

New Style



Newsletter of the La Crosse PC Users Group

Volume 23 Number 2

February 2003

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February Meeting

February 26th, 7:00pm

Lutheran Hospital Overhaul Auditorium

ON-LINE BANKING

Save time, Bank Online

Presented by Gloria Beaser - Wells Fargo

Online Banking is as easy as 1,2,3

Why should I use Online Banking?

New issues and services

A New Experience With Treating a Computer Virus

By John Storlie

A client of mine had a problem with not being able to shut down her laptop computer gracefully – she had to power down and go through the scandisk upon re-booting. After the usual inspection of the condition of the system in general, the idea of a virus/worm became a likely suspect, so a virus check was attempted. She admitted that her anti-viruses had not been updated/scanned for some months and the Norton Anti-Virus program came on the screen for a few seconds and then disappeared, so no update or scan was possible. Uninstalling and re-installing Norton also proved unsuccessful so I called Symantec (parent of Norton) and while they tried some things that seemed logical, none of them changed the situation.

Norton's final recommendation was an 800 number that would provide two levels of service. The first, which cost \$39.95, would provide a protocol and you were on your own, and the second was for \$69.95, and they would walk you through it. By this time, it was Friday night after 6:00 PM and they were out of business until Monday morning.

Kevin Blum, a club member who also has his own consulting business, as do some others in the club, suggested that there was an on-line service at www.pandasoftware.com which would download software and scan the system on-line and fix the files - and it was free for a certain number of times. I took the laptop home and accessed the Internet there and after a some time, the system had been cleaned of six corrupted files (containing the following viruses/worms: W32/Magistr.B, W32/Bugbear and Trj/PSW.BugBear). It also produced a report on the activity, which allowed the re-loading of Norton and doing a second scan with Norton, which verified a clean system. The system also shut down normally so the virus had done its dirty deeds in at least two areas that were detectable and, more than likely, others that had not been encountered as yet.

As a result of this experience I have purchased Panda Anti Virus from Kevin and installed it on my test machine and will use it to connect infected hard drives to that machine and do a virus scan with my own A-V system - and if not successful by that method, will go to Panda's on-line site. Kevin assures me that their system is updated daily as opposed to the other products that are done approximately bi-weekly.

New Disk Tools

by Shane Lambert

Disk Investigator

Disk Investigator helps you to discover all that is hidden on your computer hard disk. It can also help you to recover lost data. Display the true drive contents by bypassing the operating system and directly reading the raw drive sectors. View and search raw directories, files, clusters, and system sectors. Verify the effectiveness of file and disk wiping programs. Undelete previously deleted files.

Clean Disk Security

This program gives you secure file deletion, making sure that deleted files cannot be undeleted again. Deleting a file normally just removes the file's directory entry, but the data itself remains on the disk. This program completely eliminates the contents of deleted files. The highly acclaimed Gutmann disk cleaning method is now available as an option. This program can also clean the Window's swap file, and can optionally clean unneeded temporary files from your hard disk, such as your Internet browser cache, files in your system's Recycle Bin, and can clear the "recent files" list. Comes with a direct disk viewer for discovering exactly what is on your hard disk.

(Click on the titles above to download the programs.)

La Crosse PC Users Group (LCPC)

Treasurer's and Membership Report

January 2003

*Dick Dahlby, Treasurer
dahlby@cs.com*

Income received in January, and to-date in February, was \$100.00 from four membership renewals and one new membership. Membership renewals were Ken Buckley, Brian Hopkins, Paul Shie, and Gary Stelzig. Thank you for your continued interest and support.

Our new member is Laura Gonia. Laura was a visitor at several meetings before joining last month. She presently does not use email, but will as soon as she becomes more comfortable with the use of her computer. Once she has email capabilities and provides her email address to me, I will add her to the LCPC ListServ. I will then see if she would like to provide a brief "bio" of herself, her computing hardware/software platform and computing interests, and what she would like to obtain from her membership in LCPC. Please join me in welcoming Laura to LCPC.

The only expense paid in January was: \$15.83 for 25 photocopies of the December edition of the LCPC Newsletter.

The LCPC checking account balance as of 02/13/2003 is \$1,103.83.

We presently have 52 enrolled members in LCPC.

Members whose annual renewal fees (dues) are presently past due are: (December) Bill Brockmiller, and (January) Don and Carol Frank Atkinson, and Jack Storlie.

One membership renewal is due in February: Larry Nagy

Annual dues are \$20 (individual or couple), and checks should be made payable to La Crosse PC Users Group. Dues may be mailed to either of the following addresses.

La Crosse PC Users Group	Dick Dahlby
P.O. Box 2991	501 Olivet St
La Crosse, WI 54601-2991	La Crosse, WI 54603-1318

Reminder to all members:

If you become more than three (3) months delinquent in paying your membership dues, you will be subject to removal from the ListServ, and from LCPC. So please, be prompt with your renewal fees.

Also, if you change your email address, it is very important to inform LCPC of the change, so that the Membership ListServ can be changed accordingly. To do so, please send me an email with your new email address and I will make the change to the ListServ. If you haven't received an email from the ListServ within the last two weeks, please let me know that also, so that I can check on it. Thank you.

More Virus Horror Stories

by Shane Lambert

After reading Jack's article on page one I decided to try and run the Panda Software Active (online) scan just to see how things were on my computer. I had been having problems with Netscape loosing it's settings so I recently switched to Eudora for my E-mail. I started reading information on the Panda Software web site only to find out the problems I was having were most likely caused by the Yaha virus. So the next thing I did was scan my computer.

The scan took over an hour to complete as I have a lot of stuff on this hard drive. I started the scan then sat back and watched TV. I didn't expect to see any viruses, after all, I keep an up to date version of Norton's on my system. I was utterly suprised that Panda found 26 infected files including the W32/Magistr.B, W32/Bugbear, and the aforementioned Yaha. The software was able to successfully disinfect all the files, and a second scan the next day returned a clean report.

These results prompted me to scan two other computers at the house, one my mother uses for e-mail and playing games and another just for playing games. Mom's computer came back with a clean report - she's only been online for about a month. The other computer which my nephew uses to browse the web when I am on the main computer came back with 12 infected files. I hadn't installed an anti-virus on that yet but wasn't worried as nobody does e-mail there. Guess viruses can infect your computer WITHOUT e-mail, or maybe the viruses migrated from the main computer while playing network games. However they got their, Panda removed them and I have since installed anti-virus software on it.

Then it was time to scan the computers at work. I have four systems up and running, one server, two workstations and a Linux system. The Linux system was checked first, and as I expected was clean from viruses. The two workstations, both of which are used for e-mail, were scanned next and came back clean as well. My hopes were high that the scan on the server would come back clean as well. This computer has over 500,000 files so I knew the scan would take a while, so I started it just before leaving the office one night knowing it would be done in the morning.

I was downright disgusted at the results - 216 infected files with over 12 different viruses! Norton has failed me and as soon as my Enterprise version of Panda comes in NAV will be removed and banned from my systems forever. It's terrible to think that one of the most advertised and promoted anti-virus programs failed so miserably.

The Moral of the story: I guess it has to be to never trust one anti-virus program. I used to run McAfee and Norton in the office, and when Norton found more viruses then McAfee I went to using Norton exclusively. If I had known about Panda then I would have started using it. I want to thank Jack Storlie and Kevin Blum for bring this software to our attention!

Software Download Sources

By Ira Wilsker ira@apcug.org

In some of my recent columns, I wrote about several software products that were available for free download from their authors' websites. Several loyal readers have asked for information on websites where they can view many titles, and download them from a single source. This column is in response to those requests.

DOWNLOAD.COM – Claiming to be one of the largest sources on the Internet for downloadable software, download.com is a subsidiary of CNet. While CNet originally started as a 30-minute cable TV show, it has now developed into an Internet powerhouse with much of its growth due to "dot.com" acquisitions. Download.com is an assimilation of several other former premier download resources into a single, easy to navigate supersite. With several hundred thousand titles available for Windows, Mac, Linux, Palm, PocketPC, cell phones, and other platforms, download.com may have earned its laurels. At the top-right of the page is a search box; a topic or title can be entered in the box, and the pull-down menu gives the choice of searching in all downloads, Windows only, all of CNet (including reviews, news, price comparisons, etc.), or searching the entire web. If a particular title is unknown to the user, a simpler and classical menu interface is available. The major menu topics are MP3 and Audio, Internet, Games, Business, Mobile (Palm, PocketPC, cell phone), Multimedia and Design, Web Developing, Software Developing, Utilities and Drivers, and Home and Desktop. Each of the menu headings when opened reveals a comprehensive lower directory of detailed topics, with several levels often appearing below the main topic. A little browsing practice of the menus will reveal a generous cornucopia of choices, sometime numbering in the thousands. Once a software topic is found, and multiple titles are displayed, simply clicking on the column headers "Name", "Date", "User Rating", or "Downloads" can sort alphabetically, by date, by user ranking, or by download volume, respectively. A quick review of just the top few "most popular" downloads will indicate that for some software titles, literally millions of copies of individual titles have been downloaded from download.com. For those who browse this site frequently, a click on the "New Releases" heading on the main page will show the latest additions to the site. On the date that I am typing this, 1105 new titles have been added so far today. As another example of the dependency that many place on this site, the top download of a "new program today" (the evening that I am typing this), is already over 162,000 downloads, and one file "new this week" has had almost one-half million downloads from download.com in the past seven days. As an additional online tool to help narrow the surfers' choices, many of the screens also allow the user to sort by operating systems, license terms (free to use, trial versions, commercial), file size, and category can be selected.

Other headings on download.com can also be used to narrow searches. These headings on the main page include "IS/IT"; "Software Developer" for programmers; "Web Developer" for web page authors; "Business"; "Personal Tech" which includes audio and video utilities, internet utilities, and home and desktop utilities; "Mobile" includes Palm, PocketPC, WindowsCE, Psion, EPOC, and cell phone software; and a huge "Games" section. As a source of downloads, download.com is an excellent resource.

TUCOWS – "The Ultimate Collection of Winsock Software" originally started as a source of Internet related utilities, but has now grown into a massive network of local websites offering an extensive collection of software for a variety of platforms. Containing over 30,000 updated titles, TUCOWS has become one of my "personal favorite" resources. With software available for Windows, Macintosh, Linux, BeOS, Windows 3.1 (still available!), PDAs, and a variety of other platforms and operating systems, TUCOWS is a geek's paradise. In order to make downloads faster, and complying with the "netiquette" that says that downloads should be done close to home, TUCOWS has hundreds of local mirror sites around the world that are frequently updated with the latest in titles. A listing of all current TUCOWS mirrors is online at www.tucows.com, at the "Choose Your Mirror" link near the center of the page. In Texas alone, there are over a dozen local sites offering the TUCOWS service, with EXP offering the service locally in southeast Texas at tucows.exp.net.

Connecting to a local TUCOWS server shows a tabular heading of "Business", "Games", "Home and Education", "Internet", "Multimedia", "Systems and Utilities", and "Themes". Also on the main page is a weekly list of the top 100 downloads, indicating the popularity of specific titles. The number one downloaded title, which was the topic of a recent column here, is the excellent Irfan View software, which I personally use on a frequent basis. For those who desire to keep up with the latest in available software, TUCOWS offers a free daily email describing the newest software. By clicking on a tab at the top of the main page, another menu will appear showing sub-topics. The "Internet" tab, for example, opens a menu with an even dozen categories with easy-to-understand topics. It is here, for example, that Internet related software from spam killers to instant messaging services could be found.

There are many other fine resources available to locate and download available software. One warning is to beware of some sources, because it has been documented that some sites, as well as several of the file sharing sites, can be sources of viruses, worms, and Trojans embedded in downloaded software. While not perfect, reliable sources such as download.com and TUCOWS are generally safe places to find software.

Experimenting with and using downloaded, often free, software can be a significant enhancement to your computing experience.

Random Access Memory!

By Bob Elgines, CRCC Editor, elginesz@rraz.net

CORE MEMORY '50:

Pictured above is a single ferrite donut used in a core memory unit for one bite of memory. When the core is magne-tized that is equal to a one and when it is demagnetized that is equal to a zero. This required a lot of power, so large DC power supplies were needed producing a lot of heat. Core memory units were built to a maximum of 48K and were used in the US until 1993. The last USAF tube type computer operating in the United States with a memory core unit was finally shut down in the summer of 1986. It was located in the Block house just outside the main gate of Luke AFB in Arizona. The computer tube type processor took up a room 40ft by 40ft with ten each 3ft by 8ft high cabinets and only 48KB of RAM to cover the South Western United States SAGE aircraft tracking system with multiple RADAR input feeds.

CHIP MEMORY '69:

To speed up computers we now write and read more than one BIT at a time. Back in the sixties they decided a computer word would be a total of eight bites of data. Some of the first memory chips were 1kb, then increasing to 4k, 16k, 32K, 64K, ETC. As the late eighties came along such as the IBM 286 machine they decided to go with a 16 bit word (but as far as memory is talked about really two eight bit words) using 256KB individual chips directly on the mother board to a max of 1MB. Since you require a data line for each bit the DATA BUS was increased to 16 data lines.

30-pin SIMMS '89:

They first came out with parity (requiring an extra chip for the parity bit) and then non-parity. Most of all your newer machines are capable of using non-parity (lower cost) type SIMMs. As the 386DX processor appeared, we now could shift a 32-Bit WORD around, but most programs still op-erate using 16-bit words at this time. Memory chips were put on separate printed circuit boards with 8 chips for no-parity and 9 chips for a parity bit location. So for a 16 bit word machine you would need two SIMM boards or for a 32 bit word machine you would need four each of the SIMM boards ($32/8=4$).

72-pin SIMMS '95:

Of course now with WIN 3.11 (WIN'95 & W1N'NT do the same thing) and the new programs and machines we can use true 32-bit word operation. In other words we can transfer 32 bits of data down the bus at any one time. This of course comes in handy mainly for graph-ics and internet operation. Otherwise there is not any difference other than you are required to have more memory to make this operation successful. Like with the 8-bit word, 64KB of RAM was great, but with the 32-bit word, 16MB of RAM is great. The reason being is RAM is still calculated using the old eight bit word, why as now you need four times more places in RAM for each WORD.(4



X 8-bites =32bites). The 72-pin SIMMs are a 32-bit setup so your machine would allow you too change or add them one at a time.

EDO SIMMS '96:

Then for the faster Pentium processors (now up to 266 MHz with MMX) and proper mother boards, the new EDO (Extended Data output) Simm memory boards came out with an added cache chip to help speed up memory access due to the mother board clock speed, which now runs up to 75MHz.

168 pin DIMMS '97:

The new RAM boards out are called DIMMs, which is a 64 bit memory board @ 66MHz (like two 72 pin SIMMs on one). In 1998 and 1999 higher speed board arrived at 100MHz and then at 133MHz.

184 pin DDR '01:

Some of the latest RAM arrived called DDR or PC2100 operating at 266MHz to aide in the operation of Intel's new P4 processor and AMD's 2100. Then in 2002 a higher speed DDR333 or PC2700 operating at 333MHz and DDR433 or PC3500 operating at 433MHz with CPUs over 1GHz.

184/232 pin RAMBUS/RIMM/RDRAM '02:

The latest type of memory operating up to 800MHz. Fast memory is finally here bypassing Mother board speed. The type 1066 is a 16Bit, 184 pin module, and therefore must be installed as pairs. They are available up to 512MB per module (RIMM).

The type 4800 uses RSL (RAMBUS Signaling Level) technology to achieve transfer rates exceeding 4.8GB/sec of Bandwidth. The are 32 bit, a 232 pin module and available up to 256MB (RDRAM). The architecture of RDRAMs allows the highest sustained bandwidth for multiple, simultaneous randomly addressed memory transactions.

The separate control and data buses with independent row and column control yield over 95% bus efficiency. The RDRAM's multi-banks configuration supports up to four simultaneous transactions.

Outrageous Help Desk Stories

From the Help Desk of a company
that would rather stay anonymous

Printer problems

My favorite story comes from my past when working in a tech support organization for a computer company. At the time of this story, the company had released some buggy spooler software in their product, which was a database product.

We were quite used to frantic customers calling after trying to run an end-of-month job to complain that nothing is coming out of the printer. The typical fix was to dial-in to their computer, go into a debugger and through a laborious process unplug the confused spooler software so the job would print. We would then admonish the customer to install the latest patches.

In this particular instance, the customer called at the end of the day, frantic and upset. A couple of us sat around a terminal and modem and dialed into the system. After pawing through the entrails of the machine for a while, the tech next to me talked to the customer on the speakerphone.

tech: "would you mind going over to the printer?"

customer: "OK, I'm there."

tech: "Do you see a white, square button labeled, 'On Line?'"

customer: "Yes, I see it."

tech: "Is it illuminated?"

customer: "No."

tech: "Please press it once."

customer: "OK, I did that...Wow! The most amazing thing just happened: the report is spewing out of the printer. Good job! Thanks a lot!"

And this, of course, is why most companies don't use local support. They know it is impossible to kill someone over the telephone.

Upside Down Envelopes

A long-time user complained that the network printer had begun printing envelopes upside-down. I told her the printer could not be printing them upside down, but the envelopes had to have been inserted backward. She insisted that she had been putting envelopes into that printer in exactly the same way for over a year and she knew it had always worked that way before. My solution was to open the printer, take out the toner cartridge, shake it up a bit, turn the envelopes around, reinsert the cartridge, and have her try again. Voila! "See," she said, "I KNEW I had loaded the envelopes right! It really was something wrong with the printer!"

It's Magic!

This incident occurred at a previous employer. It was not an outrageous complaint, but was more an example of how incompetent users can be. A user came to me complaining that she could not get any of her documents to print. I went through the normal checks to make sure everything was functioning properly, which it was. I then determined that she had not logged on properly to the Novell network so her documents were not getting to the networked printer.

Without her knowledge, I got her logged on, but before I printed anything, I thought I would have some fun with her. I asked her if she was familiar with the terms bits and bytes, and she said she was. I told her that her computer sends bytes of information through the network to the printer to be printed.

But for some reason, there were a large number of bytes clogging the line to the printer. We then went over to the printer where I unplugged the network connection. I told her we had to let the bytes "escape" out of the line so it would be clear to print again. I plugged it back in, went to her machine and printed a document. She was amazed!

After that, whenever she had a problem, she asked me to come "Clean the lines again."

Black and White in Color

Received a call from a new user wanting to know why her documents were not printing in color. I told her that the printer is a black and white laser printer. She said well the program said what you see is what you get. I told her again that the printer only prints in black and white. She continued to blame the software and her computer and wanted someone to come take a look at it.

Click the Power Switch

I had a guy who was sitting in the building with all the power off calling me and screaming that he could not print his Excel spreadsheet.

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New Style is published eleven times a year, monthly January through October with a combined Nov-Dec issue. General meetings are held in the Overholt Auditorium at the Lutheran Hospital on the last Wednesday of January through October with a combined November-December meeting on the second Wednesday in December. A list of our upcoming meeting topics is available at our web site at <http://www.lcpconline.com>. Thank you, Gundersen-Lutheran, for making this wonderful facility available. Meetings begin around 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome, attend a meeting or two with no obligation to join.

Membership Dues are \$20 and cover an annual period following the month of payment. Membership entitles you to attend meetings, tap into the corporate wisdom, receive special user group discounts from publishers and others, and receive (and contribute to) this newsletter. You may also obtain software provided by publishers for review of the product.

The monthly newsletter is printed the Wednesday before the meeting, please submit advertisements and articles by the 13th of the month to editor@lcpconline.com. Unsigned articles are written by the editor. Other user groups are welcome to reprint with proper credit to the La Crosse PC Users Group and must include our web page address. Please contact the Newsletter Editor for commercial advertising rates. There is no fee for non-commercial advertisements placed by members.

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