

March  
2006

Vol. 25,  
Number 3



# MEGAPHONE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

## President's Message The Hype Game Is Back!

from Mike Kerwin

Friends, we've all been around long enough to remember numerous incidents of "vapor-ware" and mysterious hardware "in the offing" to blow away all of the competition, but much of this approach seems to have disappeared with the tech-crash of '99. I'm sure you recall the Apple (hex sign deleted) ad at the Super Bowl where an actress rampages through a grey world of PCs and smashes a machine with a hammer as the unveiling for the user friendly, and colorful, world of Mac. Or perhaps you recall the various ups and downs of our favorite candidate for Universal Computer Winner in the free-for-all days of competing hardware (Commodore, Osborne, Atari, Xerox, etc). Those were heady days full of promise and excitement, like the dawn of a new era and we were there, ready to step on the escalator and ride off into the clouds of fame and fortune.

Well now we can return to that glorious Golden Age, at least for a few brief moments, thanks to those shining knights in digital armor who came along and burst all of those bubbles with their standardized digital spears. What, you ask expectantly, is this all about? Get ready for "Origami" (fanfare)!!!

It is out on the Internet (so it must be true) that Dick Cheney was cavorting instead of quailing, whoops, that's another story not related to my theme. What I meant to write was that several blogs and more conventional web publications like PC World are raising the curtain on the latest joint endeavor of Microsoft and Intel, the Dynamic WinTel duo (cue the Lone Ranger theme song, aka the William Tell Overture): Project Origami. By the time you read this, the curtain may be fully lifted so the surprise will be diminished, but you can still participate by viewing

the following websites and the sequential offerings leading up to the 9 March launch date. Microsoft (final date 9 March) offers [www.origamiproject.com/1](http://www.origamiproject.com/1) and Intel (starting 7 March) has [www.umpc.com](http://www.umpc.com). See the object of interest at [www.engadget.com/2006/02/24/microsofts-origami-project](http://www.engadget.com/2006/02/24/microsofts-origami-project). (The "umpc" stands for Ultra-Mobile PC.)

The ads are neat and the viral approach to advertising is fascinating to view. So what's the big deal? Well Microsoft, and just about everybody else in the world of computing, realizes that desktop, notebook, and media center hardware have a limited market which is nearing saturation, and they realize that Steve Jobs has revitalized his spunky little brother company with media players (think huge profits in an expanding field, you economic types), so this may be an attempt to co-opt some of the media market and perhaps start the "Next Big Thing".

The name implies multiple layers of activity and the pictures seem to confirm this. Of course the name is taken from the Japanese art of folding paper to make some marvelous objects well beyond the paper airplanes of our culture. From the Engadget photo it appears the hardware part of the product has a keyboard and touch screen capabilities which were not part of Microsoft's earlier effort at a media player. The speculation on the blogs is that this device will be a meld of Tablet PC and PDA operating over some version of WinXP. All of the talk at the time I am writing is speculation, but by the time you read this the real story may



### Next General Meeting

Art Silverglate, with some help from Intel, will speak on Buying vs. Building Your Next PC. Plus, freebies from CES and Intel!  
Wednesday, March 15, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

### Next Windows SIG Meeting

Topic: Keeping The Bad Guys Out: protecting yourself on the network and on the Internet  
Tuesday, March 28, 7:00 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

### Inside the Megaphone

President's Message.....	from Mike Kerwin.....	Page 1
The Hype Game Is Back!		
Upcoming Meetings.....	from Andrew Rein.....	3
Deals From The Deals Guy.....	by Bob Click.....	3
Multi-core Processors.....	by Brian K. Lewis, via APCUG.....	5
Legal Bytes.....	by John Brewer, via APCUG.....	7
Fair Use - Wherefore Art Thou Going?		
Editor's Note.....	from Paul Van Bloem.....	9



be out and about. Even so it is interesting to view the build-up and feel the excitement as the website animation is pretty good.

If the device fits the current descriptions it still will not live up to the device featured on the cover of Scientific American a couple of years back. The editors had an issue devoted to speculation of how the plethora of devices now being carried, lugged, or parked by true Geeks might be combined into a futuristic single device. The range of devices up for melding included cellphone, digital camera, PDA, notebook/tablet, media player, book/newspaper (do geeks really read dead tree products?), and other miscellaneous items (possibly a pill-taker reminder for us older geeks). This Wish-Product appeared somewhat larger than the current range of cellphones, but then again it was designed to truly be an "all-in-one" gizmo.

The feature I found fascinating is one that is slowly making its way up the technology ladder – the flexible display screen. Currently Kodak is using the OLED (organic light emitting diode) in its line of digital cameras, but this type of display offers the potential for a roll-up screen to greatly increase the viewing capability without the weight and bulk of current screen technology which relies on LCD technology of a back light, diodes, and glass plate. Oh well, some day we may see this yet.

Another item has piqued my interest this month so I will throw in a little blurb with my thoughts. The item is called CellStik by SparkTech ([www.sparktech.com](http://www.sparktech.com)). The current main use for this \$40 gadget is to back-up cellphone directories to a PC via a USB plug on one end and a cellphone-specific plug on the other. I did some inquiries and judged it "not ready for prime time" today. I say this even though backups are truly essential for digital information. My judgment is based on the current limitations such as the plug specificity of the phone end; in order to transfer a directory from a Motorola phone to a Samsung (substitute any other brand) one would have to buy two of the Stik devices – one to get the data on a PC and one to load it into the second brand of phone. That is way too expensive.

Speaking of cost, CellStik does not support the transfer of other data such as images, videos, and, most crucial of all, ringtones. The wireless services are earning fortunes on downloadable ringtones to individualize the ring to the caller, yet when one transfers to a different brand of phone one is unable to transfer this paid-for data and must re-purchase it (ka-ching, ka-ching). Part of the problem is that the cellphone manufacturers have not standardized on a single data plug and apparently it is not as easy to build adaptors as it is for the power cords.

Part of my problem is the SparkTech attitude if you read the FAQ on this device. Someone asks if one CellStik can be used to back-up data from a pair

of phones (owned by husband and wife); the answer given is that it can be used only for a single phone and hence the couple should purchase a pair of CellStiks. When I inquired further the company rep admitted that the memory of the device can be erased when plugged into the PC and hence could transfer data from any number of same-brand phones if the process were done sequentially – Duh! How about that for excessive marketing ploys!

## CMUG Business

On to business. At the March Board meeting we had a very lively discussion about the financial status of the group. As you may know the cost of postage, copying, and room rent has increased substantially since the inception of our group. (Quickly now, what was 1st class postage in 1990 vs now? Would you believe, 25 cents vs 39 cents? [www.akdart.com/postrate.html](http://www.akdart.com/postrate.html))

All this time the dues for membership have remained the same basic \$25/year and for the past few years the group has shown a loss at the end of each year. This was true even as we trimmed expenses such as indemnity insurance and website costs. After much discussion the Board voted to raise the membership dues to \$30/year starting 1 June 2006. Along with this change we decided to offer a CD full of useful programs at the time of renewal. If you have suggestions for software to be included, please contact Art by the April meeting.

We believe that this dues increase will put the group in a better position to continue to provide a forum for information exchange among the members and the digital community in general.

## Meetings

Thanks to Dave Methvin for another informative and interesting presentation last month. If you missed it, Dave brought us up to date on the copy protection status of digital data. As always he stimulated much discussion, this time over the unintended consequences of the constant battle over intellectual property rights of developers and owner/renters.

This month we will have our own Art Silverglate putting on a presentation from Intel entitled "Buy or Build?" This will help provide guidance on the relative value of buying complete PCs off the shelf or Internet vs buying components and "rolling" your own desktop PC.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the meeting.

Digitally,

Mike



## Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

As time goes forward, my health gets more complicated. I have been a Type II diabetic for a few years now and other than some swelling in the legs, my sugar control is pretty good, which I assume many of you can relate to. Problem is I started the sugar control too late and suffered serious heart damage. Now it seems that I have developed a large blood clot in my lower leg, I believe from a fall, and the doctor put me on Coumadin (Warfarin), better known as rat poison. There's a long list of drugs that it interacts with, and I am already a walking pharmacy, so now it gets complicated.



This turn for the worse seems to bring other unexpected complications. I have started getting temporary spikes upward in my blood pressure for no apparent reason, which sometimes causes a nosebleed. I am afraid to go anyplace these days because I might get a nosebleed, although I can stop it now rather easily. My doctor has prescribed medication for my blood pressure as a solution to the changes and I sure hope it works. Getting old sure gets complicated, but

### Upcoming Meetings

Here's is what we have planned for the next few meetings. To suggest a meeting topic (especially if you can suggest a possible speaker for the topic), please talk to me at the meeting, or via email at [cdlots@yahoo.com](mailto:cdlots@yahoo.com).

- Andrew Rein

**March 15:** Our own Art Silverglate will speak on "Building vs Buying Your Next PC"

**April 19:** Vic McGonegal, from Computer Seniors of America ([www.computerseniors.org](http://www.computerseniors.org)), will talk a bit 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.

**May 17:** Andrew Rein & David Johns on converting analog audio to digital (LPs to CDs, for example) using computer or stand-alone techniques.

June 21: Rob Pegoraro, consumer tech columnist for the Washington Post, will explain how he decides what hardware and software makes his column, and what leads to a good review. He'll also discuss technology journalism, and take questions about his work. Also, Officer Elections!

the alternative to getting old "really sucks." It looks like I will have five more months on the rat poison, if I survive. I have talked to many people also taking Coumadin who tell me even worse stories about bleeding where you don't want to and a lack of good control by their doctor.

Right now, I need a blood test at least once a week for my INR (the clotting ability of the blood). The doctor says I can purchase a machine to do that test at home, but I checked on the Web and it would cost \$2495 (no decimal point). I'll let the clinic do the testing. Medicare only pays for that if you have valve problems in your heart, so I'm still doing my best to continue cheating my wife out of the life insurance money. Whenever I start to slow down on exercise etc., I get a vision of my wife sitting on the beach of some south sea island with a stud sitting next to her, and she is writing a check on my insurance money for their next vacation. That little vision gets me right out of the chair to exercise.

### How Secure is Your System?

I read an article in Information Week magazine that was both amusing and interesting. It concerned a company whose CIO hired security investigators to test how good their system stood up to being infiltrated. The director of the network operations center was sure they couldn't break into the systems or facilities, but they very soon proved him wrong. Some of the weaknesses were so stupid that I had to chuckle, such as many of the passwords for work stations were written on a note taped to the machine or hidden under the keyboard. They gained access to limited access places just by calling the receptionist and telling them that some agents were coming in to do an audit and needed



### Windows SIG March 28 Meeting

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, our topic is "Protecting yourself on the network and the Internet: Keeping the Bad Guys Out!"

If you have a suggestion or a topic for the SIG, please email me at [mikes\\_line@hotmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.millkern.com/cmug) for maps and directions.

- Mike Hayes



access, which was easily granted to the very people who made the call. Office keys were sometimes in the secretary's desk. You can find this article at [www.informationweek.com/management/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=177100115](http://www.informationweek.com/management/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=177100115), and you'll find it enlightening.

### Leaky Capacitor Update

A while back, I wrote about a leaky capacitor problem on motherboards that I read about in Ed Foster's Gripe Line, and gave you the URL to find out more. Since then, I received a message from Carey Holzman, author of Healthy PC, who tells me that is a four-year-old issue and that there has been "some" resolution in the matter. He says he has covered it since it first came up four years ago and more information is available on his Web site. [www.careyholzman.com](http://www.careyholzman.com). Also a second URL: [www.badcaps.net](http://www.badcaps.net).

### Great, the Bundle Is Back

Colleen Toumayan from Executive Software sent a message letting me know that their "bundle" is back. For a limited time you can get both the award winning Diskeeper 10, Home Edition, and Undelete 5, Home Edition, products for just \$49.95 plus S&H. I have never heard anything but praise about these fine products. Mine is not the latest, but it always works well, and fast. Use this link to order: <http://purchase.diskeeper.com/checkout/addtocart.aspx?Item=1382>.

### ExtraLabs Releases v 3.4 of Feed Editor

I received the announcement below recently; I've edited it down to the essentials.

New RSS Editor Makes Anyone An RSS Guru!

ExtraLabs Software unveils Feed Editor 3.4, a full-fledged RSS editor that offers you an easy way to create and maintain RSS feeds and podcasts. Compared to other RSS editors in its category, Feed Editor combines an unprecedented number of features including support for various RSS formats, a podcasting support, a WYSIWYG HTML editor, an XML editor, an RSS Feed preview, an FTP upload and publishing, automatic date management and an ability to convert CSV or HTML to RSS, and back.

Feed Editor can create and maintain an unlimited number of RSS feeds and podcasts, thus letting you maintain and distribute multiple content streams simultaneously. To create a new RSS feed, you can use a New Feed Creation wizard that will guide you through the RSS setup process in a step-by-step fashion. Additional convenience comes with a built-in WYSIWYG HTML editor that allows you to edit a feed in much the same way as you would edit a word

processing document. You can format the text, apply styling, and insert images and hyperlinks. Also, "Feed Editor" can generate a feed from a CSV and HTML file. Once a feed is ready, you can preview it and publish online using an FTP upload facility.

Read more about Feed Editor at [www.extralabs.net/feed-editor.htm](http://www.extralabs.net/feed-editor.htm). Download an evaluation version to try it for free [www.extralabs.net/FeedEditorSetup.exe](http://www.extralabs.net/FeedEditorSetup.exe) (1.72 MB).

ExtraLabs Software is glad to offer the newest version of "Feed Editor" with 50% off the regular price making it just \$19.95. Also, ExtraLabs will offer all user group members an additional 5% discount on the purchase of the program during April and May. Follow this link for the extra discount: [www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=74108&pc=312aY](http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=74108&pc=312aY).

Feed Editor 3.4 runs under Windows 95/98/Me/2000/NT/XP/2003. Registered customers are entitled to free lifetime updates and premium technical support. Discounts for volume buyers are available.

### If You Like Games...

Here's another announcement I received recently. If you're interested in puzzle-type games, you may want to check this out. Be aware that this vendor has no privacy statement on their Web site about protecting your information.

From the creators of "Zzed" comes a new game of Wonderlines by NevoSoft. Wonderlines is a remake of a popular game. Only balls and lines remind you of its predecessor here and the rest is covered with the charm of novelty. A player will see a new bonus system, a new intricate game play structure and a fresh interface design. The music and visuals are great.

Puzzle, Action, Zen Way modes are different, yet each requires special skills. Generally, the game stayed nearly the same yet now you match several balls of one color in a line, but also blow them up over certain brown squares. The challenge of the game is to remove all brown squares in each level. 70 levels of the game are very different one from another. Another merit of the game is new bonuses: the miraculous multicolor ball, dazzling diamond and clever hammer, triple or quadruple bomb and others, which help a lot while making your way through Wonderlines.

Wonderlines runs under Windows 98/ME/XP/2000 and costs \$19.95 (USD). NevoSoft offers a 30% discount to user group members if you use this link: [https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=8323-16&ss\\_coupon=NEVO-GPCU](https://www.regnow.com/softsell/nph-softsell.cgi?item=8323-16&ss_coupon=NEVO-GPCU). Registered customers are entitled to the unlocked game play and lifetime technical support. An evaluation version of the game, that



# Multi-core Processors

by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., via APCUG

When I first started researching central processing units (CPUs), my idea was to try to make some sense out of the naming/numbering schemes currently being used by Intel and AMD. This turned out to be an almost impossible task. Did you realize that Intel has more than 50 different Pentium 4 CPU models? That in each speed range there can be a dozen different models. They vary by cache size, socket size, hyper-threading or not, 64 bit or not, voltage and other parameters. As just one example, Intel's 3.2 GHz processor has 12 different models. AMD is just about as bad when you try to analyze their nomenclature. So, for the moment, I have given up on trying to find a simple way to categorize the currently available CPUs. Maybe next month.

Since the upper end of the CPU production now seems to be aimed at producing processors with more than one central core, I decided to look at that topic. So what does it mean that a CPU has more than one core? You can think of it as a single chip containing two or more central processors. It is like having two (or more) computers in one box. That said, I have to admit that it doesn't double your processing speed. At least, not yet.

Servers and workstations used in business have had multiple processors for a number of years. Mainframe computers with multiple processors have also been around for years. In order to take advantage of multiple processing your operating system must be capable of recognizing and using multiple processors. Windows has had that capability since Windows NT/

2000 and it is included in Windows XP. Intel introduced Hyper-threading technology in 2002. That allowed two different "threads" to be processed almost simultaneously. Going the next step and putting multiple processors on one single chip is the idea behind multi-core processors. The AMD64 chip was originally designed to have a second core added at a later date. This became the current Athlon 64 X2 dual-core processor. Intel's Pentium D is also a dual-core processor. In any multi-core processor each core is seen by the operating system as being a discrete processor as if the motherboard had two or more separate CPUs. Ideally this allows the computer to process more work within a given clock cycle.

## Why Two Is Better Than One

The question is why would Intel and AMD want to complicate CPU design by putting these processors onto a single chip? After all, the design is more expensive to produce. The primary answer to the questions is heat. In the fall of 2002 Intel indicated that it had a 4.0 GHz processor in production. That processor never reached the market. There was also talk about processors reaching 10 GHz. That has all changed and primarily due to the difficulty of reducing the heat output of these processors. When you have 125 million transistors in a very small space, as in Intel's Prescott processor series, there is a lot of heat produced. In fact, it takes special cooling to keep the processor from overheating and essentially burning itself up. I have a 3.0 GHz Intel "Prescott" processor in my computer and it runs at a consistent 400 Celsius (1040 F). That's only because I have an over sized copper heat sink and very large CPU fan. Ideally it should be running in the low 30s which would be about 50% of the maximum temperature.

Another problem is current or electron leakage. As the processor die size decreases and the number of transistors increases, there is a greater problem with leakage. Electron leakage from one pathway to another can result in data corruption. Die sizes are currently 90 nm and are anticipated to drop to 65 nm this year. Finally the power requirements increase with the increase in transistors. The increase in power is another component in the increasing amount of heat produced by the CPU.

Dual core processors are designed to run at lower clock speeds than the fastest of the single core processors. This reduces the heat output even though the dual core processors currently have 230 million transistors in a smaller space. Intel has also announced another dual core processor to be on the market this summer that will have 1.7 billion transistors! Their literature says they anticipate that by the end of 2006, 70% of their desktop and mobile processors will be dual-core. By the end of 2007 fully 90% of Intel's processors will be at least dual-core. AMD is moving just as fast in producing



offers 60 minutes of game play, is available as a free download at [www.nevosoft.com/wonderlines/wonderlines\\_demo.exe](http://www.nevosoft.com/wonderlines/wonderlines_demo.exe).

For more information, visit us at [www.nevosoft.com](http://www.nevosoft.com). Product page link: [www.nevosoft.com/downloadable-game/en/games/wonderlines.html](http://www.nevosoft.com/downloadable-game/en/games/wonderlines.html).

## That's It for This Month

Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. Be sure to check the new announcement pages on my website ([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 Cheapskate) Click  
[bobclick@mindspring.com](mailto:bobclick@mindspring.com)





dual core processors.

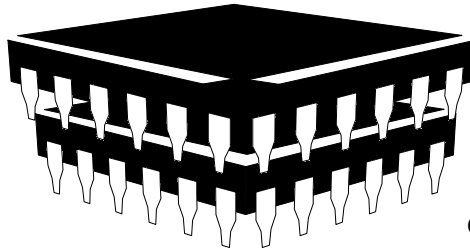
As the number of cores increase on a single die there will definitely be increases in heat output. Cooling requirements for these CPUs will definitely increase. The future of CPU cooling would seem to be water-cooled systems even for the home desktop market, unless there is some technological breakthrough that reduces the heat problem.

There are other bottlenecks that will become more important in multi-core systems. One is the bus that transmits information from the core to other components. With two or more cores sending information over the bus, both speed and bandwidth will have to increase to handle the increased load. The CPU depends on the computer RAM for the source of its data and instructions. Therefore memory speed is also important and will need to be increased. Finally, information is read from and written to the hard disk. Even with the increased speed and bandwidth associated with SATA drives, this can be the largest bottleneck in the system. So these problems can prevent the user from gaining the maximum advantage provided by a multi-core system.

All that said, I have to admit that there will be some definite gains in processing speed with the multi-core systems. This has already been demonstrated by a number of third-party testers. However, it will be some time before a dual-core system will function at twice the speed of a single core system.

I keep talking about “threads” without really giving you any explanation of them. I don't think you really want to go into the programming background for this, so I will try to give you the simple explanation. A thread is a series of sequential programming steps or operations. In some instances, programming steps can be executed simultaneously. However, the program must be designed to allow this to happen. There are also problems associated with multi-threading that can slow down the overall operation. One problem is called “deadlock”. This is when two threads are each waiting for the other to complete its operations. This can result in neither thread reaching completion. For software developers, multi-threaded applications have much higher development costs than the current single-threaded applications. Although Intel's Hyper-threading CPUs have been around for several years, very little software has been written to take advantage of the dual-thread processing. Both Intel and AMD are working with software developers to produce more multi-threaded software applications. But it may be some time before the majority of software applications can take advantage of multi-core processors.

Intel has another technology it has developed



for use in its multi-core chips. This is called “Foxton”. This allows a processor to adjust its speed and power requirements based on its processing load. Each processor will have a base or minimum clock speed and a maximum speed. When the load is low, the processor can raise its clock speed up to a maximum level. This gives the processor more power for faster computing. If the load or the power requirement rises too high, the processor slows. All of this is more technology to simply reduce the system heat to manageable levels.

As I was writing this, Steve Jobs, at MacWorld in San Francisco, announced the introduction of Intel-based Macintosh computers using the Intel Core Duo processor. This processor was developed for the mobile computer market. It uses clock speeds from 1.6 GHz to 2.1 GHz. Although it has a lower clock speed, the dual processor will provide some performance gain. There will also be a lower drain on the battery. Several other companies have produced Windows-based laptops using this same processor.

So how will multi-core computers affect the individual computer user? It should improve the efficiency of your computer by improving its multi-tasking ability. Since each core is essentially a separate processor, at least two applications can be run simultaneously. If the dual core also supports hyper-threading, as some of the Intel Pentium D CPUs do, then it could handle four applications or four threads in multi-threaded applications. Now you may think you really don't do any multi-tasking. However, if you are running an anti-virus program, a firewall, or any other application in the background while you also do word processing or emailing, then you are multi-tasking. A dual core CPU would permit this to happen more efficiently, if not more quickly. Frequently, I am writing, checking a spreadsheet and pulling data off the Web. This is also multi-tasking.

I suspect that if you plan to replace your computer within the next year (or two), you will have a dual-core 64-bit processor in your system. With a couple of gigabytes of RAM, you'll be all set to run Windows Vista as a 64-bit operating system.

*This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. This article originally appeared in the Sarasota PC Monitor, the newsletter of the Sarasota PC Users Group ([www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)). Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail at [bwsail@yahoo.com](mailto:bwsail@yahoo.com).*



## Legal Bytes

### Fair Use - Wherefore Art Thou Going?

by John Brewer, via APCUG

*[Ed. Note: I thought, after Dave Methvin's talk last month, that there might be interest in some of the legal aspects of copyright and digital media. And here's John Brewer to explain it all, courtesy of APCUG.]*

The news media is reporting the current brouhaha over electronic eavesdropping and surveillance of telephone calls, email, and Internet searches. The US Senate is set to begin debate on whether Judge Samuel Alito is the right person to follow Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Congress is debating how to manage recovery in New Orleans, fund wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and address the reality of record deficits in the federal budget. It is a good time for the entertainment industry to make an end run on "fair use."

Fair use is a legal concept that permits the public to use copyrighted content without paying for the use, subject to specific restrictions. The entertainment industry perceives "fair use" as tantamount to theft by the unwashed and the unsaved. Draft legislation sponsored by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) is being prepared for filing in Congress.

The new legislation is being circulated by Senator Gordon Smith (R-Ore) and is titled the "Digital Content Protection Act of 2006." The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) reports that "fair use" will be limited to "customary historic use of broadcast content by consumers to the extent such use is consistent with applicable law" under the DCPA. EFF continues, "had that been the law in 1970, there would never have been a VCR. Had it been the law in 1990, no TiVo; in 2000, no iPod. 'Fair use' has always been a forward-looking doctrine. It was meant to leave room for new uses, not merely customary historic uses. Sony was entitled to build the VCR first and resolve the fair use questions later."

EFF interprets the proposed legislation as giving regulatory agencies (that could be largely staffed by industry types) the power to prohibit new technologies in advance of their introduction to public use. Past practice was to permit the introduction of new technology and then permit the courts to rule whether copyright law was applicable and, if so,

whether the use of the technology was an exception under "fair use." As an example, the public is permitted to tape a television program on a VCR and play it back later as a "fair use" exception to copyright law. This practice is called "time shifting."

The new law will permit the device or technology only if it meets the criteria of "customary historic use." New technology will probably not qualify as "customary historic use." EFF predicts a world where technology will be frozen in time because industry lobbyists will have the power to prohibit new technology. Anyone who thinks otherwise is naïve. The federal regulatory agencies have seen "sea changes" in their attitudes under the current administration in the determination of the proper balance between industry and public interests.

The Public Knowledge web site ([www.publicknowledge.org](http://www.publicknowledge.org)) states that the Smith legislation is basically a rework of what is known as the "Hollings Bill" from 2002. Public Knowledge says further "the fact remains that the main issue here is not about piracy, it's about control. The content industry needs a congressional mandate to control the functionality of consumer electronics and PCs, and in turn, what consumers can do with the devices and content they legally obtain.

"The Senate has introduced the 'Digital Content Protection Act of 2006,' a bill that will create 'Broadcast Flags' for all digital radio and television, leading to

FCC oversight of all new digital media technologies from iPods and PSPs to TVs and DVD recorders."

Another web site, a very interesting web site indeed, is [beingboing.net](http://beingboing.net). Beingboing has the following to say about the Smith legislation ([www.beingboing.net/2006/01/21/broadcast\\_flag\\_is\\_ba.html](http://www.beingboing.net/2006/01/21/broadcast_flag_is_ba.html)).

Under the DCPA proposal, digital media technologies would be restricted to using technologies that had been certified by the FCC as being not unduly disruptive to entertainment industry business-models. There are two things to be certain of this century:

1. Everything that can be expressed as bits [digital content] will be expressed as bits
2. Bits will only get easier to copy

The entertainment companies are convinced that their businesses depend on copy-proof bits. This is ridiculous: there's no such thing, there never will be.

Governments that try to protect businesses that demand copy-proof bits are like governments that try to protect businesses on the sides of





volcanoes, who demand an immediate end to business-disrupting lava.

If the current entertainment companies can't or won't adapt to a world of bits, that's too bad. Let them die, and let new businesses that thrive in the new technological reality take their place. If you can't stand the heat, get off the volcano.

Back in the mainframe days, IBM made its money by giving away computers below cost and then charging a bundle for keyboards and printers. Hitachi killed the mainframe business by introducing cheap peripherals for IBM mainframes. Killing mainframes didn't kill computers: it made them better. IBM was forced to get into the minicomputer business, which led to the personal computer.

If computer industry complaints got the same attention as the entertainment crybabies get from lawmakers, there'd be 10,000 computers total in the world, running punchcards, with three companies making modest sums servicing them and shipping a new model every three years.

Hollywood's crybaby capitalists accuse us of being "communists" with one breath, and in the next, they go begging to Congress to turn the FCC into device czars who keep the market from being disrupted by innovation.

Andy Setos, the Fox executive who invented the Broadcast Flag, once told me that his objective was "a well-mannered marketplace." The entertainment industry's version of a planned economy is bad policy.

Send a strong signal to your lawmaker: if you break my TV, radio, and computer, I will campaign tirelessly for anyone who will promise to throw you out of office and undo your deeds."

A commenter on Boingboing says "The author of the new bill to break our televisions, computers, and MP3 players, Senator Gordon Smith of Oregon, has been paid tens of thousands of dollars to do it. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) has been lobbying hard for the sole ability to decide how hard it's going be for us to listen to an mp3. The NAB has thrown nearly \$250,000 at Republican candidates this year alone. NAB's money stuck to Gordon Smith."

Sometimes the public has live with the legislation that has been bought by industry. Anyone who is concerned should make their voice heard.

This article comes to us from APCUG, the Association of Personal Computer User Groups, of which CMUG is a member. This article originally appeared in the eMonitor, the newsletter of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City ([www.ccokc.org](http://www.ccokc.org)). John Brewer practices law in Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor's and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace. Comments and questions are welcome and can be emailed to [johnb@jnbrewer.com](mailto:johnb@jnbrewer.com).

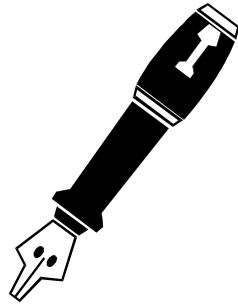
## Editor's Note

*from Paul Van Bloem*

A few quick notes from your Editor. Sorry I don't have time to make them longer, or include other items I've been meaning to pass along.

### Dues & Finances

First, let me point out the upcoming increase in CMUG dues. This was discussed and voted on at the last Board Meeting.



Basically, the club has two main ongoing expenses: printing and mailing the newsletter, and renting rooms for our meetings. It's hard to see this in our most recent Financial Statement (in the January Megaphone), because we ended up not getting billed for our

room rentals in calendar 2005. But note that the newsletter cost over \$700 for the year. That will be going up this year, at least a tad, because postage has gone up, and Staples is now charging 7 cents per copy rather than 6.

My understanding is that we pay around \$40 for the Windows SIG meetings each month, and something like \$50 for the longer General meetings. So in a year, the 11 Windows SIG meeting cost the group around \$440, and the General meetings run us about \$600.

Add in miscellaneous expenses of around \$300, and a typical year's expenses are a bit over \$2000. We have between 50 and 60 members, so expenses run between \$33 and \$40 per member.

Now, there's a lot of variation in these numbers. The Bain Center hasn't consistently billed us for the room rental, for example, and we've saved some money with shorter newsletters and deals from Staples. Also, I haven't considered the CD-of-the-Month donations. But I also haven't looked at the costs of new equipment, which we will need someday.

On the whole, I think it's pretty clear why the Board decided to bring the dues more in line with CMUG's expenses. Of course, any suggestions from members, on reducing our expenses or increasing our income, would be welcome.

### Late Night Website

Let me briefly mention the Woot website, at [www.woot.com](http://www.woot.com). This is a great way to stay up late and spend money. Woot does a lot of wholesale and bargain consignment business, and as part of this their website offers "one item, one day, until its gone." This can be a refurbished hard drive, or a new flat panel LCD TV, and all sorts of other stuff. Generally, whatever they offer is leftover or discontinued or otherwise not sold in stores.





Anyway, they post the new product each night at midnight Central time (that's 1 am our time).

Some items sell out very quickly, so if you're up around then you might want to check the website before heading off to bed. (One day they offered 1 mb Secure Digital cards for \$30, and were sold out at 12:19 am CT.)

In addition to a wide range of electronics, the site also offers clever write ups for each product. Cordless headphones were introduced this way:

Yao Ming. Abraham Lincoln. Robert Wadlow. For all their fame and fortune, there was one thing these tall, tall men couldn't do: keep their MP3 players in their pants pockets while listening. The stingily short wires on the standard lightweight headphone set force such giants to keep their iPods and Rios and iRivers in their shirt pockets, or clipped to their Houston Rockets jerseys, or hidden in their stovepipe hats.

And you probably had no idea that Abraham Lincoln used an MP3 player!

There are also comments from other visitors, which can save you having to do research on, say, how much cordless headphones are going for at other sites, or what might be less-than-ideal with the ones on offer.

### Computer in a Pen (or Pens)

Gene Bessette recently sent me an email with some pictures, purporting to show a computer made up of five pen-shaped devices. He was wondering if I'd heard anything about it, or if it could be a hoax.

I should have picked up on the hoax aspect and just looked for it under Urban Legends, but instead I tried doing Google searches for it.



Unfortunately, "pen computing" is a big field, but had nothing to do with this email. Eventually I found a discussion about it on About.com, in their Urban Legends section ([http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl\\_pen\\_pc.htm](http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/bl_pen_pc.htm)). But, it's actually a true urban legend, at least in many ways.

It turns out this was an NEC prototype that they showed off at the ITU Telecom World show in Geneva, back in October 2003. They were calling it P-ISM, which somehow stands for "Pen-style Personal Network Gadget Package". There's a little more info on it at [www.nec-design.co.jp/showcase](http://www.nec-design.co.jp/showcase), along with info on some other impressive (but maybe impractical) ideas that NEC designers came up with. They don't seem to have anything recent on this, so I guess there's nothing actively in development.

I'm not sure how clear the photo below will be. In essence, one pen replaces the monitor by projecting a screen image on a handy wall, while another replaces the keyboard by projecting a keyboard onto a desktop. The other pens apparently handle the computations, and allow Internet access via a cell-phone modem system. And the pens all talked to each other via a short-range radio system.

I have seen ads for keyboard projecting gadgets; they're aimed at PDA users who sometimes need a keyboard and don't want to carry anything bulky. The gadget projects a keyboard image onto a desktop, and then detects your fingers moving and reports the keypresses to your PDA; it even makes clicking noises, if you want. But at \$150, it sounds like a niche market. There are bound to be glare issues, and there'd be no tactile feedback.

I haven't seen a pen that projects a monitor image. I suppose, if you have a convenient wall and a dark room, it might work pretty well. (Probably need to plug it in, though, as a battery might not last long.)

All in all, an interesting assemblage, but I don't see it replacing standard PCs anytime soon, especially as prices keep dropping.

### Meeting

But we could ask Art Silverglate at the upcoming meeting. He has a presentation from Intel on Building vs Buying a New PC. I'm not sure where a Pentium 4 would fit in one of these pen things, but I'm sure Intel is working on it!



# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045

Meeting:  
**Wednesday, March 15, 7:30 pm**  
Art Silverglate on Building vs Buying  
Your Next PC



## 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](mailto:gcoffin3@comcast.net)

### Reviews

Send review software, hardware, books,  
and info to:  
CMUG Reviews  
Att: Art Silverglate  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
[asilver@erols.com](mailto:asilver@erols.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](mailto: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](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..... [asilver@erols.com](mailto:asilver@erols.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..410-610-7628..... [pjvanbloem@aol.com](mailto:pjvanbloem@aol.com)  
Board Member.....Sumi Kinoshita..301-549-3939..... [skinoshita@juno.com](mailto:skinoshita@juno.com)

The CMUG Megaphone is the official newsletter of the Central Maryland Users Group (CMUG). Articles are copyright © 2006 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 \$25 (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.milkern.com/cmug](http://www.milkern.com/cmug)

