-explorer/beta/features/web-slices.aspx?tabid=1&catid=1>

Download Internet Explorer 8 Beta for better protection, to connect to more services, and to have more options and control. See how IE 8 can improve your experience www.microsoft.com/windows/internet-explorer/beta/

Run IT on a Virtual Hard Disk (September 2008)

Using the power of virtualization, you can now quickly evaluate Microsoft and partner solutions through a series of pre-configured Virtual Hard Disks

(VHDs). The Microsoft Virtual Software experience gives you full access to a number of server products on a pre-configured virtual machine. You can download the VHDs and evaluate them for free in your own environment without the need for dedicated servers or complex installations. Download the application of your choice and start evaluating the software for your environment immediately, for free. www.microsoft.com/servers/virtualharddrives.aspx

Access 2003 Solution Center --- (August 2008)

This is a great starting point to find solutions, downloads, current topics and links to the latest updates. <http://support.microsoft.com/?scid=ph;en-us;2509>

MSDN – Virtual Labs to Test-drive Code samples (August 2008)

How many times have you seen a code sample but didn't try it out because you didn't have the software configuration or you didn't want to risk unexpected impact to your system? Now there's a simple and convenient solution. MSDN provides virtual labs so that you can try out many of the code samples. Better yet, there's a split window so that people can read the MSDN article in one pane and use a second pane to contain the test environment! <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/magazine/cc511327.aspx?pr=flas>

RESOURCE Tips:

A couple of good sites to search for information and programming assistance are www.mvps.org and Office Developer Center on MSDN. And, we've been mentioning the newsgroups. You can search and drill through thousands of threads. Check out <http://www.microsoft.com/office/community/en-us/FlyoutOverview.aspx> for a comprehensive display of topics. You may also find what you are looking for by using <http://groups.google.com> or try www.google.com/microsoft.html for Microsoft related pages or by setting multiple search criteria at www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en.

Access Blog – by the Access Team

Stay tuned to the community ... The team shares insights into their schedule, their favorite features, new features and how to use them. This is also an ideal avenue for the team to talk about issues that are of interest to the Access community. You'll learn about the people and some of the factors that are helping to shape the future of Access. Whether you're a seasoned developer or just learning about Access, you'll find invaluable information and techniques. From creating a database template to getting help when you need it, The Access Blog covers the gamut.

<http://blogs.msdn.com/access/default.aspx>

Get Help When You Need It – Office Online

Available 24/7 on the Web! The Office Online Web site offers dynamically updated Help and online training as well as downloads, templates, and clip art-for new and previous versions of Office. Check this out at: <http://office.microsoft.com/>

Database Issue Checker

Access MVP, Allen Browne offer tips and utilities for casual users through expert developers. The Issue Checker can be used during development or to trouble shoot legacy files. Allen's site provides a host of other tips and resources, including a compilation of reserved words. <http://allenbrowne.com/ApplyIssueChecker.html>

MSDN magazine is available online ...

An excellent, searchable resource. You can check out back issues, download articles and source code. Check it out at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/msdnmag>

A compilation of links to Access Resources

This site provides an impressive array of links to a variety of resources for Access developers and users. www.cbel.com/ms_access/

Conrad Systems Development--- CSD Tools Version 2.0

Jeff Conrad, former Access MVP, and one of the newest members of the Access Test Team, offers an Access Add-In for documenting your database objects. <http://www.accessmvp.com/JConrad/accessjunkie.html>

The Seattle Access site. You will also want to check the Links and Downloads pages at www.SeattleAccess.org

Thanks again, Teresa, for the extremely useful links and tips!

And, don't forget the links to sites that are very useful Access resources, on the home page of our Access SharePoint site, <http://sp.ntpcug.org/accesssig/default.aspx>. Look for more Access information, tips, hints, examples, etc. in the not-too-distant future.

Microsoft Certification SIG - 2:00 pm

At this third Saturday meeting at KOG, we will have hands-on exercises using the Membership Provider feature; more on incorporating a SQL Express database into a web site.

ASP.NET Fundamentals Workshop Continues

- Advanced Authorization Techniques
- Creating a database for the Membership Provider
- Using the `aspnet_regsql.exe` tool

- Database schema for user and role information

CertSIG Notes for January meeting:

Members present: Kathy Brown, Chris Morgan, Raj Mandeva, Amin (Raj's guest), Bob Webber, Jeff Frauenheim, Gil Brand, Jesse Hastcoat, Tom Perkins, Bill Drissel.

Members work individually or in groups on a common web site application. We built a basic ASP.NET web site, added a master page, created a login page with fundamental authorization features, and learned how to login and authorize a user. Some of the things we'll work on next time include displaying an indicator that a user is logged in, using a template for different displays on a page for logged in and not logged in users, creating a logout page, and using default content for master pages.

In a survey taken after the first workshop session, members indicated that they would like to continue in-class, hands-on work on the sample web site, rather than work on the problem individually as homework. This provides a good learning vehicle for getting down to the nuts and bolts of a web site. We'll try to find some way to make the classroom time productive and not confusing for new persons coming into the group.

If you or some of your colleagues would like to learn how to construct ASP.NET web sites, feel free to drop in and see what is involved. If you don't have a laptop, come on anyway -- last month we had several groups sharing the development experience on a single computer. For the most part, only one person was typing at a time, however.

We believe that the best learning process is when you're faced with a problem and apply what you know or can find out to do it yourself. This workshop is an experiment in experiential learning -- although we have some clearly set objectives, the class only moves to the next objective when everyone has completed the current objective. The workshop is not a matter of "Gee-whiz! Look what I know!", but rather a matter of "How can we learn this topic together?"

Word tutorial, CSS style sheet, and a C# solution for Workshop I can be found at <http://sp.ntpcug.org/STUDYGROUPSIG/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2fSTUDYGROUPSIG%2fShared%20Documents%2fCertSIG%20Workshops%2fWorkshop%5f01&FolderCTID=%2d7bE4BA98DF%2d2705%2d491C%2d8933%2d0586FEDF95B1%7d>

Hope to see you at the 2nd Saturday meeting at NerdBooks or the 3rd Saturday meeting at the KOG

NTPCUG meeting, 2pm both days.

Questions or comments?

Contact Tom Perkins (tomperki@gmail.com) or Chris Morgan (chris.morgan@ntpcug.org)

Microsoft Expression Web — 10:00 am

Chris Morgan
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org



Having finished with the series on CSS, we will now start in on an equally big topic - JavaScript. At the first session, in May, I will present the basics of JavaScript and show some simple examples of how to use it on a web page.

Mobile Computing — 10:00 am

No meeting this month. See IT Professional.

Powershell – 9:00 - 11:00 am

Gil Brand, SIG leader
gbrand@ntpcug.org



Open Q&A on all aspects of PowerShell.

Windows Inside Out — 12:30 pm

Glynn Brooks
lynn.brooks@ntpcug.org



The Honeypot Project. Charles Rem will continue talking at the May meeting about network intrusion detection and how to prevent successful penetrations.

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

Gil Brand
gb1@ntpcug.org



Chuck Stark
chuck.stark@ntpcug.org

Open Q&A on all things Windows & PC's. Possible 'Live, no net' troubleshooting session.

Wireless Communications — 11:00 am

Birl Smith
birl.smith@ntpcug.org
birlhtml@swbell.net



Word — 9:00 - 11:00 am

Diane Bentley
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org



Formatting a Document – Comparing 2003 and 2007

We'll compare Word 2003 and 2007 by formatting the same document in each. For instance, we'll adjust margins in 2003, and then in 2007. Then, we'll choose fonts in 2003, and then in 2007, etc., switching between the two, and continuing through many other features. This should be interesting, to say the least!

WordPerfect — 11:00am - 12:00 pm

Diane Bentley
diane.bentley@ntpcug.org



Do you know the difference between Newspaper, Balanced Newspaper, Parallel and Parallel w/Block Protect? I've prepared my company's policy manual using Parallel columns. It's a seldom-used feature that I LOVE!

Monthly NTPCUG Meeting Flyer – Can You Help Distribute?

Each month we send members a flyer listing the upcoming second and third Saturday SIG meeting information. We work to fit it all on one page so it can be easily printed and posted in offices and public areas. It can also be sent by email to family members, friends, colleagues, etc.

With your help we hope to generate increased interest in User Group activities, thereby helping us grow. We rely on members, SIG leaders, Board members and volunteers to share this information with others. We also need you to consider new options beyond the obvious – bulletin boards, etc.

We ask you, our members, to think of places where you can post the monthly flyer and to e-mail it to anyone you know who may be interested.

We try mightily to get this out before the weekend preceding the second Saturday of each month so you have time to “do your thing”.

With your help we can grow our Group and reach others who can “Share what you know, learn what you don't.”

Where have you sent the May flyer?

How strong are your passwords?

by Chuck Fiedler

Is your sensitive data properly protected? What about your email accounts and the various websites you visit? As I'm sure you have heard at NTPCUG, you should be using strong passwords – eight characters or longer and including upper and lower case letters, numbers and punctuation characters.

A popular Website, phpbb.com, an open source forum established in 2000, was recently hacked, and the hacker published approximately 20,000 user passwords from the site. To security professionals, this is hard data that can be used to figure out how users choose passwords. Robert Graham, CEO of Errata Security, wrote a program to analyze these passwords looking for patterns, and came up with some interesting results. He recently published his results, as describe below.

He described this incident as similar to one in 2007 when MySpace was hacked, revealing about 30,000 passwords. Both Wired and InfoWorld published articles analyzing those passwords.

The striking difference between the two incidents is that the phpbb passwords are simpler. MySpace requires that passwords “must be between 6 and 10 characters, and contain at least 1 number or punctuation character.” Most people satisfied this requirement by simply appending “1” to the end of their passwords. The phpbb site has no such restrictions, so the passwords tend to be shorter and rarely contain anything more than a dictionary word.

It's hard to judge exactly how many passwords are dictionary words. A lot of words, like “xbox” or “pokemon,” are clearly words, but aren't in an English dictionary. Graham ran the phpbb passwords through various dictionary files and came up with a 65% match (for a simple English dictionary) and 94% (for “hacker” dictionaries). The dictionary words were overwhelmingly simple ones, like “apple” or “orange,” rather than complex words like “pomegranate.”

16% of passwords matched a person's first name, including people using their own first names or those of their spouse or children. The most popular first names were Joshua, Thomas, Michael, and Charlie. But you have to wonder if there is something else going on.

Joshua, for example, was also the password to the computer in “Wargames,” which almost certainly accounts for it being at the top. Variations of the name “Jordan” are popular, which almost certainly refers to “Michael Jordan,” a prominent basketball star (such

as “jordan23,” referring to his jersey number).

14% of passwords were patterns on the keyboard, like “1234,” “qwerty,” or “asdf.” There are a lot of different patterns people choose, like “1qaz2wsx” or “1q2w3e.” The password “159357,” is a pattern on the numeric keypad.

4% are variations of the word “password,” such as “passw0rd,” “password1,” or “passwd.” “Drowssap,” is simply “password” spelled backward.

5% of passwords are pop-culture references from TV, movies, and music. These tend to be youth culture (“hannah,” “pokemon,” “tiger”) and geeky (“klinton,” “starwars,” “matrix,” “legolas,” “ironman”). Music, though, appears to have a much broader age demographic, with a lot of old bands, like “iron- maiden.” Some notable pop-culture references are chosen not because they are popular, but because they sound like passwords, such as “ou812” (‘80s Van Halen album), “blink182” (‘90s pop), “rush2112” (‘80s album), and “8675309” (‘80s pop song).

4% of passwords appear to reference things nearby. The name “samsung” is a popular password, I think because it's the brand name on the monitor that people are looking at. Similarly, there are a lot of names of home computers like “dell,” “packard,” “apple,” “pavilion,” “presario,” “compaq,” and so on. It's hard to figure out what belongs in this category, though. Is “cocacola” a popular password because there is a can of coke on their desks? Or just because it's a well-known name? In any event, “cocacola” appears to be more popular than “pepsi” among those who choose passwords.

3% of passwords are emotion words. Swear words, especially the F-word, are common, but so are various forms of love and hate (like “iloveyou” or “ihateyou”).

3% are “don't care” words. I've always thought that dialogs, like Microsoft's UAC, should have a button labeled “whatever.” When prompted with, “This program may contain a virus, do you want to run it?” instead of having two buttons, “YES” or “NO,” dialogs should contain a third button labeled “WHATEVER” or “I DON'T CARE.” A lot of password choices reflect this attitude, either implicitly with “abc123” or “blahblah,” or explicitly with “whatever,” “whocares,” or “nothing.”

1.3% are passwords people saw in movies/TV. This is a small category, consisting only of “letmein,”

“trustno1,” “joshua,” and “monkey,” but it accounts for a large percentage of passwords.

Here are the top 20 passwords from the phpbb dataset. You’ll find nothing surprising here.

3.03%	“123456”
2.13%	“password”
1.45%	“phpbb”
0.91%	“qwerty”
0.82%	“12345”
0.59%	“12345678”
0.58%	“letmein”
0.53%	“1234”
0.50%	“test”
0.43%	“123”
0.36%	“trustno1”
0.33%	“dragon”
0.31%	“abc123”
0.31%	“123456789”
0.31%	“111111”
0.30%	“hello”
0.30%	“monkey”
0.28%	“master”
0.22%	“killer”
0.22%	“123123”

Notice that whereas “myspace1” was one of the most popular passwords in the MySpace dataset, “phpbb” is one of the most popular passwords in the phpbb dataset.

The password length distribution is as follows:

1 character	0.34%
2 characters	0.54%
3 characters	2.92%
4 characters	12.29%
5 characters	13.29%
6 characters	35.16%
7 characters	14.60%
8 characters	15.50%
9 characters	3.81%
10 characters	1.14%
11 characters	0.22%

So when you set up passwords, where do you fall in these distributions? If you have noticed during several of our SIG meetings, the leaders may use AT LEAST 12 characters, varying by site, and then uses a password manager like ROBOFORM to keep track of them.

Sounds smart to me.

Laptop Batteries: Buying, Recycling and Increasing Longevity

by Chuck Fiedler

A laptop frees you to work anywhere you want but this freedom lasts only as long as the laptop’s battery charge. Once the battery runs down, you’re forced to plug in and recharge.

It is well known that lithium-ion batteries have a finite lifespan (typically 300 to 500 charges, which usually means a few years). But your computing behavior can have a strong effect on battery life expectancy, hence how soon you’ll have to buy a new one.

When you get a new battery for your laptop or use your new laptop for the first time, fully charge and discharge the battery a few times before doing any partial charges. After that, calibrate the battery monthly to reset its “digital memory.” This syncs the “fuel gauge” with the battery’s charge state, which can get out of whack with many partial discharges and recharges.

To calibrate, set your battery alarm at 5 percent, let the battery discharge to that warning, then fully charge it again. If this is how you already charge your battery, there’s no need to calibrate; you’re already doing it regularly.

The following simple steps can lengthen the time between charges: Dim the screen to the darkest level you’re comfortable viewing. Disable any peripherals like CD/DVD drives you’re not using, and disable your wireless card.

Listening to music or watching DVDs consumes a lot of power as does accessing files on CDs or DVDs. Instead, save those files to your hard drive whenever possible to avoid using your optical drives.

Extreme temperatures, especially heat, are a big enemy of laptop batteries. Leaving your laptop in the car during scorching summers is a big mistake, but you can also cause heat damage by using your laptop on a plush surface such as a seat rather than a hard surface where your laptop’s fans can circulate properly.

Leaving your laptop constantly plugged in as a desktop replacement can also cause damage. Not only can your battery suffer from the heat, but there’s a small draw on the battery, as if it’s constantly charging. (Cont’d on page 13)

Internet turns 20

by Chuck Fiedler

Did you know that the World Wide Web recently turned 20 years old, and one of its founders admitted there are bits of the phenomenon he does not like?

The creation of the Web by British computer software genius Tim Berners-Lee and other scientists at the European particle physics laboratory (CERN) paved the way for the Internet explosion which has changed our daily lives.

Berners-Lee and CERN colleagues originally set up the system to allow thousands of scientists around the world to stay in touch. In March 1989, the young Berners-Lee handed his supervisor in Geneva a document entitled "Information Management: A Proposal." The supervisor described the proposal as "vague, but exciting" and later gave it the go-ahead, according to CERN.

They drew up the global hypertext language — which is behind the "http" on website addresses — and came up with the first Web browser in October 1990, which looks remarkably similar to the ones we use today. "Everything that people talk about today, blogs and so on, that's what we were doing in 1990, there's no difference. That's how we started," said Robert Caillau, a Berners-Lee associate.

A NeXT PC was used by Berners-Lee as the world's first Web server and also to write the first Web browser, WorldWideWeb, in 1990. By Christmas 1990, Berners-Lee had built all the tools necessary for a working Web: the first Web browser (which was a Web editor as well), the first Web server, and the first Web pages which described the project itself.

On August 6, 1991, he posted a short summary of the World Wide Web project on the alt.hypertext newsgroup. This date also marked the debut of the Web as a publicly available service on the Internet.

The WWW technology was first made available for wider use on the Internet from 1991 after CERN was unable to ensure its development, and the organization made a landmark decision two years later not to levy royalties.

But the commercial development of the Web still irritates some of the founders.

"There are some things I don't like at all, such as the fact that people have to live off advertising," said Robert Caillau, who preferred the idea of direct "micro payments" to information providers.

"And there's the big problem of identity, of course, the trust between the person who is consulting and the person who provides the page, as well as the

protection of children," he added.

Berners-Lee is now a researcher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is a university professor in Southampton, Britain. He still heads the World Wide Web Consortium that coordinates development of the Web.

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:

Secretary

Record and distribute official minutes from each board meeting.

Information Desk — Charles Rem

crem@ntpcug.org

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

Program Director

Identify and arrange program topics for our vendor presentations.

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.

Newsletter — Doug Gorrie, Chuck Fiedler, David Franke

doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org

chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

dave f81@gmail.com

Prepare, contribute to and distribute the monthly newsletter.

Battery that 'charges in seconds'

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

According to a report from BBC News, we are in for a great leap in lithium-ion battery technology where a new manufacturing method could lead to smaller, lighter batteries that can be charged in mere seconds. According to the report, the approach only requires simple changes to the production process of a well-known material.

Because of the power they pack, pound for pound, lithium-ion batteries are the most common rechargeable batteries found in consumer electronics, such as laptops. But, they take a long time to charge; until recently it was thought that there was a "speed limit" on the lithium ions and electrons passing through the batteries to form an electrochemical circuit.

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) used a computer simulation to model the movements of ions and electrons in a variant of the standard lithium material known as lithium iron phosphate.

The simulation indicated that ions were moving at great speed.

"If transport of the lithium ions was so fast, something else had to be the problem," Professor Gerbrand Ceder said. That problem turned out to be the way ions passed through the material.

They pass through minuscule tunnels, whose entrances are present at the surface of the material. The solution, Ceder discovered, was to engineer the material such that it has a so-called "beltway" that guides the ions towards the tunnel entrances.

A prototype battery made using the new technique was charged in less than 20 seconds - in comparison to six minutes with an untreated sample of the material.

Most commercial batteries use a material made up of lithium and cobalt, but lithium iron phosphate does not suffer from overheating - something that has affected laptop batteries in a number of incidents.

Even though it is cheap, lithium iron phosphate has until now received little attention because lithium cobalt batteries can store slightly more charge for a given weight.

However, the researchers also found that their new material does not lose its capacity to charge over time in the way that standard lithium ion batteries do. That means that the excess material put into standard batteries to compensate for this loss over time is not necessary, leading to lighter, smaller

batteries with rapid charging rates.

As there are relatively few changes to the standard manufacturing process, the new battery material could make it to market within two to three years.

Laptop Batteries (Cont'd)

When your laptop battery begins its final descent, it won't go quickly. Rather, your run time will begin to dwindle. When you decide to purchase a new battery, look for the battery recommended for your particular laptop and buy one that has at least, if not more, capacity (the mAh rating) as your previous battery.

Users can purchase new batteries from most major online laptop retailers, from the laptop brand Web site, at most big box retailers or from those who sell laptop equipment and accessories. If you walk into your local consumer electronics store and don't find your battery, be aware that many of these stores offer a better selection on their Web sites.

When you receive your new battery, it's time to dispose of the old one. Batteries are full of all sorts of toxic chemicals so recycling is a must. Among other places accepting batteries for recycle are EVS Supply in Richardson, Batteries Plus in several suburbs, and other local retailers and businesses that collect rechargeable batteries.

Hopefully, by following these tips, you will get more usefulness out of your laptop, more life out of your battery and do your part to avoid filling landfills with toxic waste.

This Month in Our History

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Now that the PCNews archives are on our website, I'm going to abandon the flying time machine metaphor and instead take the approach of pointing out articles of interest in the historical newsletters. This month we'll look at the May '84 and '89 issues.

We should all thank emeritus member Doug Gorrie, our system administrator, for posting all the back issues from CDs that were prepared by Diane Bentley and Elva Roy. This is another example of how the efforts of volunteers make our existence possible.

In May of 1984, the group was meeting at Jesuit College Preparatory School on Inwood Road on the second Saturday of the month. It would appear that the group was then geared far more toward the technical rather than the end-user side. A look at the seven SIGs of the time shows this technical slant. The SIGs were: Beginners and BASIC, Business Applications, Programmers, Computer Aided Instruction, Beginning Assembly, and two SIGs held in conjunction with the Apple Corps, Engineering and Scientific, and Ham Radio.

The majority of articles in May were regarding word processing and spreadsheet programs I've never heard of. Obviously, this was prior to the introduction of office suites with which we're all familiar.

There was an interesting article by Doug Windham on a printer advance of the time. At that time, all PC printers were dot matrix and output looked like it had been printed on a computer. Well, Windham saw a daisy wheel printer at one of the vendors for \$455 called a JUKI 6100. The promise of letter-quality output for such a modest price (at the time) pushed him into buying the printer and he reported complete satisfaction.

In May 1989, then-President Jim Hoisington wrote in Prez Sez that Microsoft CEO Bill Gates would be the featured speaker for the May meeting.

Fred Williams had the second installment of his article Introduction to SQL. For those of you who routinely use databases (or would like to), I suspect Fred's articles would be useful and interesting.

The third in the series Cipher Lore by John Taber dealt with the matter of Crypto Law. Taber took great length to point out the confusions in the ITAR (International Trade in Arms Regulations). One of these

confusions is that an encryption algorithm could be published in a magazine or book and could be exported. However, incorporating that algorithm into a computer program meant that the result could not be exported. Taber went on about these confusions by saying:

There are other dual use items on the Munitions List and a magic phrase is used for them – “specifically designed, modified, or configured for military use”. For example, depth finders are a Munitions List item, but not for a sailboat's or fishing boat's depth finder, unless they are specifically designed, modified, or configured for military use... The way the regulations are written, if a Munitions List item is not specified as military, it is then “deemed” to be intrinsically military in nature.

The DOM (Disk of the Month) Squad had a full four-page index of available freeware and shareware. Still, everything was offered on 5¼ disks although a 3½ inch option was by now available.

The Variety Store by Reagan Andrews began with the observation that software publishers were grappling with developing programs that would work both on the original IBM PC and PC/XT as well as the later 80286 and 80386 machines. Some were to the point of abandoning compatibility with the earlier machines.

Still in the days before TrueType fonts, Pacific Data Products released a \$399 program named 25 Cartridges in One. When print drivers were specific to each program, this program included drivers for Lotus1-2-3, MS Word, WordPerfect, WordStar, and MS Excel, among others.

Jim Hoisington wrote the 27th installment of his ongoing article, On Complexity, with this issue describing why many custom software programs fail. While successful programs tend to be documented, most failures are simply abandoned with no picking over the bones to see why the failure occurred.

Fully 21 SIGs were offered monthly in the variety of rooms available at the InfoMart. There were fully 94 volunteers serving in a variety of positions, making our monthly meetings possible and smooth-running.

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

Emeritus Members

John Pribyl (1924 – 1993)
Reagan Andrews (- 2006)
Connie Andrews (- 2008)
Phil Chamberlain
Jim Hoisington
Guy Andrews
Stuart Yarus
Timothy Carmichael
Mark Gruner
David McGehee
Tom Prickett
Kathryn Loafman
Fred Williams
Andy Oliver
Alex Lilly
Doug Gorrie
Claude McClure
Robert McNeil
Gil Brand
Bill Parker
Diane Bentley

Thank you!

from your 2009

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chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

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bill@drissel.us

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doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org

Jesse Hastcoat
jesse.hastcoat@ntpcug.org

Chris Morgan
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

Spike Smith
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

Bill Parker
bill.parker@ntpcug.org

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chuck.stark@ntpcug.org

Calendar

May

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

June

- 13** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday**
at Microsoft
2:15 pm **Certification SIG** at
Nerdbooks
- 20** 8:00 am—2:00 pm **3rd Satur-**
day at King of Glory
2:00 pm **Certification SIG** at
King of Glory

July

- 11** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday**
at Microsoft
2:15 pm **Certification SIG** at
Nerdbooks
- 18** 8:00 am—2:00 pm **3rd Satur-**
day at King of Glory
2:00 pm **Certification SIG** at
King of Glory

North Texas PC Users Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 700055
Dallas, TX 75370-0055

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