North Texas PC News

Prez Sez

Are you getting all the advantages available in your NTPCUG membership?

A mere $36 per year entitles you to all of our learning opportunities, known as Special Interest Groups, or SIGs. That breaks down to $3 per month for all the learning opportunities available each month.

Got a troubled PC? You can call a business specializing in PC repair and pay up to $100 per hour, or you can bring your sick machine or merely questions about how to fix it to the Tips and Tricks SIG's monthly meeting. There, Chuck Stark and Gil Brand will get you back on the computing "Yellow Brick Road."

Your membership also brings you the monthly PC News. Here, various authors present items of potential interest to the membership. Also, do you actually read the newsletter? Recent surveys indicate that only about half the membership attends the monthly meetings and, of those, only half actually read the newsletter.

Perhaps you have visited our SharePoint site, http://sp.ntpcug.org. There you will find information on upcoming and past SIG sessions, frequently including copies of the slides used in the last monthly presentation. There is also a series of forums for you to raise questions or respond to the questions of members.

You will also find copies of prior newsletters going back to 1982, our second year of existence.

And finally, membership gives you the opportunity to serve as a volunteer. For having been a persistent volunteer, you gain access to TechSoup, a service where you can get popular software for a substantial discount. Just as "Membership has its priviliges," volunteering has substantial advantages. Now, volunteering is not just to get discounted goodies, it carries its own reward of returning to other members.

Remember, we are the place to "Share what you know, learn what you don't."

In this Issue....

Raffle Ends At May 21st Meeting

Don't forget that the drawing for our first PC raffle of 2011 ends at the Business Meeting on May 21st. As usual, NTPCUG and the Texas Center for the Visually Challenged (TCVC) have worked together to provide an outstanding machine, lovingly assembled and configured by our illustrious Director, SIG Leader and Treasurer, Chuck Stark.

Be sure to get your raffle tickets at the May 21st meeting, preferably as you check-in.   As always, the proceeds are split between our User Group and TCVC. Computer parts previously donated to TCVC form the basis for this great machine.

For this raffle, we have a Sony Vaio PVC-V300G "All –In-One", professionally installed, updated, tuned and defumed. ("Defumed" must be a technical term that only experts like Chuck are familiar with). So if you are short on desk space or just need an unobtrusive PC in the family room, here is your chance.

The Specs …

Hardware . . . .
*   Sony Vaio PCV-V300G All-In-One ! (see attached pics)
*   Intel Pentium 4 2.8 GHz, 1 Gb Ram (2x512 max)
*   200 Gb SATA HDD, 15" Screen (diagonal)
*   Onboard: Realtek100Mb NIC, Conexant Modem,
*   SoundMax audio, DVD+-RW, Sony Memory Stick Slot,
*   Dual USB 2.0 ports, PCMCIA Slot
*   Linksys Wireless B PCMCIA Card

Software:
*   Windows XP Pro with Service Pack 3 and all updates
*   MS Security Essentials 2.0, MalwareBytes
*   Adobe Reader X, Flash & Shockwave,
*   CutePDF Writer, Tree Size, MyDefrag,
*   iTunes / Quicktime, VLC Media Player,
*   Java, Belarc, 7-zip . . .!

As usual, raffle tickets are$3 each, or four for $10. Tickets can be purchased at the Information Booth at the May "3rd Saturday" meeting, and the drawing will be during the noontime business meeting.

Yearly Dinner for NTPCUG Volunteers

At least once each year, we try to bring our various dedicated NTPCUG and TCVC volunteers together for a Thank You dinner, some camaraderie, and an opportunity to provide updates and get your input on how to make your efforts and our User Group more successful.

If you are, or have been, a regular volunteer, SIG Leader, Board member, or a participant in the efforts of the Texas Center for the Visually Challenged (TCVC), you should have already received an e-mail inviting you to this event, scheduled for the evening of May 18th. If your official invite got lost in the mail, please contact Chuck.Stark@ntpcug so he can verify his list. Please advise Chuck of the capacity you volunteered in and the timeframe, and Chuck will try

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) ...

Sessions with presentations, discussion, and exchanges of information

2nd Saturday

These meetings occur at the Microsoft facility at 7000 State Hwy 161, Building 1. See map at http://www.ntpcug.org/LocationMapsMicrosoft.html.

.NET Developers – 9:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org

Ongoing Series – Learning C# 2010

This month, our topic will be Handling Errors using Exceprions, by David Stark.

The book we are using is Teach Yourself Visual C# 2010 in 24 hours by Scott Dorman, ISBN: 0672331012, SAMS Publishing.

Here is what we are doing the next five months:

Shawn Weisfeld 6/11/2011
Understanding Generics

Tuc Goodwin 7/9/2011
Understanding Query Expression

David Stark 8/13/2011
Using Files and Streams

10:15 am

Windows Phone 7 Development – by Justin Weinberg

SharePoint – 11:30 am

Ram Yadav
ram_yadav@hotmail.com

Topic: Sharepoint 2010

3rd Saturday

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

Alphabetically

Building Web Sites — 8:00 am

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

presented by Alan Lummus

May's SIG will be an open discussion about any web building topic you'd like to discuss, so bring all those questions you've been aching to ask but haven't found the time. We'll also review Alan's agenda for his two Saturday workshops on May 28 and June 4, plus have an opportunity to add to that agenda to be sure your areas of interest or concern will be addressed. For more information on the workshops, or to sign up to attend, visit: http://www.bkmts.com/workshop.

Digital Photography — 10:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

I subscribe to PhotoVision by Ed Pierce. PhotoVision is an educational series of DVDs showing advanced techniques from noted professional photographers. The items covered in PhotoVision include different types of digital photography and marketing. I intend to select a few excepts from the series for showing during our SIG meetings.

I have selected three special interest segments that demonstrate fine posing, lighting, camera handling and environment.

We will note the digital camera settings and lens selections used for various applications for the excellent final results. Even though most members are more inclined to be serious amateurs and perhaps to merely improve their quality of point-and-shoot operation, most examples will help us understand and improve

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our product. For those shooting for images for profit, there will be many points of interest.

Come on in and enjoy Ed's cllocewtions while we dsicuss which parts are pertinent to our needs.

Bring you cameras and other tools of interest as we learn from one another.

Digital Photo Editing Software — 11:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

In the earlier Digital Photography SIG today, we used the Ed Pierce, DVD PhotoVision techniques for capturing better images. In our editing SIG, we will review these designed for professionals DVDs to learn several interesting editing techniques that will apply to our needs. Near the end of most of these Photovision episodes, the captured images use Adobe Photoshop for final editing for their end customers.

Although Photoshop is primary used, we will find the methodology very similar as used with our personal editors of choice, i.e., Corel Paint shop Pro, Google, Gimp, Photoshop Elements and others.

Come join us as we sample some of Ed's programs and we see where we can make our captured images look even better.

This is the Editing SIG. However, it would not be complete without including photographer, Jeff Dunn who uses his Photoshop editor only as a last resort. His beliefs are to do it right but in the camera. Let's check out what uses he has for Photoshop.

Come join us, share info, and enjoy.

Internet — 11:00 am

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

Glynn will be on vacation during the May meeting time. See you in June.

Investors - 1:30 pm

Gil Brand
gbrand@ntpcug.org

In May, we will have our usual Q&A session. Drop by and tell us about your latest investing success stories.

IT Professional — 9:30 am - 11:00 am

Larry Copeland, Co-SIG leader
Lacopeland2000@yahoo.com
Mark Phelps, Co-SIG leader
eytukan@gmail.com

No meeting this month. Plan for a special presentation in June.

Making Money on the Internet — 9:00 am

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

presented by Alan Lummus

May's SIG will be an open discussion about everything and anything having to do with making money on the Internet that you'd like to discuss, so bring your favorite topics and all those questions you've been aching to ask but haven't found the time. We'll also review Alan's agenda for his two Saturday workshops on May 28 and June 4, plus have an opportunity to add to that agenda to be sure your areas of interest or concern will be addressed. For more information on the workshops, or to register up to attend, visit: http://www.bkmts.com/workshop.

Microsoft Access SIG — 11:00 am

Larry Linson
larry.linson2@ntpcug.org

Jim Wehe
jimwehe@gmail.com

On Saturday, May 21, 2011, SIG Member **Geof Kohler** and SIG Co-Leader **Jim Wehe** will show and discuss *The New Look of Access 2010*. There are some significant improvements in *Microsoft Access 2010*, not necessarily related to the different user interface.

In April, 2011, SIG Member **Geof Kohler** demonstrated a membership database of his and also demonstrated using Access features that make record editing easier by selecting incomplete records from a large file. SIG Co-

Leader **Larry Linson** was unable to attend to present the presentation on *Calculations in Access* that had been planned, but the topic outline and the sample database to which that outline refers have been uploaded to the Shared Files folder on the second page of the NTPCUG Access SIG SharePoint Site.

Coming attractions: We solicit your suggestions for topics.

The topic for the June, 2011 meeting has not been determined. SIG Co-Leader **Larry Linson** will not be in attendance due to a scheduling conflict resulting from the necessity to move the date of the June meeting to Fourth Saturday, June 25 .

*VBA: When, where, and how to use it

We need to know what topics you'd like to hear, see, and learn – they can be related to these, or entirely new. Come to the meetings and let's discuss them. Write some suggestions, add your contact information so we can explore details if what you want isn't clear to us, and give them to **Jim** or **Larry**.

A continuing call for presenters: We want you to show us an *Microsoft Access* database you created and use, a tutorial on an Access-related topic, other Access- or Office-related material, or to contact a friend of yours who'd be a good guest speaker. If you need help constructing the presentation, see **Jim** or **Larry** – we're not from the government, but we're here to help.

Microsoft Certification SIG - 1:30 pm

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

In May, the CertSIG session will continue our exploration of the Microsoft Entity Framework, as well as have an overview presentation of ASP.NET MVC3.

The session will include walk-thru demos, so please bring your laptop. For more information on the free Visual Web Developer package, see http://www.asp.net/vwd.
Questions or comments?

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

Microsoft Excel – 8:00 am

Frank Tubbs, SIG leader
ftubbs@sbcglobal.net

The May session will cover using DEFINED NAMES in a spreadsheet. It is like being able to program without using a macro. The concept is simple and fun to test in your own problem set. It is a very versatile and useful skill to have in your toolkit. So come learn a way to expand formulas and use data that is sometimes out of place when simply typed into a cell but always in the right place in a DEFINED NAME.

Microsoft Expression Web — 10:00 am

Chris Morgan
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org

We will continue with our series "Introduction to Microsoft Expression Web 4" -- Chapters 5-7 in our book *Sams Teach Yourself Microsoft Expression Web 4 in 24 hours.* This is a big topic and is the basis for web site navigation and actions. Hopefully we can cover it in an hour. We will cover how you can turn text into a link to a document or another web page. We will also cover inserting photos and images into your web page and turning them into links. This is a vital part of understanding how to create web sites.

Mobile Computing — 10:00 am

No meeting in May. Plan for a special presentation in June.

Powershell – 9:00 am

Larry Weiss
lfw@airmail.net

Gil Brand
gbrand@ntpcug.org

"The Pipeline: Connecting Commands"

The PowerShell class using examples from Chapter 4 "The Pipeline: Connecting Commands" from the book "Learn Windows PowerShell in a Month of Lunches" by Don Jones continues, followed by a Q&A session. https://sites.google.com/site/powershellsig.

Windows Inside Out — 12:30 pm

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org

Glynn will be on vacation during the May meeting time. See you in June.

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

Gil Brand
gb1@ntpcug.org

Chuck Stark
chuck.stark@ntpcug.org

Open Q&A. If you have a troubled system, please contact Chuck or Gil for a possible 'live, no net' troubleshooting session.

Wireless Communications — 11:00 am

Birl Smith
birl.smith@ntpcug.org

Birl will be working with the Dallas Police Department. See you in June.

Word — 9:00 - 11:00 am

Sharon Dorsey
Sharon.Dorsey@ntpcug.org

Formatting – The Paragraph Group

There are four ways to access the commands in the paragraph group. One is using keyboard shortcuts. The second way to access paragraph commands is to click on the arrow in the bottom right corner of the Paragraph. (The paragraph group is located on both the Home tab and the Page Layout tab.) This launches the dialog box. A third way to gain access is to highlight text you want to change, hover the mouse over that text and the mini-toolbar will appear. Last, when you highlight text you can also right click on that text and choose Paragraph from the dropdown list, which also launches the dialog box.

In the table are the keyboard shortcuts for activities in the paragraph group. The left column titled "Previous Version" is Word 2003 keyboard shortcuts. The right column titled "New Version" is Word 2007 and 2010 keyboard shortcuts. You can use Word 2003 keyboard shortcuts in 2007 and 2010. I think you will agree with me that pressing Ctrl+L simultaneously is quicker than pressing Alt then H and then AL to align text to the left. Therefore, if you like keyboard shortcuts, you will probably use the 2007 keyboard shortcuts where there is no 2003 combination.

In our April 16 session, we started with the Bullet command in the paragraph group. Any time you open the Bullet command, you see the default Bullet Library. As you select and use bullets in your document, groups for Recently Used and Document Bullets appear. The first time you use bullets; these two groups will look the same. Save your document with a bullet list, close that document but keep Word open and you will see the difference. The Recently Used group will disappear but the Document

Previous Versions	Activity	New Version
Ctrl+*	Show/Hide Paragraph Marks	Alt-H-8
CTRL+L	Align Text Left	Alt-H-AL
CTRL+E	Center Text	Alt-H-AC
CTRL+R	Align Text Right	Alt-H-AR
CTRL+J	Justify	Alt-H-AJ
	Bullets	Alt-H-U
	Numbering	Alt-H-N
	Multilevel List	Alt-H-M
	Decrease Indent	Alt-H-AO
	Increase Indent	Alt-H-AI
	Sort	Alt-H-SO
	Line Spacing	Alt-H-K
	Shading	Alt-H-H
	Bottom Border	Alt-H-B

Bullets group is there.

Don't like the Bullet Library? Well, you can edit the Library by right clicking on a bullet and selecting Remove from the dropdown list. On the other hand, if you really, really like a bullet, you can add it to your Quick Access Toolbar for easy access.

Notice as you hover your mouse over a bullet, you see a preview in your document. That's the Live Preview function, which can be enabled or disabled in Word Options.

If you want fancy bullets that are not in the standard library, you can add bullets, which can be symbols, clipart or jpeg files by choosing Define New Bullet at the bottom of the Bullet Library dialog box. When you click on the picture button, you can scroll through the list of clipart or you can find by name using the search box at the top of the box. If you have a jpeg file you want to use as a bullet, you can import it to the picture list. Note – If you import a picture to the list, it cannot be removed from the list of pictures/clipart but it can be removed from the library.

Number Lists are very similar to Bullet Lists. Any time you open the Number command, you see the default Numbering Library. As you select and use numbers for lists in your document, groups for Recently Used Number Formats and Document Number Formats appear. The first time you use numbers; these two groups will look the same. Save your document with a numbered list, close that document but keep Word open and you will see the difference. The Recently Used group will disappear but the Document Number group is there.

Just like Bullet Lists, you can edit the Library by right clicking on a number format and selecting Remove from the dropdown list. In addition, you can add it to your Quick Access Toolbar for easy access.

As with bullets, you can create a new numbering format - as long as it is on the Number Style dropdown list. Start by selecting Define New Number Format at the bottom of the dialog box. Here since you are selecting letters or numbers, you might want to define font formatting. The font format can be different from text in your list.

When you make a change in the middle of a list, you might see the Auto Correct lightning bolt icon. It will ask if you want to continue or restart numbering. If you do not want to change the list, you can go the Numbering command and select Set Numbering Value found at the bottom of the dialog box. If you are starting a new list, you get to specify what number to start with. If you are continuing a list, it will pick up from the last item.

If you would like to learn more about formatting in the Paragraph group, please join us at the next meeting on May 21. We will review Lists and talk about the remaining functions in the Paragraph Group - Multilevel Lists, Indention and Line Spacing, Text Alignment, Borders and Sorting.

News from the Northwest

By Teresa Hennig

No column this month, look for it next month.

NTPCUG Member Websites

by Doug Gorrie

Are you an NTPCUG member? Do you have a website that you would like to share with other members? Here is your opportunity to publicize your hobby, personal interests or perhaps a business.

NTPCUG now permits each member to post their name along with <u>one</u> website at www. NTPCUG.org and in our newsletter. Member links to be posted are subject to Board approval, and cannot contain inappropriate content or promote illegal activities – all the usual conditions that responsible persons expect. Send us your links now!

Here are our current member sites:

Member	Website
Howard Lee Harkness	www.choicetraveltx.com
Bill Parker	www.Partec.net
Bob Hawkins	www.fairviewmicrowave.com
Doug Gorrie	www.JanetGorrieInteriors.com

If you wish to post as shown above, just e-mail *webmaster@ntpcug.org* with your name, member number and the URL of your desired website. We'll post your name and URL on our website and in the newsletter for as long as your membership remains current.

Another Unknown Threat to User Privacy

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

From time to time, my web searches lead me to bnet (www.bnet.com). According to a recent report there, Congress seems intent on examining citizen privacy breeches by Apple and Google over their tracking of individual customers and transmission of that data to advertisers, all without user permission.

Senators Al Franken, John Kerry and John McCain have proposed investigations into these practices and proposed a law to create a privacy bill of rights for consumers which would regulate digital advertisers.

Apple collects data on its iPhone users (I sure didn't know that when I bought one) without their knowledge, as does Google with its Android mobile system. Both have the ability to track customer conversations from their phones.

In addition, Google's Chrome browser, an alternative to Microsoft's Internet Explorer and the Firefox browser, does not have an option to block tracking of user activity (both IE and Firefox incorporate a "do not track" option). In fact, Google recently patented a new technology permitting their advertisers to track users based on browsing interests.

Recent investigations indicate that Pandora also collects a large amount of data on its users.
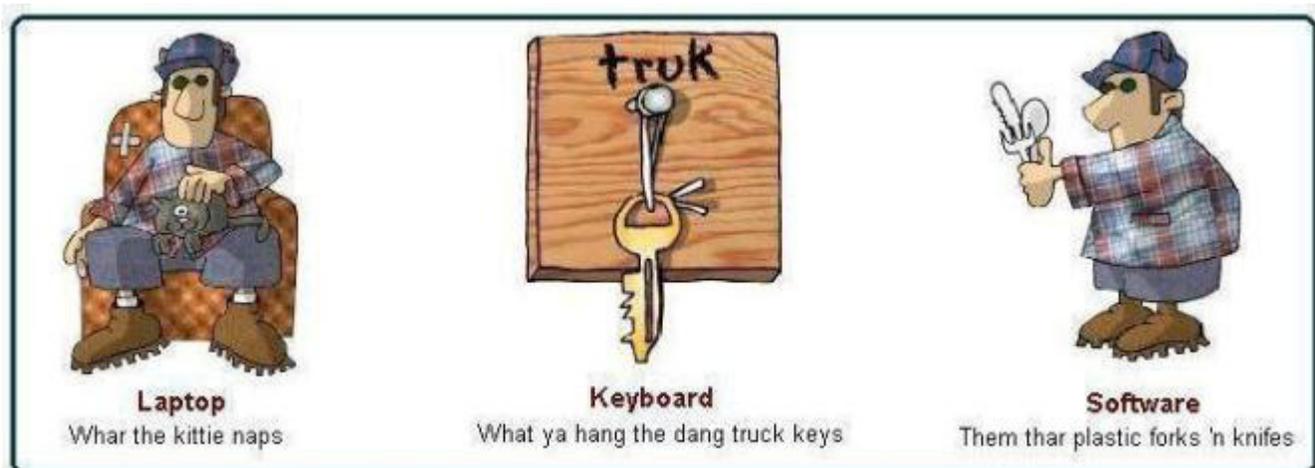
Clearly, user privacy is under threat from our generally trusted providers. From their perspective this tracking and browsing history might make business sense as many of these business models consist of offering free or minimal-cost services to users. Development and operational costs need to be covered somewhere.

While us "old codgers" may long for a return to the days before the Internet when privacy was a real thing, young folks today have no idea what they have lost, and more importantly, simply don't care.

Apple, Google and Pandora know that their services can be "hacked" and hard-to-find apps can be added but they know that consumers ultimately will submit to the demands of their advertisers because iPhones and Android phones won't work properly unless the user agrees to tracking.

Aware as we might be, there seem to be progressively fewer chances to protect our individual identity from the eyes of others.

Sad.

Laptop
Whar the kittie naps

Keyboard
What ya hang the dang truck keys

Software
Them thar plastic forks 'n knifes

User Privacy, Part Deux

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Further to the user privacy issue noted on page 8, Forbes magazine reports that all is not well with Apple.

Again, recall my report last month that I recently purchased an iPhone and could not be happier.

Forbes reports that South Korea has joined a number of other government officials asking whether the location-tracking file on iPhones and iPads breaks the law. As of this article, Apple is still not commenting officially about the tracking, but outraged iPhone and iPad customers may be amused by this comment from Steve Jobs last summer on Apple's approach to iPhone users' location privacy: "Privacy means people know what they're signing up for in plain English and repeatedly."

Hey, Steve, I'm an iPhone user and nobody told me, nor did I sign anything saying y'all could track my every movement.

In June 2010, when the new iOS 4 came out and Apple changed its privacy policy to address location privacy, Walt Mossberg raised the topic in an interview with Jobs. Mossberg mentioned some other privacy missteps in Silicon Valley by Facebook and Google — Jobs notes Google's "inadvertent" Wi-Spy data collection on its Street View cars. Mossberg then asked Jobs to comment on Apple's attitude toward protecting users' privacy, especially when it comes to location information. Since Apple has said nothing to date, it's worth looking back on Apple's views in the summer of 2010 when the company first started storing this file on people's phones. Jobs said:

"We've always had a very different view of privacy than some of our colleagues in the Valley. We take privacy extremely seriously. As an example, we worry a lot about location in phones. And we worry that some 14-year-old is going to get stalked and something terrible is going to happen because of our phone."

Jobs points out that Apple doesn't allow apps to get users' location data without their express permission. Then he says:

"Privacy means people know what they're signing up for in plain English and repeatedly. That's what it means. I'm an optimist. I believe people are smart. Some people want to share more data than other people do. Ask them. Ask them every time. Make them tell you to stop asking them if they get tired of your asking. Let them know precisely what you're going to do with their data. That's what we think."

According to Apple, users do have the option to turn location services off on their iPhones, and most do not know precisely how their location is being tracked and stored on their phones. The meaning -- this statement from Jobs doesn't track with reality.

It's not clear why Apple hasn't answered questions about the file. Given previous statements like this one from Jobs, privacy advocate and EPIC director Marc Rotenberg speculates that the company is embarrassed. In the absence of official comment, tech commentator Daring Fireball suggests the file was an engineering mistake. If that's the case, Apple may have to resort to the "inadvertent collection" explanation popularized by Google last year.

Now I gotta figure out how to turn off location tracking.

This Month in Our History

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Well, there certainly was enough devastation around the country due to recent spring storms. I hope you and yours were spared from destruction.

This month, we look at the May '86 and '91 issues of *PC News*, which can be found on our website.

At the May '86 meeting, the support and marketing managers of Software Recording Company of America (SRCA) presented a new recording software named *AutoMentor*. It was noted that major companies with leading approaches to technology used *AutoMentor* to create or automate software authoring, for training and for software and hardware demonstrations.

Reagan Andrews wrote an extensive article on slow data erosion common to hard drives of the time. He recommended running *CHKDSK* at every boot-up, sending the output to the printer and keeping a permanent record of bad sectors on the then-prevalent 4- to 20MB drives. He also recommended frequent backups of important files, perhaps as frequently as daily. I am not aware of such "creeping deterioration" in modern hard drives, and shudder at the thought of running **CHKDSK** on a modern 1TB+ drive. But the recommendation for frequent backups is as valid today as ever.

Fred Williams had a 5-page article titled *Introduction to RS-232*, "the most common communication standard." I rather doubt any members save the true "propeller heads" care about such matters anymore.

John Keohane wrote an article titled *Package Software and the PC* in which he noted the benefits of purchasing packaged software rather than engaging programmers to develop in-house applications. The main advantage of "purchasing vs. building" was/is still the sharing of development costs across a hopefully large number of purchasers. Even in 1986, programmers went for $50 an hour and systems analysts $100 an hour.

Disk of the Month featured PC-Write, at the time a very popular shareware for word processing.

In the May '91 *PC News*, then-President **Jim Hoisington** wrote in his Prez Sez column that member **Vincent Gaines** had built a storage cabinet on wheels to store Info Desk items at the Infomart. I wonder whatever happened to that cabinet, and fear it went to a landfill when Infomart cleaned us out.

Jim also had number 51 of his series titled On Complexity. He dealt with the problem of storing real numbers (those with decimal fractions) on a computer. All computers deal in binary data, a series of 1s and 0s of expanding length as the stored number increases in magnitude. Early computers had no math co-processor, so storing other than whole numbers was a problem. As Jim pointed out, the advent of the add-on math coprocessor solved this problem. With modern computers, the math function is included in the processor chip.

Doug Gorrie, then our systems administrator (like some things seem to never change), had an extensive article titled *BBS Tip of the Month* in which he reported the usage statistics of our BBS. Seems it was pretty popular and enjoyed a high monthly usage.

In *Variety* Store, **Reagan Andrews** wrote of Compaq Computers' move to the new RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Chip) chip. He noted that Compaq was then the foremost producers of high end IBM PC clones and servers. As usual, he covered a number of other interesting topics which I will leave to the reader's responsibility.

The mythical **Ben Thar** wrote another of *The Adventures of PC Tech*, telling the story of software installation when programs came on a large number of floppy disks with several installation and user manuals. Can't say I miss those "Good Old Days."

Thanks for reading. If you wish to see the full historic newsletter issues, log on to our website, WWW.NTPCUG.ORG or SP.NTPCUG.ORG and look for News.

A New Look for News

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org

I watched '60 Minutes' on TV on March 6, 2011 and their commentator, Andy Rooney reviewed printed publications as he saw them. He had always loved the printed matter and kept a massive library of books that he and others wrote. He loved having them readily available to pick up, browse, re-read, and maybe to just handle. He liked to read the printed newspapers and magazines. He then went on to explain that he was told that eBooks, eMagazines, and eReaders will make printing on paper totally obsolete. He expressed his sorrow and stated he would love to continue reading from the printed documents.

As Andy went through his dissertation in his own manner, I had to agree with him in that I too still like to handle, read, and write for incorporation on paper. I like to store my good books forever, magazines for months, and newspapers for days. What I see on the TV screen and instant abbreviated Web news gets only partially absorbed, and perhaps never seen or found again.

Further problems with displayed electronic media are that practically none of it is truly documented -- usually no dateline, mostly void of factual backup, no reference source, yet readers do not seem to care. I guess the new media is a shortcut to what writers and publishers practiced for centuries -- publish just what the people want to see and hear. This may be incongruous to the basics of news documentation we were taught several years ago, hence the establishment of this new-look minimal comprehension did not just mysteriously appear.

Now getting back to Andy's final closing; He stated that if printing of books becomes obsolete and replaced, he stated that he certainly hopes that this trend doesn't relate to writers.

NTPCUG Website Updates

Since the mid-90's, NTPCUG has had a webpage presence on the Internet, first provided by Onramp Technologies, then bought out by Verio. Over time, we chose to move and maintain some files, especially the larger ones, on our own web server once located at Verio, then ThePlanet, and now at King Of Glory Lutheran Church, our 3rd Saturday meeting location. Maintaining larger files elsewhere ourselves helps reduce storage costs, and has worked well for us, but over time, the costs at Verio have slowly risen to the point of being prohibitive.

So NTPCUG has been working to toward relocating our Verio website to GoDaddy. That move is almost complete, so you should see the results by no later than the end of May. In the process, outdated material will be removed, and response time should improve dramatically.

An announcement to members will be provided when the change takes place, asking for your help in identifying any glitches remaining from the change. Be looking for that notification in the very near future.

Simple encryption of USB flash drives

by Ralph Green, Jr, VP of ntlug.org

A lot of us carry USB drives and they are very convenient. But, they are so convenient that you might be tempted to put information on the drives that you would really not like someone else to find. This might be passwords or PINs to your bank accounts. It might just be personal notes that you intend to keep private.

The best advice I have seen is to carry <u>two </u>drives. I'll call those drives secure and open. Put the important data on the secure one and encrypt that drive. Put everything else on the open drive.

I'd suggest that the secure drive be a lot smaller than the open drive. That way, you can make a backup of it in encrypted form on the open drive and give yourself some insurance. I'll show you one way to do that backup at the end of the article.

Remember that these drives are not reliable, long-term data stores. Even good drives advertise a five year lifetime, and that is probably more optimistic than is warranted. Most drives you buy today use multi-level cell flash chips, so they are actually <u>not</u> good in the long-term. So, be sure that you backup any important information. This article will guide you through the steps needed to create an encrypted USB flash drive that is quite secure yet still easy to use.

There are multiple ways to accomplish what this guide wants to accomplish. The instructions here will work on most modern Linux distributions. Linux, unlike the major OS vendors, actually has people who care about security making the decisions about what to include, and has developed a capable encryption infrastructure. There are programs that will stop casual attacks on the market leading operating systems, but I don't know anything I would trust with my own data.

This guide will use a terminal prompt and give you commands to type. That is the most universal way to do it and fairly easy to understand. The instructions were tested on two Linux-based operating systems - Ubuntu Natty Narwhal (aka 11.04) and OpenSuSE 11.4. The best simple write-up I found online was an article on the Ubuntu wiki. I based my instructions on that guide and picked Ubuntu to test on because of this article. Similar to that article, this guide is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 License.

https://help.ubuntu.com/community/EncryptedFilesystemsOnRemovableStorage

In this article, I will encrypt the entire flash drive, and I tend to choose the more secure options when choices are available. You can certainly alter my procedure to suit your own needs. I think the way I did it will be fine for most people. This procedure will also work for USB hard drives.

Hard drives can take a long time to initialize with random data, so I usually don't do them in the manner described below. Instead, I usually mount them inside the computer as SATA, PATA, or SCSI drives to get better speed.

Speaking of licenses, some people may ask why I don't use TrueCrypt. When I looked at TrueCrypt a while back, it was limited to holding FAT file systems in its encrypted volumes. I am picky about my filesystems. That problem now seems to be fixed, but the license for TrueCrypt is not a good open source license. It is, in fact, bad enough that no major Linux distribution will include TrueCrypt, so I would rather use more standard solutions. The solution I picked requires no software to be installed on machines where you just want to use your encrypted USB drive. That seems like a big plus to me.

The security used here is based on the LUKS(Linux Unified Key Setup) system that is widely supported in Linux.

No system like this is 100 percent secure, but if you pick a good pass phrase, it will be almost impossible for anyone to decrypt your drive in the next several years. However, once you unlock

it on your computer, any program on that computer could conceivably access the information. So as Henri Ducard warned, "Always mind your surroundings."

There are not many prerequisites. I will install a little software, but this is only needed on the computer where you are going to set up the encrypted USB flash drive. Most major Linux distributions include the pieces you need to mount the encrypted drive and read and write it.

For steps after this one, the commands are usually the same for Ubuntu and OpenSuSE. The only real difference would be how they are run. On Ubuntu, you normally run these commands with sudo and that is what I will show. On OpenSuSE, you normally run them as root. On Gentoo, you may need to set certain kernel options, and that is left as an exercise for the reader. Since the different distributions use different tools to install software and package the software with different names, this first step differs between distributions. The software installed by these packages s the same, so the commands will be the same. Only the packaging is different. That is not to say some Linux distribution might not change a program name, since they can.

For Ubuntu
　　sudo apt-get install cryptsetup
For OpenSuSE (as root)
　　zypper in cryptconfig
For Gentoo (as root)
　　emerge cryptsetup device-mapper
Here are the steps to encrypt the drive:

1) First, we need to identify the device name for the secure drive. Insert the USB flash drive into a USB port, if it is not inserted already. Then read this section a couple of times before you try the procedure, because if you pick the wrong device, you might blank out your hard drive. It is usually pretty obvious, so just pay attention.

At the terminal prompt, type the command:
　　dmesg | tail -20
If the USB drive has been inserted for awhile, 20 lines may not be enough, so increase that number. Look for a line that has something like:
　　[sdb] 129440 512-byte logical blocks: (66.2 MB/63.2 MiB)
That shows me that my device is sdb, so I would use /dev/sdb throughout this procedure. Implicit in the last statement is the fact that I would use sdb1 where you see sdX1, which indicates the first partition on the device sdb. In order to make it less likely that people would just cut and paste these instructions and destroy a real drive, I will refer to the drive in all these instructions as sdX.

As an extra check that you have the right drive, you can run the following command and see if the results seem reasonable. Your built-in hard drives should be much larger than your USB flash drive. Look and see that the size is about what you would expect for the USB flash drive.
　　sudo fdisk -l /dev/sdX
I am more careful about this than most people. I usually repeat this step every time I insert the drive during this procedure. I only remember a device name changing once when doing this and I had been doing a lot of drive swapping on that computer. If the drives moved, it is fairly unlikely that they would move in such a way as to cause you a real problem. Since we are writing to the device at a pretty low level and as root, safety seems prudent. So, I do it to be safe, or as some might say, to allay my concern.

2) Next, we will blank out the drive with random data. This step is not absolutely required, but it is good security practice. If you do as I suggested and use a small flash drive for your secure data, this step won't take long. My 64 MB secure drive took about 30 seconds -- larger drives take longer.

```
sudo dd if=/dev/urandom of=/dev/sdX bs=4K
```
3) Next, we prepare the partition table.
```
sudo fdisk /dev/sdX
```
Because we blanked the drive to random data, there will be no valid partition table to start. You will have the option to write an empty partition table here. Type *w* at the prompt and press enter. You may see a message about the ioctl() failing and that the partition table will be available after a reboot. If you see that message, reboot and then continue. If not, just continue.

4) Continue setting up the partition table.
```
sudo fdisk /dev/sdX
```
Type *n* and press enter. That will create a new partition. Type *p* and enter to make it a primary partition. Type 1 and enter for partition 1. Take the default choices until you get back to the Command prompt in fdisk. Then, type *w* and enter to write the new partition table. As before, if you get a message saying the table will be read after the next boot, then you need to reboot before going on.

5) Create the encrypted partition.
```
sudo cryptsetup --verify-passphrase luksFormat /dev/sdX1 -c aes -s 256 -h sha256
```
Here, you will be asked for 3 things. First, you will have to type *YES* to go on. They really mean *YES*, as it must be upper case. Then press enter. If you typed *YES*, then you will be prompted twice for the pass-phrase. Pick a strong one, but one you will remember. If you forget it, you will never get the data back off of this drive. If you make it too easy, people may be able to guess it or brute force attack it.

6) Unlock the partition and map it for use. The name *secureusb* is my choice, but you can name it whatever you prefer.
```
sudo cryptsetup luksOpen /dev/sdX1 secureusb
```
7) Now, we will make a filesystem in this encrypted partition. I prefer ext2 for this sort of thing. I don't need journaling on a flash drive, and using ext2 means fewer writes to the device and a longer life. Use the same name here as in the last step. In my case, it is *secureusb*.
```
sudo mkfs -t ext2 -m 2 -O dir_index,filetype,sparse_super /dev/mapper/secureusb
```
8) Most recent Linux distributions will automatically mount USB drives. So, pull the USB flash drive out of the USB port, wait a few seconds and reinsert it. You should be prompted for your pass phrase, so enter it as requested. Look to see what directory the drive is mounted into. There are several ways to find this. I usually type ls *-l /media/* to see the directory where the USB drive mounted. It will probably look something like "/media/001B-9511".

For convenience, we now can set the ownership of the directory on the flash drive.
```
sudo chown user:group /media/disk
```
For *user* and *group*, you should substitute the user and group you want the secure drive to mount as. Ubuntu creates a group for each user, so I would put something like *ralph:ralph* here. OpenSuSE puts users into a users group and so I would put *ralph:users* here. For disk, you put the directory name the device mounted into.

9) Enjoy. You've now created your encrypted flash drive.

This may all seem a bit complicated. But, you only have to go through all this when you create the encrypted drive. It still took me less than 10 minutes to setup my secure, encrypted drive. Plug this drive into a new system and you will be prompted for the pass phrase, and the drive will be then available for use.

When you enter the pass phrase, you often have an option to tell the system how long to remember the password. The most secure option is to "Forget password immediately". That way, your system knows how to access the encrypted data until you unmount the drive, and the pass phrase is not

stored anywhere in memory or your hard drive. That is especially true, if you are using encrypted swap, but that is another article. So, it is a little complicated to set up, and simple to use on a daily basis. And, if you lose the drive, your secrets will stay your secrets.

   You may want to make a backup of the secure drive, and I recommend that you do. Here is how I do it. I insert the USB flash drive into a USB port, and unlock it with my pass phrase. Then, I unmount the drive. On Gnome, I right click on the drive icon and choose *eject*. Then, I go to a terminal prompt and run the following command:

```
sudo dd if=/dev/sdb of=./secureflash.drv
```

   That gives me an image copy of the drive into a file named secureflash.drv. I then copy that file to my open USB drive. I like the secure drive to be smaller, so I can fit this backup onto the open drive and still have plenty of room.

   Questions? Feel free to come to the Linux SIG and talk about them. I am frequently in the #ntlug irc channel on freenode, logged in as Severian.

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NTPCUG NEWSLETTER AD RATES AND DESCRIPTION

Paid advertising is available within the North Texas PC News at reasonable rates. The online Newsletter is published monthly and is distributed in PDF format to approximately 200 registered members.

SIZE	Price / One Issue	Price Each - Six Issues
Full Page	$120	$ 85
Half Page (vertical)	$ 75	$ 65
Half Page (horizontal)	$ 75	$ 65
Quarter Page	$ 50	$ 40
Business Card	$ 35	$ 25
NTPCUG Members	Half Price	

Policies & Mechanicals
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  - o   JPEG or approved format
  - o   300 DPI minimum
- Text ads should follow most commonly used font styles
- No ads on front page
- Related only; suitable at discretion of NTPCUG
- Payment in advance
- Send requests for information, contacts, or orders to: **Advertising@ntpcug.org**

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?

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.

This is an ongoing need. YOU can hlep, and it's not difficult. Training provided, so you really have No excuse not to assist - right?

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
davef81@gmail.com

Prepare, contribute to and distribute the monthly newsletter. Edit articles for better wording, formatting.

What's Changing at NTPCUG?

by Doug Gorrie
doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org

For those not aware, NTPCUG has been providing our own e-mail service for years, going back to at least the late 80's, and maintained by dedicated members such as Tom Prickett, Fred Williams, Gil Brand, Don Westurn, Larry Copeland and myself.

Early e-mail was provided by use of a BBS (Bulletin Board System), which allowed our members to ask and answer questions among themselves in those days prior to widespread use of the Internet. Such Q&A was critical in those days since there were no easy ways to research issues.

When I joined NTPCUG in the late 80's, our BBS had 3-4 analog phone lines, connected to individual modems (remember mo-dems?), and a computer running BBS software.   We housed our equipment in rented office space (an oversize closet) near Addison Airport, with phone lines provided for the usual fees by Southwestern Bell. Since most calls to the BBS were incoming only, we reduced our costs by not having Touch-tone service, restricting our lines to pulse-dialing only, which was cheaper.

It sounds archaic by today's standards, but it worked well. Our BBS handled a considerable amount of traffic. Members typically posted messages to the conference area most closely aligned with their topic, and other members read those posts and provided answers.

As the Internet became a topic of interest, we realized that we could increase the breadth of questions and answers if we could e-mail those individuals and companies that were 100's of miles away and outside of NTPCUG membership. Sysadmin Fred Williams stepped forward to integrate some Australian-based software into our BBS, and with that change, we started reaching individuals around the globe using the familiar name@domain format we use so easily today.

Notable too is that all this was occurring *before* browser software had become widespread, and of course before Microsoft's Internet Explorer had seen its first days.

With the advent of our connectivity to the Internet, we effectively became an Internet Service Provider, providing our members with the ability to dial into our BBS to send and receive Internet e-mail. We accumulated member's outbound e-mail on our BBS, then we connected to "the Internet" a few times each day to forward that outbound e-mail and to receive incoming e-mail intended for our members. Incoming e-mail was saved on our BBS system until members connected-in to get it.

Over the years since, e-mail has gotten better, but also gotten worse. When we started sending Internet e-mail, neither spam nor viruses were an issue. Obviously, all that has changed, such that spam, malware, and e-mail address harvesting are widespread. We've been relatively successful in blocking most malware, but doing so has become more time intensive then a volunteer group can readily sustain.

In addition, the need for NTPCUG e-mail addresses is no longer the sizeable benefit it was in the 90's, since e-mail addresses are provided without charge when you sign-up for internet service through a myriad of providers, or free through providers such as Google, Hotmail, Yahoo and others. Also, all these services provide malware detection and removal, and provide dedicated resources to manage those risks.

All the while, active use of NTPCUG e-mail addresses has dwindled, with at

most only 30-35 members using those addresses with any apparent frequency.

So What's Changing?

As a result, NTPCUG will soon be taking some steps to outsource e-mail within the NTPCUG.ORG domain. By doing so, we will reduce the maintenance burden on our volunteers, increase the level of malware detection, and regain the ability for members to access their e-mail *from anywhere* using a web browser.

Of course, these are the same services already offered by Verizon, AT&T, Times Warner, Gmail and hundreds of others. So although no one will be left out "in the cold", wherever possible, we hope to reduce our e-mail "footprint" such that ongoing maintenance of the NTPCUG.ORG domain is easier for our volunteers.

In the next few weeks, current members with NTPCUG e-mail addresses will be contacted directly with more detailed information, and we'll work out ways to make a smooth transition. These details and available options will be communicated well in advance, allowing for user testing, and basically have everyone squared away before we "throw the switch". Even then, we will have back-out procedures available in case things fall apart – very unlikely however.

Should you have questions, feel free to contact us at postmaster@ntpcug.org and we'll try to provide answers. As always, thanks for being an NTPCUG member.

MIDDLE AGE TEXTING CODES

As a service to our more senior members, we offer the following definitions for your edification. These are for communication with your age mates. The youth have a whole different set of translations.

CODE	TRANSLATION
ATD	At the doctors
BFF	Best friend fell
BTW	Bring the wheelchair
BYOT	Bring your own teeth
FWIW	Forgot where I was.
GGPBL	Gotta go, pacemaker battery low
GHA	Got heartburn again
IMHO	Is my hearing aid on
LMDO	Laughing my dentures out
OMMR	On my massage recliner
OMSG	Oh my! Sorry -- gas
ROFLACGU	Rolling on floor laughing and can't get up
TTYL	Talk to you louder

Calendar

May	June	July
14 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft	**11** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft	**9** 9:00 am—Noon **2nd Saturday** at Microsoft
21 8:00 am—2:30 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory	**25** 8:00 am—2:30 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory	**16** 8:00 am—2:30 pm **3rd Saturday** at King of Glory
	NOTE: *This is actually the 4th Saturday in June.*	