

January 2008



Vol. 27,  
Number 1

# MEGAPHONE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

## Editor's Note

*from Paul Van Bloem*

Here it is, another new year. And it's a leap year, so it's a full 0.27% bigger than last year!

2008 marks the beginning of the 27th year of this newsletter (under various names) and of CMUG (also under various names).

## Holiday Meeting

I hope you all enjoyed your holidays. I still am behind on my thank you notes, but otherwise enjoyed some time off and visits with family.

The CMUG family also enjoyed a holiday feast at the December meeting. Instead of doing a pot luck supper, this year's gathering featured a pot luck dessert, or rather lots of pot luck desserts. Needless to say, there were a lot of cake and pie and cookies left over. Thanks to everyone who contributed, and especially to Sumi Kinoshita for coordinating the feast.

## Meeting Programs

Speaking of meetings, let me mention that the January meeting will feature Amy Begg DeGroff from the Howard County Library. She is head of the library's technical services, and will be talking about their computer services. If you've visited a HoCo library lately, you may have noticed that their public Web PCs are all running Linux rather than Windows. With all the free and open source software available, using Linux has saved the library quite a bit of money. I expect Amy will be talking about this, and what the library plans to do in the future.

We also have our February speaker scheduled. Rob Pagararo, who writes the Faster Forward columns and blog as well as other computer articles for the Washington Post, has agreed to come speak in February. He's currently covering the MacWorld convention, and was at the recent Consumer Electronics Show. Throw in his visit to Google headquarters (read about it

here: [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fasterforward/2008/01/gawking\\_at\\_google.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fasterforward/2008/01/gawking_at_google.html)) and he'll have a great deal to tell us.

Let me remind you that we still need a Program Coordinator for CMUG. We have continued to have programs for most meetings because members have stepped forward to obtain a speaker, or volunteered to do a presentation themselves. However, this is inevitably hit-or-miss, and we may end up with a series of meetings with no presentation. A Program Coordinator would help prevent that, as well as making it easier to publicize upcoming programs (Jack Fogarty and I would know who to ask!). Please consider stepping up to help CMUG and your fellow members by taking on this task.

## Consumer Electronics Show

I didn't pay too much attention to the recent CES show in Las Vegas. I saw some good entries at Amazon's Current blog; there's a wrap-up post at <http://www.amazon.com/gp/blog/post/PLNK1JY97RMVL8ATZ>. I like the writing at Amazon's blogs, but I haven't figured out how to search for particular posts. Can someone tell Amazon about the concept of search engines?

I saw mention of several interesting items. One was a 150 inch plasma TV, introduced by Panasonic. Yes, soon you'll be able to see a life-size picture of an elephant in your living room. This assumes you have a good-sized living room (the screen is 7 by 11 feet), and that you have a fair



## Next General Meeting

Amy Begg DeGroff from the Howard County Library will speak on the library's use of computers, and how open source software has helped them save money

Wednesday, January 16, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

## Next Windows SIG Meeting

Topic: Finding It on the Web

Tuesday, January 22, 7 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

## Inside the Megaphone

Editor's Note.....	<i>from Paul Van Bloem</i> .....	Page 1
Deals from the DealsGuy.....	<i>by Bob Click</i> .....	3
Upcoming Meetings and Help Needed.....		3
XKTC.com Cartoon.....	<i>by Randall Munroe</i> .....	5
Old to New.....	<i>by Charles W. Evans, via APCUG</i> .....	6
Computer Files Transfer Advice		
Weird Windows Behavior.....	<i>by Sandy Berger, via APCUG</i> .....	7

↪ amount of cash sitting around (no price was announced). In fact, it will probably be several years before this is available for purchase, so you have lots of time to see about raising your living room ceiling...

Panasonic also showed off a new plasma system that uses less power and is less than one inch thick. The Viera TVs are expected to be out sometime in 2008.

Speaking of thin TVs, Sony has forged ahead with the Organic LEDs they talked about last year. OLEDs have a number of advantages over LCDs, but they're still expensive to manufacture. The 11 inch TV that Sony displayed is expected to cost \$2500. Obviously the price will have to come down before sales will amount to much. But the models Sony showed boasted a million-to-one contrast ratio (LCD monitors typically offer 1000:1 contrast), which means the blacks will look very very black. Also, OLEDs are viewable from any angle, unlike LCDs.

Oh, and I said they were thin? How about 3 millimeters thick, which is just about 1/8 of an inch. If the price comes down enough, we'll be plastering these on all our walls in another ten years.

### Blu-Ray Gets Blue Ribbon?

It was actually announced before CES, but the big news was from Warner Bros., and it wasn't a new product. You've probably heard that Warner is dropping HD-DVD and moving to Blu-Ray as of this coming May. As a result, the HD-DVD consortium canceled their press conference at CES.

It seems likely that this switch seals the HD-DVD format's fate and makes Blu-Ray the winner in the high definition movie format war.

However, I saw this article ([http://www.betanews.com/article/Bluray\\_Early\\_adopters\\_knew\\_what\\_they\\_were\\_getting\\_into/1199841379](http://www.betanews.com/article/Bluray_Early_adopters_knew_what_they_were_getting_into/1199841379)) which says that updates to the Blu-Ray standard will be leaving early adopters behind. Apparently Blu-Ray was rushed to market with some important parts missing. The Profile 1.1 just released and the Profile 2.0 scheduled for next Fall are upgrades that most existing Blu-Ray players will not be able to handle. The exception seems to be PlayStation 3, which can be upgraded to Profile 1.1 now, and is expected to be upgradable to 2.0. Caveat emptor, I guess.

### The Last Format War?

When I first heard about Warner's announcement, I thought this was an important story. The more I think about it, though, the less important it gets. The movie industry thinks that consumers are

holding back from high definition DVDs because they weren't sure which format would win. I wonder if consumers are holding back because they're in no rush to move to high def. How many people have wide screen high definition TVs? Of those that do, how many are in a hurry to watch sharper movies on their big screen?

From a PC viewpoint, the Blu-Ray disks will allow us to store more info on a single disk: up to 50 GB versus around 5 GB on a standard DVD. But the Blu-Ray burners costs something like \$400, and the media is around \$35 (or half that for a 25 GB disk). Don't all storm Best Buy at once!

Then I came across this interesting article in the Economist: [http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=10498664](http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10498664). The article starts with:

IN 2006 EMI, the world's fourth-biggest recorded-music company, invited some teenagers into its headquarters in London to talk to its top managers about their listening habits. At the end of the session the EMI bosses thanked them for their comments and told them to help themselves to a big pile of CDs sitting on a table. But none of the teens took any of the CDs, even though they were free. "That was the moment we realised the game was completely up," says a person who was there.

If music CDs are on their last legs, can movie DVDs be far behind? It will take longer to download a 20 GB movie than a 5 MB song, but we all expect bandwidth to increase. And once

we're downloading our movies and storing them on our 10 terabyte Tivos, the format of the delivery system becomes rather moot.

I think we are in for interesting times in the entertainment industry. Right now, both music and movies are sold much the way books have been sold for generations. But unlike books, music and video both lend themselves to digital reproduction, and so to digital distribution. Until we have an acceptable book reader gizmo, people will be buying physical books. But we already have a music reader gizmo in the iPod and the many MP3 players, and we have had a movie viewer gizmo (the TV) since before there were movies for us to rent or buy.

A book contains less information than a typical music CD or DVD, but the lack of a good viewer has delayed the move to digital distribution of books. Ironically, the oldest form of mass entertainment may be the last to go digital.

Which brings us back to libraries, and the next CMUG meeting. Hope to see you there.

- Paul / Ye Ed



## Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

I've used FedEx twice and it was a complete disaster. The first time, a few months ago, they delivered the packages I sent my son to the wrong house, which was actually unoccupied, but the tracking said it was delivered. Luckily he found them three days later when checking that house (he owns it).

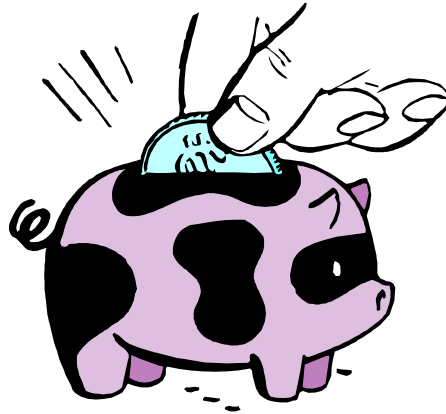
I recently sent two more packages to my son's home. I tracked the packages on the Web site and when it showed the packages on the truck for delivery, I called to make sure their gate was open that day. They live a quarter-mile back from the road with a gate at the entrance. The package was not delivered that day, but at 6:46 PM the tracking showed it would be delivered the next day. At 8:30 PM the next night and no change with the Web site tracking, I called FedEx to see why it was not there and was told they had no way to communicate with the driver, but the package would not be delivered that late. My son closed the gate.

FedEx called me the next morning to give an approximate delivery time, but discovered that the delivery was actually made the night before at 9:06 PM. My son hurried to look, but the packages couldn't be found. My son's house is not visible from the gate at night because it's back down the drive, so obviously with the gate closed, the packages were left beside the

road, but there is a large sign on the gate with the address and phone number to call. Why can't they communicate with their driver? They said that because I didn't request a signature, I am out of luck. Actually, they are out of luck from now on with my money. I submitted a claim anyway.

### Problem Resolved

Last month I mentioned a reader had tried the free Advanced WindowsCare Personal (from my November column), but in order for it to fix the problems, he needed to upgrade to the pay version, so he stopped there. I later received a message from Ira Wilsker telling me it worked fine without upgrading, and that he had demonstrated it to their group. My proofreader also tried it with no upgrade



demand, so I downloaded it and it removed what it found without upgrading to the pay version. I don't know where my reader went wrong, but he's going to try it again. Sorry for the mix-up.

### Hypervisor instead of an Operating System?

I saw this article [www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=202401578](http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=202401578) about using servers without operating systems. This doesn't affect home users, but could it in the future? I found it interesting.

## Upcoming Meetings and Help Needed

As was announced previously, Andrew Rein has stepped down from his job as Program Director. So CMUG is in need of someone who can coordinate presentations for our general meetings.

The presentations are an important part of the educational mission of our user group. The Program Director acts as a central coordinator, and as liaison between the group and the speaker. So, this is an important job. On the other hand, I don't think it's particularly time-consuming; we only have 11 presentations a year, after all, and most of the communication can be done via email. If you have questions about the workload or are otherwise interested, you might speak with Andrew (or one of the other officers) at the meeting.

**February 20:** Rob Pagararo from the Washington Post and [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com)

**March 19:** To be determined

**April 16:** Dave Methvin (tentative)

## Windows SIG January 22 Meeting: "Finding It on the Web"

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month, except in December. The SIG focuses on using and maintaining Windows, all platforms. We take questions, present tips and techniques, demonstrate freeware/shareware and even feature some web topics using a little trickery.

This month, our topic will be "Microsoft: Helping You Protect Your PC." If you have a suggestion or a topic for a future SIG meeting, please email me at [mikes\\_line@hotmail.com](mailto:mikes_line@hotmail.com).

Remember that the meetings are at the Florence Bain Senior Center, and begin at 7 pm. See the CMUG website at [www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org) for maps and directions.

- Mike Hayes



I severely edited the announcements appearing below, so please check their Web sites for full information. I have not tried them.

## A Firefox Add-on

iMacros for Firefox was designed to automate online activities within the Firefox web browser. With iMacros, users can create macros to automatically check the same sites every day, remember passwords, complete web forms, and upload or download files, among other activities. They say, "Whatever you do with Firefox, iMacros can automate it." Notable examples include stockbrokers who create macros to extract online stock quotes, shoppers who use them to automatically compare prices at online stores and website owners who use them to get daily downloads of their page rankings.

iMacros for Firefox allows users to share macros and scripts in a way similar to sharing bookmarks on the many social book marking websites. After creating a new macro, users can use just one click

to share it with their friends as a link, or by distributing the link via email and social book marking websites. Also, by embedding it in a website or by blog for public access. Script sharing is now so popular that iOpus has even created a special site for script-sharing on **del.icio.us**.

The iMacros for Firefox software is free for personal and commercial use. Users may opt to upgrade to the business version with guaranteed response times and advanced features. Additional information and the software download link are available online at [www.iopus.com/imacros/firefox](http://www.iopus.com/imacros/firefox). Alternately, the software may be downloaded directly from the official Mozilla site for extensions at [https:// addons.mozilla.org/ en-US/ firefox/ addon/ 3863](https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/3863).

## Help for Your Video File Conversion

Video Mobile Converter v1.0 supports digital video files in the following formats: AVI (audio video interleave), ASF (advanced systems format), MOV (QuickTime movie), MPG/MPEG/MP4 (moving pictures experts group) and WMV (Windows media video). Once you choose a video, Video Mobile Converter loads the video and lets you define how much video to convert. Users also have control over the video and audio quality during the conversion process. Users control the height and width of the video, its frame and bit rate as well as its overall quality. Users also control



the sample rate, bit rate and overall quality of the video's converted audio, along with the option of splitting video files during the conversion process enabling very large video files to become smaller and more easily managed.

Lastly, Video Mobile Converter can output the converted video in the following formats: 3GP and 3G2 (for use on 3G network mobile devices that use GSM or CDMA network protocols), MP4 (for use on mobile devices, such as iPods classic, iPod nano, iPod touch, iPhones, cellular phones and other mobile devices), and PSP (for use on Sony PlayStation Portables).

Video Mobile Converter v1.0 runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows, including Vista and costs \$29.95 (USD) for a single-user license. User group members get a 20% discount. For some reason they didn't respond to my request for the special ordering procedures, so please email Michael Kaba ([sales@geovid.com](mailto:sales@geovid.com)). Could be I haven't heard because of the holidays. Licensed users are entitled to the fully functional copy of the software, and free updates. Further information, as well as a free, fully functional evaluation copy is available from [www.videomobileconverter.com](http://www.videomobileconverter.com).

For more information: [www.geovid.com](http://www.geovid.com).

Download link:

[www.videomobileconverter.com/ download/ videomobileconverter.exe](http://www.videomobileconverter.com/download/videomobileconverter.exe) (9.3 MB).

## Help For Your Web Site

FlamingoSoft's package, SeoAdministrator, is a popular professional tool for webmasters and SEO specialists. They've released a new module called "Site Analyzer" that will be of interest to all webmasters including those who look after personal websites. The new module helps you to keep a website free of errors such as broken links. Regular use of Site Analyzer will ensure that problems are quickly and easily spotted so they can be fixed. Download a free demonstration of their easy-to-use tool from here:

[www.seoadministrator.com/ seoadministrator.exe](http://www.seoadministrator.com/seoadministrator.exe).

Site Analyzer, developed by FlamingoSoft of Vancouver, BC, is designed to automate the vital web management task of monitoring and improving website performance.

Site Analyzer performs comprehensive scans of a specified website and alerts web managers to a range of common problems including broken links, faulty image links, errors in HTML code and missing meta tags using a variety of report formats. Site Analyzer can also create sitemaps in both human and machine formats ready for uploading. The link vendor will be able to see which pages are "overloaded" with external links and perhaps suspend link sales on those pages. Works with Windows 95/98/ME/2000/XP/Vista

Priced from \$70 (Standard) to \$150 for Expert edition, we are offering this great



software to user group members at 50% discount (\$75 instead of usual price of \$150) which includes lifetime support and free upgrades. Use this link: <https://usd.swreg.org/cgi-bin/s.cgi?s=1613&p=1613seo&v=3&d=0&q=1&t=> for the 50% discount. Check their Website URL for full info: [www.seoadministrator.com](http://www.seoadministrator.com).

They can also be reached by regular mail at Pacific Business Centre, Att: FlamingoSoft, #101 - 1001 W. Broadway Suite 381, Vancouver, BC V6H 4E4 Canada.

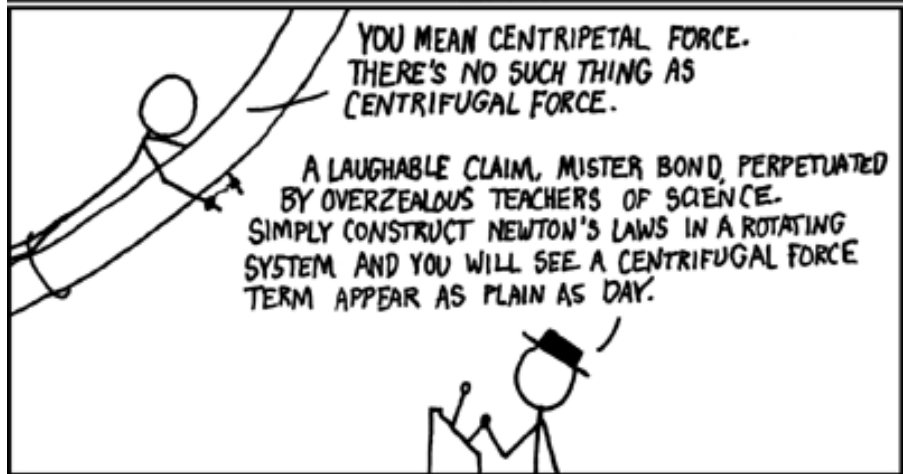
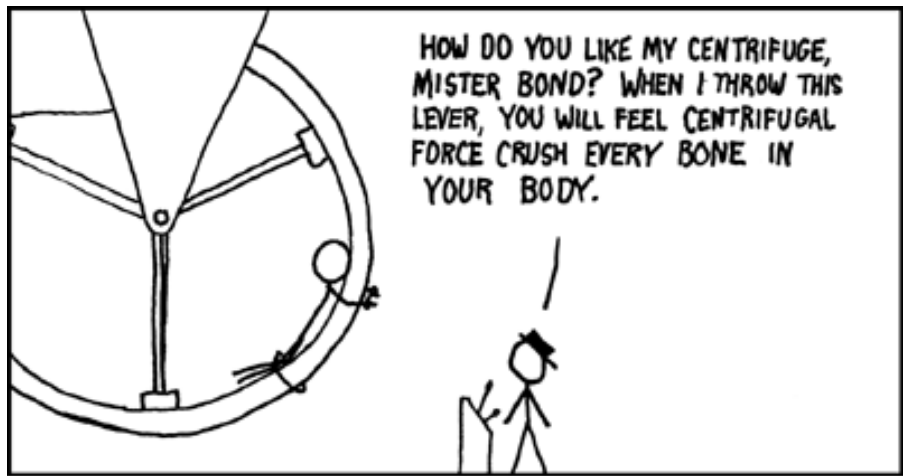
### Easier Way to Remove USB Devices

USB Safely Remove enhances the native Safely Remove function in Windows and enables you to remove and unplug any USB removable device in one mouse click or hotkey. It can give correct names to the devices, lets you rename them and find out what application or process is locking the USB device, preventing it from safe removal. It's easy to unplug the wrong one by mistake because many of them have the same name. Unlike the native Windows option, USB Safely Remove shows all USB devices currently plugged into the computer and lets you remove any of them, showing you the device names on its menu. The software is primarily aimed at those users who have more than one USB device.

USB Safely Remove 3.2 runs under Windows 2000, XP, 2003, Vista and is available immediately for \$20 (US) from SafelyRemove.com. User Group members can purchase the program at a 25% discount. Use the coupon code: CUG25 on the Buy Now page. Licensed users get unlimited functionality without nag screens, free technical support by email and free lifetime upgrades. More information on the product, as well as a free trial copy is available from <http://safelyremove.com/> ug. Download link: <http://safelyremove.com/usbsafelyremovesetupug.exe>

### That's All Folks

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my website (most not offering a discount): [www.dealsguy.com](http://www.dealsguy.com). Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware



The comic strip is from [XKCD.com](http://XKCD.com), and comes with a caveat: Warning: this comic occasionally contains strong language (which may be unsuitable for children), unusual humor (which may be unsuitable for adults), and advanced mathematics (which may be unsuitable for liberal-arts majors). Find more at <http://xkcd.com>. This strip is at <http://xkcd.com/123/>. Used under the Creative Commons Attribution - Noncommercial 2.5 License.

of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

- Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [bobclick at bellsouth dot net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net)

## Old to New

### Computer Files Transfer Advice

by Charles W. Evans, via APCUG

It's that time of year when many of you will buy a new computer. And one of the biggest chores of getting a new computer is moving all of your stuff from one to the other. This review and a follow-up next month should be helpful in transferring or moving your "stuff".

I have the advantage of visiting numerous SIGs each month and listening to individual problems. Moving files or "migrating" programs can be a real headache, but it doesn't have to be.

A few comments first:

1. When you install a program under Windows, that program not only places most of its files in its own folder (subdirectory), it also places files in various Windows folders. You must move the files in the Windows folders as well.
2. To remove a program, you cannot simply delete the folder. That's only the first step, although not the best. You must uninstall the whole program. Most programs now include an "uninstall" feature. Please use it.
3. Transferring a file or folder from old to new computer just does that – it simply moves files from one place to another. If you have the original installation media, that may be all that you need. Install the program on the new computer then move data files from the old computer.
4. If you don't have the original install media, what then? In January, I'll review a program that will actually move the entire program, including files in the Windows folders, to your new computer.

CAUTION: The trick is knowing what to move. If you're moving from XP to Vista, keep in mind that some of your programs may no longer work with Vista. And you have to be careful when you're moving full versions of a program from XP on top of demo versions on your new Vista machine. So spend some time up front doing some housecleaning on both machines before you start the process.

What won't move easily? Some programs with security features may need to have the user key put back in or the entire program reinstalled. Antivirus software won't move successfully because it is so coupled with the operating system.

PS: You can also use the two devices reviewed below to copy files between your laptop and desktop computer. In addition, you don't have to deal with firewalls or Ethernet - some transfer programs use an Internet-type connection.

#### Belkin USB Cable Transfer

For a basic utility and the simplest way to transfer files from one place to another, use this Belkin Easy Transfer Cable for Windows Vista. Load the special drivers from the included CD. Plug in the USB2 cable into each computer and open Explore.

You should see your old computer as another device or hard drive. Then move the files from the old to the new computer as you would move any other file. Suggestion: I would Copy rather than Move. That way

you have a backup on your old computer — just in case.

The Windows Easy Transfer Wizard automatically appears and lets you select the files to copy. With a couple of clicks, your photos, music, settings, and more will all transfer, without requiring time-consuming CD burning or hooking up a network.

Belkin includes free file-synchronization software. With "One-Click," Pcsync® software automatically synchronizes files, folders, music, photos, video, etc. between your PCs. It works on machines running Win98SE through Vista.

What can you expect in your box? An Easy Transfer Cable for Windows Vista, a brief Quick Start Guide (a more complete Guide is on the CD) and a CD with Windows Easy Transfer and Pcsync software. For more info and updates, go to [www.belkin.com](http://www.belkin.com). [\$28 at [Newegg.com](http://Newegg.com)]

#### LapLink Migration Kit

For a more comprehensive solution to move your stuff from your old computer to your new Vista computer, look at LapLink version 11.5 or 12 which use an optional USB2 for transfers. This device uses a TCP/IP connection, which, for us non-gurus, means an Internet connection procedure. This kit is very efficient and effective, but it does require some time to set up AND you've got to read the few pages of instructions. They are non-technical, but you have to follow them explicitly.

Newer versions include a Windows Vista transfer wizard that attempts to bring over some of your settings from one to the other (it helps if you buy a special cable). Simply select the files or programs you wish to transfer and press the button. To assist you in correctly moving files, LapLink has included a "sync" program – easy to use and oh, so handy.

I have used the Vista wizard on a handful of PCs and none were adequately transferred in my opinion. The data files were moved okay for the most part but the process was cumbersome and crashed on some computers when using the network options. There were timeouts and snags. Transfer security is very tight from lockout protection to folder level security.

Warning: It is important to install the USB cable correctly. Do not attach the cable to the computer until directed. Incorrectly installing the cable can result in problems in the Device Manager, and can prevent Laplink from connecting properly. If it is currently attached, please unplug it before proceeding. For more info and software updates go to [www.laplink.com](http://www.laplink.com). [Laplink PCmover for Windows is \$40 at [Newegg.com](http://Newegg.com) for the retail version, or \$28 for a downloadable version. There is also Laplink FileMover for \$20.]

Not sure either of the above will do what you want? That's understandable. Hang loose for next month's review of an excellent file/program mover.

*This article comes to us via APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Charles W. Evans is the Reviews Editor for HAL-PC ([www.hal-pc.org](http://www.hal-pc.org)) in Houston Texas. He can be reached at [reviews\(at\)hal-pc.org](mailto:reviews(at)hal-pc.org).*



# Weird Windows Behavior

by Sandy Berger, via APCUG

Have you ever been completely dismayed by your computer? Does it seem to do unusual things that you can't trace back to any of your actions? Well, you are not alone. This happens to all computer users. In the computer world, unusual things sometimes happen. Here is a list of some weird computer behavior and how to combat it.

## Icons Disappear

Right-click on any open area of the computer desktop, then chose Arrange Icons By. If your icons have accidentally become hidden there will be no checkmark in front of Show Desktop Icons. Just click that option and your icons will reappear.

## Unusual Windows Appear

Windows has a lot of keyboard shortcuts that can be accidentally accessed. For instance, when I started this column, I wanted to hit the Shift key and the letter "h" for the word Have. However, my finger slipped and I hit the Ctrl key and the letter "h" instead. A window popped up asking what I wanted to Find and Replace, which is not at all what I intended. If this ever happens to you, you can usually just close the pop-up window, but occasionally you have to look a little further into what happened. For instance, when working in Microsoft Word, if you accidentally hit Ctrl+N, a new window will appear making it look like you just lost your entire document. If you look closely, you'll realize your document is just hidden; using the Window menu or choosing File/Close will bring the document you were working on back into view.

If you can't figure out what happened or you get caught in a loop, restarting your computer will usually bring you back to normal.

## Lost Toolbars

As noted before, an errant key press can cause a problem. This time the culprit is one of the function keys. Accidentally pressing the F11 key can make the toolbars disappear. This is often used as a feature when you want to show something in what they call "full screen mode". If this happens to you, just press F11 again to make the toolbars return.

## The Toolbar Moves

Have you ever had the toolbar that usually appears on the bottom of the screen show up on the side or top of the screen? There is an easy way to get it back where it belongs. Just place your cursor right next to, but not on, the Start button. Then hold the mouse button down and drag the toolbar back where it belongs.

## Dramatic Slowdown

A dramatic slowdown can mean that your hard disk is filling up. The computer uses the hard disk as sort of a scratch pad when it computes, so when your hard drive starts to fill up, it can slow the computer down significantly. Click on My Computer and highlight the drive called Local Disk (C:). Look at the Details area to see how much space is free. You should have at least 10% of your hard drive free. If you don't, a hard drive cleanup is in order. Delete unnecessary programs and backup old files and photos to an external drive or CD so you can delete them from the hard disk.



You can use the Disk Cleanup utility to empty the recycle bin and delete unnecessary temporary files. To access it, click on Start, choose All Programs, then click on System Tools where you will find Disk Cleanup listed. It will walk you through the cleanup. Once your hard disk has more free space, your computer will perk up considerably.

You might also consider defragging your computer to speed it up. The Disk Defragmenter utility is in the System Tools area. Remember there are other things like viruses and spyware that can also slow down your computer.

## No Sound

Sometimes the sound gets muted by mistake. Look at the taskbar at bottom of the screen. In the right hand side you will see a small icon that looks like a speaker. If it has a red X on it, the sound has been muted. Click on the icon, then click to remove the checkmark in front of the word Mute. If you don't see this icon, go to the Control Panel and choose Sounds or Sounds and Audio Devices where you will find a place to uncheck the Mute option. Many laptops and some desktops also have a volume button on the keyboard which you can use to mute and unmute the speaker.

## Mouse Shudders

If your mouse is hard to control or acting erratic, it may need a cleaning. An optical mouse with a flat bottom just needs a cleaning with a damp cloth. If your mouse has a roller ball on the bottom, remove the ball and clean the rollers inside the mouse with a Q-tip soaked with isopropyl alcohol.

Hope this gets you through some of those weird Windows moments in your life.

*This article comes to us via APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Sandy Berger is a journalist, speaker, and author; she also runs the CompuKISS website ([www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com)). She can be reached at [sandy\(at\)compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com).*



# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045

Meeting:  
**Wednesday, January 16, 7:30 pm**  
Amy DeGroff from the Howard County  
Library will discuss their computer  
systems and software choices



## CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

### Membership and Change of Address

Send renewals and address changes to:  
George Coffin  
CMUG Membership  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045  
gcoffin3@comcast.net

### Reviews

Send review software, hardware, books,  
and info to:  
CMUG Reviews  
Att: Art Silverglate  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
art.silverglate@gmail.com

### Editorial Copy

Send articles, letters, ad copy, questions,  
and comments to:  
CMUG Megaphone  
Att: Paul Van Bloem  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
pjvanbloem@aol.com  
Use any of these formats: ASCII (text),  
RTF, or Word.

### CMUG Officers and Contacts

President.....Mike Kerwin.....410-531-1822..kerwinm@dea.nci.nih.gov  
Vice President.....Mike Hayes.....410-465-1131....mikes\_line@hotmail.com  
Secretary.....Bill Baxter.....410-531-1822.....billbaxter@erols.com  
Treasurer.....John Weske.....301-774-7564.....jsweske@juno.com  
Asst Treasurer.....Mary Guarnieri..410-531-2820...watermelon@comcast.net  
Membership.....George Coffin.....410-750-6914.....gcoffin3@comcast.net  
Reviews.....Art Silverglate....410-750-2435..art.silverglate@gmail.com  
Programs.....  
Publicity.....Jack Fogarty.....301-774-0331.....jfogarty@bcpl.net  
Megaphone Editor...Paul Van Bloem..410-549-3070.....pjvanbloem@aol.com  
Board Member.....Sumi Kinoshita..301-549-3174.....skinoshita@juno.com  
Andrew Rein.....240-473-4299.....cdlots@yahoo.com

The CMUG Megaphone is the official newsletter of the Central Maryland Users Group (CMUG). Articles are copyright © 2008 by their respective authors, except where noted, and all rights are reserved. For reprint permission, please contact the editor.

General meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Florence Bain Senior Center, near the Harpers Choice Village Center in Columbia MD. The number there is 410-313-7213.

Membership in the user group is currently \$30 (cheap!). Membership includes a monthly subscription to the CMUG Megaphone, a membership directory, full access privileges to the Website, and drawings for free and review software at meetings.

[www.myCMUG.org](http://www.myCMUG.org)

