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# MEGAPHONE

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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

## President's Message

### A Black Eye for Microsoft

from Mike Kerwin

Dear Friends, I have been following and keeping you up to date on the continuing saga of the "Windows Genuine Advantage" (WGA) software. This month's column is based on two issues of Brian Livingston's "Windows Secrets" newsletter, specifically the 6/29 and 7/13 issues. (You can find them online at <http://windowssecrets.com/comp/060629> and <http://windowssecrets.com/comp/060713>.) These constitute about 20 pages of commentary and screen shots for recommended actions.

### Whose Advantage?

I first encountered this mess when some of my updates to the Microsoft anti-spyware program (now named Windows Defender) refused to load. This was puzzling and I inquired among my tech friends about a strange (well it *was* from Microsoft) error message about the validity of my software. Having paid good money for the software to a reputable computer manufacturer, this was troubling.

It seems as though I encountered this problem because I had not yet downloaded and installed the WGA in a regular update of the XP operating system. For anyone who set up XP to auto install updates (most of us, I suspect) this was auto-loaded by MS. One of its unpublicized features was to "phone home" every 24 hours and report who knows what to a MS server. Some speculation was that it was part of an anti-piracy effort to enforce Windows Product Activation (WPA). This activity could be disruptive to other uses of the computer at the time of its report; who needs to have Windows causing more delays and unintentional actions by

making a keypress at the wrong instant.

The howls of users reached the hallowed halls of MS and shortly a less zealous version of WGA was sent forth — this one only "phoned home" every two weeks. Most objectors compared this software to spyware which MS has promised to combat. Many called it "an intrusive sales gimmick" sent out under the sheep's clothing of a mechanism touted for delivering critical security updates.

Brian Livingston is a columnist whose advice I have found worthy over several versions of Windows and across different publications. He has written that WPA is not a robust security system, as unscrupulous operators can circumvent it by copying a single file onto any number of Windows installations. So, MS's effort to burden paying customers with this intrusive software will not prevent mass piracy so the surface reason for this software is bogus. Well maybe the Shadow knows what evil lurks in the hearts of MS, but the rest of us will have to muddle through on our own.

Brian discusses several actions that users can take to prevent WGA from taking over and the first is to "Turn off Automatic Updates". This can be done in the Control Panel and this can then be set to "Notify" rather than "Auto-Install". This



### Next General Meeting

Vic McGonegal, from Computer Seniors of America ([www.computerseniors.org](http://www.computerseniors.org)) will talk about his organization, which is an "entryway to cyberspace for the mature citizen." He'll discuss the philosophy, principles, and operations of a volunteer-staffed computer school, where they try to make the complex, simple and fun.  
Wednesday, July 19, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

### Next Windows SIG Meeting

Topic: Security Risks on your PC You Don't Know About  
Tuesday, July 25, 7:00 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

### Inside the Megaphone

President's Message.....	from Mike Kerwin.....	Page 1
A Black Eye for Microsoft		
Deals From The Deals Guy.....	by Bob Click.....	3
Phishing Works and Works and Works.....	by Mike Hayes.....	5
Suddenly.....	by Charles W. Davis, via APCUG.....	6
A Month's Log of a "House Call" Doctor		
Tweaking Windows' Toolbar.....	by Gabe Goldberg, via APCUG.....	8
Email Etiquette.....	from Art Silverglate.....	9



will certainly prevent future incursions, but it will leave the user in the dark about what is truly a critical security update patch worthy of allowing to be installed. This is akin to the ubiquitous 401K retirement plans where individuals must rely on their own resources rather than on professional experts for guidance. (Brian's Newsletter does have a section devoted to analysis of such patches though it is more directed to networks than to individual users.)

The newsletter goes on to discuss two possible alternatives to MS's own update software. The first, **WindizUpdate.com**, is not recommended for reasons best read directly in the newsletter. The second, Shavlik's NetChkPro, came with an high recommendation even though it was only available as a subscription service. In the second article of the series Livingston reports that the author had made a new version of this software available for free for up to 10 computers at a single location. (That would cover Mary and me, for now anyway.)

In addition to patch management, this software also offers admirable anti-spyware scanning (on demand only, so as not to interfere with always-on scanners). Brian does offer the caveat that this software was designed for use by network professionals rather than the average geek. However, the second column provides screen capture images and detailed instructions for how to configure and install this software. If you wish to pursue this route I strongly recommend that you call up this newsletter and follow the guidance it contains.

Brian also offers a "How To" for uninstalling the offending WGA in the first column; again I recommend calling this up and printing out the instructions before scattering the entails of the Registry hither and yon.

The forces of Good look to have this conflict well in hand, so go forth and may the Force be with you!

### Bike Tech

For this month's high tech highlight I can only offer the gizmo's attached to the bikes and riders of the Tour de France, to which Mary and I have become addicted.

The bikes those fellows ride are wonderful examples of technology in action. They use different bikes for speed and for powering up mountains. Each bike is also equipped with an array of very light weight sensors to a) identify the bike at monitoring points like the finish line; b) to monitor heart rate of the rider (and broadcast it to the world); c) monitor power output of the rider by measuring the torque



on the rear axle; and d) to provide two-way radio communication to team managers.

The strength and endurance of these riders is phenomenal. The best of them can ride up and down mountains averaging 19 mph and some can sprint at 45 mph at the end of 150+ mile rides. Someday I hope to be present when the whole group goes whooshing by; to paraphrase Lance Armstrong: Preserve the Power of the Peloton.

### CMUG Business

On to business: Thanks to Rob Pegoraro, consumer tech columnist for the Washington Post, for an interesting presentation last month. What an fascinating and frustrating job, to test and report on new products, both the great and the also-rans.

Last month also included our annual election. Thanks to all of you for re-electing the officers. We duly met and reappointed the members of the Board of Directors so CMUG is good to go for another year. I consider it both an honor and a privilege to represent you and to give voice to your concerns and desires.

This month we will hear from Vic McGonegal's Senior Computing Group — hey that sounds a lot like me as I have come to expect my Senior preferences. Hope to see you Wednesday at the Florence Bain Center.

Digitally,

Mike



## Windows SIG

### July 25: Security Risks on your PC You Don't Know About

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month. 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, we'll be talking about "Security Risks You Don't Know About". If you have a suggestion or a topic for a future SIG meeting, please email me at **mikes\_line@hotmail.com**.

Remember that the meetings are now at the Florence Bain Senior Center, and begin at 7 pm. See the CMUG website at **www.millkern.com/cmug** for maps and directions.

Hope to see you there.

- Mike Hayes

# Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

Last month I published an announcement for a product that could copy DVDs. We included what we found about downloading an additional product that was necessary to accomplish certain tasks, and I was accused of encouraging illegal activities. Maybe I should have worded it differently, but the fact is, I simply published the announcement for a free product, along with our findings, and made the information available so an editor, or reader, could use it, or not use it, however they wished. I had two complaints (from the same UG) and that group chose not to make the column available to their members, which is their choice.

This is not an apology because there has been tremendous interest in such products; I simply reported the facts and people are responsible for their own actions. I have read a number of articles in UG newsletters containing opinions concerning the law and the tactics of publishing companies. By the way, since last month's column, ShrinkTo5's product pricing and lineup has changed.

There are also those who would argue that a gun shop encourages murder, and I could use other similar issues that might be said to imply illegal activity. Recently I published an announcement for a product that recovers passwords. That could also be used for an illegal activity if used on a stolen computer. With all the write-ups and notoriety about new and controversial copyright laws, I wouldn't even try to explain the legalities of anything. Is it legal, or illegal to make a backup copy? Do you know for sure? Also, ShrinkTo5 has other uses and we did not include a link for Machinist2.dll. My proof reader suggested that car companies must encourage a long list of illegal activities, including manslaughter, since they sell cars that can do such things.

Actually, I am not a fan of publishing companies' tactics and the UCITA or DCMA laws. If those officials have their way, you would not be able to give, or even lend, anything published after you have read or listened to it. From what I read, they want all used book stores shut down as well as all libraries, and you would even be arrested if you were caught lending, or giving, a book or CD to a friend. Who knows where it all might end when it comes to the pockets of some corporate bigwigs? However, I have no interest in any of this copying stuff. I have no time and have not bought a music CD in years, nor do I rent videos or go to movies. The performers and executives involved with that industry are grossly overpaid, but they don't make any money from me. I

don't watch much TV now, but if they keep adding commercials, I'll shut that off too. While I'm on my soapbox; if I am paying for cable TV, why should I have to put up with all those commercials? People are much too tolerant of being taken advantage of, and about what they are paying for.

## Do Your Homework

The announcements below have been edited to shorten them, so be sure to check their Web sites for better information. Remember, I have not tried any of these and have no knowledge about their reliability.

## Check That Malware, and For Free!

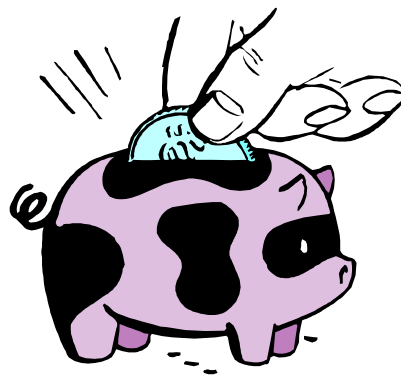
Put an end to all types of malware, at no cost. The a-squared Web Malware Scanner 2.0 hunts undesired Spyware modules and dangerous Trojans, Backdoors, Keyloggers, Worms, Dialers, Rootkits, Hacking Tools, Riskware and Tracking Cookies; all from within the Web browser and no software must be installed. All users having Internet Explorer and a fast Internet connection, such as DSL, can make optimum use of the scanner. The a-squared Web Malware Scanner 2.0 uses over 350,000 signatures and an ingenious heuristic algorithm for detecting pests on the local computer, and this scanner can be used directly

from the Web browser. The user can choose from four different scan functions depending on the time available for a scan. The quick test provides rapid results, while a detailed analysis of the entire computer can take a while. A Riskware recognition system can also be enabled that informs the user of programs that are usually harmless, but are often used by Malware for specific tasks. There is also a paid version that they recommend as quicker and better with a 30-day free trial.

- ↳ a-squared Web Malware Scanner 2.0: <http://malwarescan.emsisoft.com>
- ↳ a-squared Anti-Malware: [www.emsisoft.com/en/software/personal](http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/personal)
- ↳ Product details Malware-IDS: [www.emsisoft.com/en/software/ids](http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/ids)
- ↳ Order a-squared Anti-Malware: [www.emsisoft.com/en/order/homeuser](http://www.emsisoft.com/en/order/homeuser)
- ↳ Phone: +43-664-3446068 (German)
- ↳ Fax: +43-6272-73083
- ↳ Email: [info@emsisoft.com](mailto:info@emsisoft.com)
- ↳ Web: [www.emsisoft.com](http://www.emsisoft.com)

## Let's Compare Data

ZsCompare allows users to efficiently synchronize computers, backup data, compare different versions of files, verify that CDs have been copied correctly, manage Zip files, review changes to source code, and more. Users can





easily run comparisons on local directories, networked computers, or removable media, such as CDs, DVDs, and flash drives.

ZsCompare 3.0 adds many new file and freeform text comparison features, including the ability to compare text from Microsoft Word documents and PDF documents. Also, zsCompare provides additional control over how the comparison is performed with predefined options for common comparisons. Finally, the new version of zsCompare permits direct editing of the contents of a file from the results.

ZsCompare

3.0 operates on Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux. It runs on the Java platform, a copy of which is included with the zsCompare installation. ZsCompare 3.0 is available in three editions: Professional (\$199.95), Standard (\$99.95), and Lite (\$35.00). For a 20% discount, my readers should enter the coupon code "DealsGuy" when purchasing a license at <https://www.zisasoft.com/store/order.shtml>. The Lite Edition contains basic comparison and synchronization functionality. With the Lite Edition, users can compare directories, zip files, text files, and freeform text. All versions include free lifetime upgrades and free technical support.

More information, including a complete list of enhancements and a fully functional 30 day trial version, is available at [www.zisasoft.com/products/zsCompare/index.shtml](http://www.zisasoft.com/products/zsCompare/index.shtml).

Sales: [sales@zisasoft.com](mailto:sales@zisasoft.com)

Telephone: (303) 638-9235

Fax: (720) 862-2089

## The Arnold Schwarzenegger of Windows?

Tame Windows with Actual Window Manager 4.01. Microsoft Windows is the most widely used operating system today and its window architecture is a brilliant invention. However, this architecture comes with a bit of baggage and a degree of frustration, especially when you work with several windows simultaneously. With many applications open at once Windows becomes heavily cluttered, which in turn cuts down on your computational productivity. The more windows you open, the more time you spend to manage them and less focus is on the job. Monotonous clicking, window clutter in the taskbar, switching between windows, their positioning and resizing may



double and even triple the time you need to concentrate on your job.

Actual Window Manager adds its buttons to each window in your system and allows you to navigate them in new ways. Instead of the taskbar, you will be able to minimize windows to the task tray or to the edge of the desktop, or roll them up or unroll, like blinds. If you need to multitask in several applications at once, you can simply pin all necessary windows on top without the need to bring up each one several times a day. In fact, you have over 40 other controls to automate routines related to windows. You can apply a predefined level of transparency to any window, automate positioning of windows, resize them and change priority from the title bar menu and more.

Over 450 suggestions were carefully considered and reflected in a more intuitive user interface. The customization of options has become much simpler, and the choice of options wider. In addition to subtle customization abilities, the program has a list of presets for most popular applications that allow you to use Actual Window Manager in the "install-and-go" style.

Read the complete description of features at [www.ActualTools.com/windowmanager/](http://www.ActualTools.com/windowmanager/).

Download a no-cost evaluation copy from [www.ActualTools.com/files/aimsetup.exe](http://www.ActualTools.com/files/aimsetup.exe).

Actual Window Manager 4.0 runs under all Windows platforms and costs \$39.95 for a single-user license. Registered customers are entitled to the unlimited functionality, free updates and lifetime technical support.

Additional information on Actual Window Manager, a collection of tutorial articles and success stories, as well as a 60-day evaluation copy is available from [www.ActualTools.com](http://www.ActualTools.com). UG members should visit our User Groups Support page [www.actualtools.com/usergroups/](http://www.actualtools.com/usergroups/) and click the "Get 20% discount" link, then follow the instructions.

E-mail: [info@actualtools.com](mailto:info@actualtools.com)

## That's it for this month

Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. Visit my Web site at [www.dealsguy.com](http://www.dealsguy.com). This column is written to make user group members aware 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 Cheap&Kate) Click

[bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)



# Phishing Works and Works and Works

by Mike Hayes

“Don’t click on URL links in email!” Ever heard this before? Do you practice it? Really? An email, from your best buddy that has a link to a late-breaking news story from the BBC, just popped in your Inbox. Do you click on the link or not? You know that the From: field in email can easily be forged. In fact the From and To fields are usually forged to make it harder to track the spammer. So is it safe?

We’ve all heard by now about the emails with the single graphics link in the form of a picture of an email from CitiBank, Bank Of America, PayPal, or some credit union. They all claim that a recent change in their computer systems blah, blah, blah or that recent activity on your account may indicate fraudulent activity, or whatever. Quick, you have to click on the URL link to address this issue or lose access to your account.

ZD-Net ran a story on March 30, 2006 about Cybercrooks tricking email recipients into clicking links to read BBC news. (The article can be found at [http://news.zdnet.com/2100-1009\\_22-6056217.html](http://news.zdnet.com/2100-1009_22-6056217.html).) The vulnerable reader clicks and is taken to a forged BBC page where malicious software is automatically downloaded to the PC. This code takes advantage of the recently revealed IE exploit “createTextRange()” and usually runs a keylogger on the PC to monitor for any financial site login and sends that information back to the attacker. The attacker can use this information themselves to access your accounts or sell it. All this by just visiting a Web page.

This is but one example of phishing. This article is not large enough to detail all the scams that are current, or the huge number over the past few years that continue to appear. The Nigerian scam (AKA 419, around since 1980) is estimated to have bilked over 18,000 people worldwide in 2005 alone.

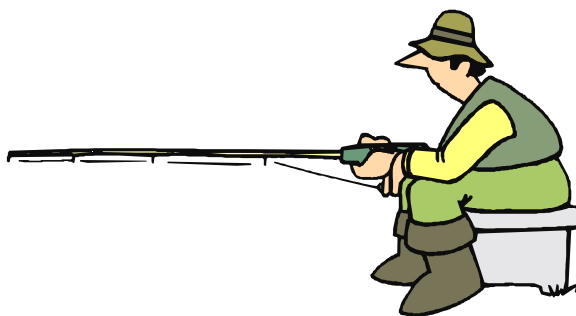
Sometimes the scam reappears under a different disguise. The method may change but the goal is the same. Don’t think if you are not using IE that you are safe. There are vulnerabilities in all browsers; not just IE, but also Mozilla, Firefox and Opera. And frequently your software is irrelevant, because most scams depend on simple social engineering; a way to lure you into giving them what they want.

At the general meetings and the SIGs I’ve stated the obvious many times over. Here is a summary of don’ts from the Anti-Phishing Working Group:

↳ Be suspicious of any email with urgent requests for

personal financial information unless the email is digitally signed. You can’t be sure it wasn’t forged or “spoofed”.

- ↳ Don’t use the links in an email to get to any Web page, if you suspect the message might not be authentic. Instead, call the company on the telephone, or log onto the website directly by typing in the Web address in your browser.
- ↳ Avoid filling out forms in email messages that ask for personal financial information. You should ONLY communicate information such as credit card numbers or account information via a secure website or the telephone.
- ↳ Always ensure that you’re using a secure website when submitting credit card or other sensitive information via your Web browser.
- ↳ Regularly log into your online accounts.



- ↳ Regularly check your bank, credit and debit card statements to ensure that all transactions are legitimate—if anything is suspicious, contact your bank and all card issuers.
- ↳ Ensure that your browser is up to date and security patches applied.

For more tips and the

complete listing for the above tips, visit [www.antiphishing.org](http://www.antiphishing.org).

There is software that can help protect you from virus, spam and phishing schemes. None are perfect. Symantec and McAfee for example have added protection to block some of these attacks. There are things you can do in your email handler to help, and you can use third party add-ons like McAfee Active Mail Protection, Norton Internet Security or lesser known utilities like MailFrontier Desktop, now owned by Sonicwall ([www.sonicwall.com](http://www.sonicwall.com)).

MailFrontier Desktop, for example, provides an anti-spam and anti-phishing solution for the individual user. If you’re really fed up, you can turn on the “challenge” feature in this program, which forces unknown senders to pass a simple test that will baffle mass-mailing software that spammers use. MailFrontier also has built-in anti-phishing protection and will help you to report fraudulent emails. Like most utilities, it will mail accept from entries in your address book, and you can mark additional names and newsgroups, etc., as safe.

No matter what you use, the human factor remains the weakest link. You can’t open the door for the bad guys and expect technology to protect you. For example, do you know when you are on a secure Web site? I’ll be covering more of what you can do to protect yourself and your ID at the SIG meeting on July 23. The topic is “Security Risks on your PC You Don’t Know About.”



## Suddenly...

### A Month's Log of a "House Call" Doctor

by Charles W. Davis via APCUG

In working to help Club members and others with their computer problems during the Thursday morning Computer Talk sessions, or more often when making "house calls," I often hear strange tales that apparently involve acts of gremlin-like creatures. Invisible gremlins, at that.

Generally the caller's comments start with "all of a sudden" or "suddenly" and end with "I didn't do anything." I can only surmise that it was one of cartoonist Bill Keane's ghostly imps "Not Me," "Nobody" or even "Ida Know."

I've documented some recent examples below.

#### Suddenly...

One morning a couple of weeks ago, I received a call and the person on the other end of the phone connection was obviously very upset. She exclaimed: "Suddenly all of my desktop icons are gone! I didn't do anything! Please help me!"

This situation seemed to be serious. I had never heard of this happening. I didn't have anything on the calendar for another two hours so I hopped in my 1999 "Sapphire Blue Mica" (marketing division color name of course) Miata for the short drive up the hill to her Tall Mesa Village home. She was right, the icons were indeed missing. A simple right click on the blank desktop, hover over Arrange Icons by: and then click on Show Desktop Icons. This was definitely an act by the "little people." As I said, I hadn't heard of this situation before. Therefore, it must have been "Not Me" wishing to get off the hook by whispering in my ear how I might arrive at the solution. Since the club member was in the back room and the house girl had let me in, I quickly left the scene.

The next day the same lady called and said that her "My Computer" Icon was missing from the desktop. Realizing that it wasn't the normal desktop shortcut icon, I was puzzled. Not thinking things through, I again slid onto the seat in the Miata and shortly arrived on the scene. Sure enough most icons were visible, but the "My Computer" icon was not in its normal position. It wasn't immediately visible. I later noticed the top edge of the icon protruding just above the task bar. Once again, I moved the pointer to a blank spot on the desktop, a right click on the mouse and chose Arrange Icons by and chose Name. The My Desktop icon again assumed its prominence at the upper left. She said that she didn't drag and drop it down there. As I picked up a \$20 donation to the Club, I assumed that it must have been "Nobody" and left for home.

#### Suddenly...

Monday morning is usually the time for the phone calls to begin. On a recent Monday, the caller sheepishly stated that "suddenly I can't access the Internet." I recognized that the person speaking to me is the same one whose 18-year-old granddaughter had

placed hundreds of malware programs on his laptop two weeks before. At that time I had suggested a router/firewall so that she could plug her laptop directly to the router with Internet access. He had immediately gone out and purchased and installed one. Oh yes, the granddaughter had been there over the weekend and had brought her own laptop computer.

The blue Miata once again headed up the hill (from our home in the Valley View Village all destinations seem to be "up the hill.") to their home in Arroyo Vista Village. In just a few minutes, I found that the dear child didn't plug the cable into the router as instructed, but had used grandpa's computer. Since she was an AOL user, she attempted to change Gramps' Accounts from Cox Cable to AOL dialup and failed. It would have been so easy for her to have just gone to AOL using Internet Explorer. She left for school Sunday evening and didn't mention a thing to Gramps. That way, she didn't have to tell on either "Ida Know" or "Not Me." I picked up the \$20 donation to the club and was soon on my way.

An admonition: Set up a Guest Account without Administrative rights. Place a User name and password on the Administrative (your's) account.

#### All of a Sudden...

"All of a sudden" turns up many times a month and in some unusual situations. Last week, I received a call from a member that was using Microsoft Office Outlook. It seems that she had been entering information into a new contact when "all of a sudden" she couldn't enter information. She explained that she had been using Outlook and contacts for years and had never had this problem. Since this didn't seem (to me) that this required immediate attention, I arranged an appointment for the next morning. My Miata and I arrived at her Golf Mesa Village home just as the Grandfather clock guarding the entry was announcing that it was 10:00. Grandfather clocks that I am aware of don't announce "a.m." or "p.m."

She met me at the door and we proceeded to the office and she took her place in front of her computer to show me what was happening. She began keying in the house number, using the numeric keypad and just as she had said, nothing worked as expected. I immediately saw why this had happened so "suddenly." Apparently, "Nobody" had pressed the Num Lock key thereby turning it off. So as she would enter a house number, things went wild as the 2,4, 6, and 8 keys acted as direction keys, 7 & 9 were Home and Page Up respectively and 1 & 3 were End and Page down. I asked her to press the Num Lock key and "all of a sudden" the problem was resolved. I collected the \$20 donation check to the club and was homeward bound — downhill of course.

#### Suddenly...

On another Monday, I received a call from a member stating that she had recently upgraded to MS Office 2003 and a short time later, suddenly she could no longer access MS Publisher files. This was the result of someone else messing with functions





that they should have stayed away from. Support teams at Norton will vow “Not me.” But when the lady was directed to an article titled “How to use Office programs with the Norton Anti-Virus Office plug-in” she was able to resolve the problem as I watched. This article can help you extricate yourself and may be found at: [http:// support.microsoft.com/ kb/ 329820/en-us](http://support.microsoft.com/kb/329820/en-us) .

It is maddening to think that one, nay thousands upon thousands, must jump through hoops because a bunch of programmers at Symantec (Norton) can’t get it right.

I have never understood their automatic plug-in installation. At least they should tell the user, including a list of possible problems and their resolution, and let them make a decision as to whether to install the plug-in. Who needs viruses when “reputable” software manufacturers can do things like this to you?

A long time ago in computer time, but actually just over a year ago, I stopped paying the extortion money for antivirus software and have used the free AVG antivirus, which is available from [http:// free.grisoft.com/ doc/1](http://free.grisoft.com/doc/1) .

### **Suddenly...**

“Suddenly” you can’t open Word or most other Microsoft Office products. This happened because you owned a Hewlett Packard multi-function printer with a flash memory card reader. It seems that a security update messed with the logic for these systems and caused much havoc around the world. A follow-on update was released to affected computers during the fourth week in April. If you are still having the problem, go to Start then Windows Update, download and install all critical updates. It seems that “Ida Know” visited Microsoft’s Redmond campus...

### **Suddenly...**

Last week, one of your neighbors in the Valley View Village went to his neighbors stating that his phone went “dead.” On investigation, it was learned that he had ordered and installed a new Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system. Some of the equipment had arrived, but due to a transposition of digits when entering the credit card number, the important “Silver” box did not get shipped. “Ida Know” didn’t know how the mix up occurred. “Who Knows” stated that the customer probably discarded the silver box with the packaging. However, the land line telephone provider had been notified to discontinue the service. “Dead line!”

An admonition: Always check the contents of packages to make certain that all components are included before installing anything!

The Federal Communications Commission has a web site that explains most aspects of VoIP: [www.fcc.gov/voip/](http://www.fcc.gov/voip/).

### **Not so Suddenly...**

This particular call arrived on a Tuesday, so I was surprised to hear: “Suddenly I can send email but I can’t receive any messages. Everything times out. I’ve

called Cox Communications and since I use Office Outlook 2003, they weren’t much help.” This phone call came in at a time that Vickie was out and wouldn’t return for a while, so I slid behind the wheel of the Miata and headed for Ridgecrest Village to see what had happened so “suddenly.”

It took several minutes of attempting to send messages to the owner’s email address. Sure enough the message would be sent, but no incoming messages. After some time it would all time out. The first inbound message would never arrive. I found that there was no Internet access using Internet Explorer. I installed Firefox from my USB Flash memory and was then able to access the Internet. At this time clues began to appear one-by-one.

Norton Internet Security was warning of Firefox accessing the Internet — twice!

ZoneAlarm was warning of Firefox accessing the Internet!

Oops! Only one program firewall at a time is allowed. Since the member’s Norton subscription was about to expire, I downloaded AVG antivirus to his desktop (free at <http://free.grisoft.com>), shut off the cable modem, went to uninstall Norton SystemWorks and discovered two versions. I uninstalled both. When I attempted to install AVG antivirus, the program indicated that the version of the Roxio CD creator contained code that was incompatible with AVG, and it provided a link for an update. I installed the update and then successfully installed the AVG antivirus. Then I turned on the cable modem and downloaded updates. I was grateful to the AVG programmers to make that test and inform the user. Suddenly, I decided that I like the AVG antivirus program and its creators even more than in the past.

Now I felt that I could address the original problem. I opened Office Outlook, and it proceeded to download a monstrous movie clip — 9.87MB! It was able to complete the download due to the fact that Norton wasn’t scanning inbound e-mail messages.

“Suddenly” wasn’t really all that sudden. The second and third firewall programs were installed over a period of time, but the problem didn’t manifest itself until the arrival of the large file. As an aside, it was a clip from a newscast relating the story of an autistic youth that had been the go-fer for a high school basketball team. On the last game of his senior year, the coach (dad) suited him up put him in to play. I believe that I saw through the tears that welled up in my eyes over 21 points racked up — all three pointers. I’m not a sports fan, but am a fan of the underdog! \$20 more for the Club’s treasury.

This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of PC User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. Charles Davis is the newsletter editor and webmaster of the Sun City Anthem Coumputer Club, in Henderson, Nevada ([www.myscacc.org](http://www.myscacc.org)). He can be reached at [chas@anthemwebs.com](mailto:chas@anthemwebs.com). This article was originally published in Bits, PCs & Macs, the SCACC newsletter.



# Tweaking Windows' Taskbar

by Gabe Goldberg via APCUG

It's easy to use a key part of Windows' screen real estate, the taskbar, without really noticing it. Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components summarize what's happening on your computer and access running software. But unlike your car's dashboard, the taskbar can be customized for individual needs and preferences.

## Fun with Windows' Taskbar

I've read reports that most people can't accurately draw their car's dashboard, no matter how many hours or years they've stared at it. Similarly, many of us look at and use a key part of Windows' screen real estate—the taskbar—without paying much attention to it.

Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components—Start button at one end, notification area icons at the other, and application buttons in between—summarize what's happening on your PC and give quick access to running software. But the taskbar is more interesting than a car dashboard: you can customize it for your individual needs and preferences.

This article describes Windows XP's taskbar; other Windows versions have mostly similar facilities. People sometimes worry when their taskbar disappears or suddenly looks odd—or moves to an unfamiliar place on the screen. We'll see how such glitches are easily fixed.

Right-clicking a blank taskbar area displays Windows' familiar context menu, showing available options. Clicking Toolbars lets you display or hide built-in toolbars (groups of icons representing programs, folders, or files) or create your own. My favorite toolbars are Desktop (a handy pop-up list which duplicates desktop icons) and Quick Launch (which holds the few key icons I always want immediately available). Other standard toolbars are Address and Links.

Cascade and Tile options specify arrangement of open application windows: fanned like playing cards or arranged in a grid.

A key option—Lock the Taskbar—controls whether you can change the taskbar. When the taskbar is unlocked, you can change its size by dragging its edge away from or towards the screen's edge. You can move individual toolbars by grabbing their handles (perforated line near each one) and move the taskbar by grabbing a blank area.

Clicking Properties brings up a detailed options dialogue box. It's safe to experiment but only change one thing at a time until you learn your way through all the choices.

The Taskbar tab customizes the taskbar itself and its notification area. You can auto-hide the taskbar—handy on small monitors to reclaim space for application windows. When it hides, moving the mouse near it makes it visible. You can always keep the taskbar on top of other applications, or allow it to be covered. If it's hidden, pressing ctrl-esc displays it.

Similar task bar buttons—for example, representing multiple Word documents—can be grouped to save taskbar space, or spread out. If they're grouped, left-clicking the group displays all open files, and right-clicking lets you manipulate the files simultaneously.

You can add and delete Quick Launch toolbar icons by dragging them on or off the toolbar. I trimmed mine to two icons: Show Desktop and Windows Explorer. From a Windows keyboard, these are available by pressing Win-D and Win-E, respectively.

The notification area (called the “tray” in earlier Windows versions) shows icons for small applications or utilities that are running, plus your clock. Mousing over an icon pops up its name. You can control which icons are displayed and whether inactive icons (representing programs you haven't used for a while) are hidden. Each program running consumes PC resources so it's worth monitoring these icons and pruning any which aren't necessary. Right-click an icon to display options. Closing some applications prevents them from automatically starting at system boot, while others offer an explicit option.

Continuing our tour through taskbar properties, the Start Menu tab lets you specify Start Menu appearance and operation. You can pick large or small icons and determine how many shortcuts are saved in it for recently used programs. Key programs can be “pinned” to the Start menu by right-clicking a desktop icon or dragging an icon to the Start button and placing it in the permanent top area. The Advanced tab determines Start menu behavior and lets you select modern or “classic” Start menu format.

Finally, when the Taskbar is unlocked, three extra toolbar right-click options are available: View, Show text, and Show title, for fine tuning your PC's “dashboard”.

While Windows operates just fine as it's installed, tweaking taskbar settings and other options can make it faster and more pleasant to use. And since there are usually multiple ways to accomplish tasks in Windows, it's worth exploring—for example, right-clicking to explore context menus and clicking various options/customize/advanced buttons to see what's available. Don't be afraid to tinker, but remember what you change so you can undo it!



# Email Etiquette

from Art Silverglate

Email has become an indispensable part of our lives. The problem seems to be people have forgotten the rules of etiquette. Even in email they still apply. And it seems I get email every day showing that people have forgotten how to use etiquette.

So, as a reminder, I would like to list some rules we all should follow for using email.

- ✉ The 24 hour rule. If you are annoyed or angry wait 24 hours before you send a reply. What is sent cannot (generally) be retrieved. Calm down and cool off. If you must put it in writing, save it as a draft and wait the 24 hours; often when you read what you wrote, you will discard it or at least tone it down.
- ✉ DON'T USE ALL UPPERCASE, that is the same as shouting.
- ✉ Make sure you check your To: field; the mistake of sending email to the wrong person can very embarrassing
- ✉ When you want to reply, make sure you click Reply and not Reply to All. Sometimes you want to include everyone in your "conversation", but many times you don't. The wrong button here can cost more than embarrassment; in a business situation it could cost you your job.
- ✉ You should have more than one email address. Most services today allow you to have multiple email addresses, including Hotmail, Gmail, and Yahoo. You should have one that is private for family and close friends, another for mailing lists you may want to join and another for shopping online.

- ✉ Remember the attachment! I have done this a number of time, sending the email without first attaching the file(s). How often have you read an email and were looking forward to the indicated attachment only to find its not attached?
- ✉ And the single most important tip I can give you: if you can't say it to your mother in public, don't put in an email. Along with that, don't think email is PRIVATE, it usually is not

Sadly, Emily Post is no longer with us to remind us how important etiquette can be. (The first edition of her Etiquette book came out in 1922, and she died in 1960, so she didn't actually say much about email.) So we need to remind ourselves how important etiquette can be.

*[Editor's note: Email etiquette is a topic near and dear to your editor's heart, so let me make a couple of comments.*

*[First, remember that email is permanent; unlike the spoken word, it can come back to haunt you. There's a tendency to consider email ephemeral, because it's not actually written down on paper. But it takes about two seconds to print it, or to forward your private message to hundreds (or thousands) of complete strangers.*

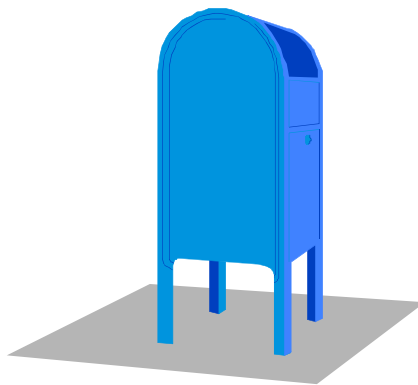
*[Storage space keeps getting cheaper. My free Gmail account has more than 2.5 GB of storage space, so*

*I'll never have to delete all those emails you send me. For that matter, I've got email from ten years ago on my hard drive. I'd give long odds that I'll still have those emails 25 years from now, just copying them over to new machines.*

*[So remember that email is never really private, and it never really goes away. So, as Art says, don't write email while you're angry, and don't write anything you wouldn't want your mother to read!*

*[My other main point is that email is very easy to misinterpret. If you're making a joke, or being sarcastic, or even **not** being sarcastic, you need to consider your tone and your audience carefully. There's a corollary to Murphy's Law that says if your email **can** be misinterpreted, it **will** be misinterpreted. So reread your email before you send it; if it's not crystal clear what you mean, take the time to add a sentence or two to make it clear. People can still misread it, but at least you'll have your email to back you up. And this will cut down on the funny looks people give you at the office!*

*[Happy emailing!]*



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*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member.*

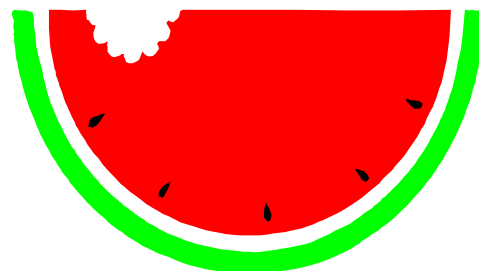
# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045

Meeting:

**Wednesday, July 19, 7:30 pm**

Topic: Vic McGonegal will discuss  
Computer Seniors of America, a vounteer  
group that focuses on computer  
training for seniors.



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George Coffin  
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[gcoffin3@comcast.net](mailto:gcoffin3@comcast.net)

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Columbia, MD 21045  
[pjvanbloem@aol.com](mailto:pjvanbloem@aol.com)  
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### CMUG Officers and Contacts

President.....Mike Kerwin.....410-531-1822.. [kerwinm@dea.nci.nih.gov](mailto:kerwinm@dea.nci.nih.gov)  
Vice President.....Mike Hayes.....410-465-1131... [mikes\\_line@hotmail.com](mailto:mikes_line@hotmail.com)  
Secretary.....Mary Guarnieri...410-531-1822... [watermelon@comcast.net](mailto:watermelon@comcast.net)  
Treasurer.....John Weske.....301-774-7564..... [jsweske@juno.com](mailto:jsweske@juno.com)  
Asst Treasurer.....Bill Baxter.....410-531-2820..... [billbaxter@erols.com](mailto:billbaxter@erols.com)  
Membership.....George Coffin.....410-750-6914..... [gcoffin3@comcast.net](mailto:gcoffin3@comcast.net)  
Reviews.....Art Silverglate...410-750-2435.. [art.silverglate@gmail.com](mailto:art.silverglate@gmail.com)  
Programs.....Andrew Rein.....240-473-4299..... [cdlots@yahoo.com](mailto:cdlots@yahoo.com)  
Publicity.....Jack Fogarty.....301-774-0331..... [jfogarty@bcpl.net](mailto:jfogarty@bcpl.net)  
Megaphone Editor...Paul Van Bloem..410-549-3070..... [pjvanbloem@aol.com](mailto:pjvanbloem@aol.com)  
Board Member.....Sumi Kinoshita..301-549-3939..... [skinoshita@juno.com](mailto:skinoshita@juno.com)

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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.

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