

The Inside Track

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Open-source Software

“Quality software costs money . . . or does it? Is it possible to obtain quality software that is free or essentially free and that works as well or better than software costing hundreds of dollars? Can you replace Microsoft Office or iWork with free products that perform as well or better? Open-source software is growing.

Come and learn what’s available and how to obtain it.
This presentation, just like most open-source software, is absolutely free.”

Our presenter will be Christopher Urban, Lecturer, Computer Science.

Chris Urban’s primary focus is the practical application of computer information systems (CIS) technology to satisfy real-world requirements. He believes that Tom Magliozzi’s quote, “happiness equals reality minus expectations” is the most useful heuristic for determining quality and stakeholder satisfaction.



Chris holds an M.S. in Information Systems and an M.A. in National Security and Strategic Studies. He is a retired career Naval Officer with significant leadership, management, and project management experience, and he has served as a chief information officer (CIO). He has taught at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD and the United States Naval War College in Newport, RI. ♦

Once again winter is upon us and bad weather may force school closure.

If the school is closed, we cannot hold a meeting.

Please check our website — mvpcug.com for notification of meeting cancellation, and/or listen to the radio for school closings.

www.wktv.com also has a listing of school closings.



Tuesday, February 3, 2009 - 6PM
Whitesboro High School cafeteria



explorer

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The MVPCUG was founded in 1981 by individuals interested in IBM compatible computers. This non-profit organization consists of volunteers whose expertise range from novice to professional.

Regular meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at 6pm, usually at the Whitesboro High School, Route 291, Marcy NY. A typical agenda consists of discussion of business affairs and a demonstration of computer related products. Meetings are open to the public.

Initial membership fee for an individual is \$25. Annual renewal dues are \$20.

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Meeting Agenda

- 5:30. Meet and Greet
- 6:00. Business Meeting
- 6:30. Program, Part 1
- 7:10. Break
- 7:20. Program, Part 2
- 8:00. Drawing for Prizes
- 8:15. Adjournment

Editorial notes . . .

February is the month when the groundhog pops up and lets us know whether Spring will start in 6 weeks or if we'll have to put up with the wintery weather for another month and a half. Either way, Spring starts on March 20—which can't get here soon enough to suit me!



In the meantime, I'll be checking out the Westminster Dog Show, Feb 9-10, hiding out on Friday, Feb 13, and hoping for a Valentine on Feb 14.

There will be a full moon and a lunar eclipse on Feb 9. The eclipse will only be visible in western North America. Native Americans of New England and the Great Lakes called this full moon the "snow moon" because of heavy snowfall at this time of year; it was also known as "hunger moon" because of the meager hunting.

Stay connected . . . to the MVPCUG
Mohawk Valley PC User Group, Inc.
\$25 for initial sign-up - \$20 for renewal

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Minutes of January 6, 2009

— HRussell, Secretary

The MVPCUG general meeting was held at the Whitesboro HS cafeteria. President Jerry Finkelstein called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. There were 21 persons in attendance.

BUSINESS MEETING

Jerry started the meeting by requesting a treasury report from Bill Gorrell for the period of Dec. 1, to Dec.31, 2008. The club received \$160.76 in revenues and spent \$114.95 leaving a net income for the month at \$45.81. Account balances as of Dec. 31'08 includes \$53.77 in the checking account and \$2,568.62 in the money market for a total of \$2,622.39.

Next Jerry asked for a volunteer to audit the club's books for the year of 2008. As in the past, this is done on a yearly basis, in order to verify the financial bookkeeping records.

The next item for consideration was a request by Jerry for the club to purchase a laptop computer, up to \$750.00. This is a much needed item by bringing windows up to the new and latest versions of Vista. The laptop will be much easier to transport to the meetings and be ready for any of our Q&A groups or presenters that require the Vista programs. A motion was made by Nelson Robinson to spend \$750.00 for a new Laptop Computer and was seconded by Don Pianka. The members present approved the motion unanimously.

There was a brief question & answering session by two of the members that needed help with their computers. Rod St. Clair and Gary Virkler had some problems with their computers and once again "members helping members" came to the rescue with plenty of advice.

PROGRAM

The program for tonight dealt with how to enroll at MVCC for obtaining college credits on line. The presenter, Colleen R. Kehoe-Robinson did an excellent job in using a Power-point presentation for her demonstration. She took us step by step showing how to register Online for college courses at MVCC. By taking classes on line a student can set their own time and not have to attend class. Thus, making it easier for one to keep their day job. This makes it possible to obtain an Associated Degree or a Certificate in the Online courses that are offered.

Colleen answered many questions from the members. She also handed out three sheets listing all the courses offered on line, along with an MVCC Online course application form. Her presentation was thorough and enjoyable.

DOOR PRIZES

[furnished with club funds]

Flash Drive-1g. Jerry Finkelstein
Photo Paper,4x6. Dave Askew
1yr.Sub, Smart Computing. Fred Schmandt
20-CDR w/Case. Helen Russell

[Donated by Que Books]

Guide to Word Perfect 12. Jim Schmandt

[Donated by Pearson Education Books]

Profiting from Social Networking. . Nelson Robinson
Geeknomics. Gary Virkler

[Donated by Jerry Finkelstein]

20-CDR w/Case. Rod St. Clair
The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.
Helen Russell, secretary

ROOTSMAGIC v4 —by Donna Gorrell

If you are interested in genealogy, stay tuned for the latest and greatest program coming soon. I've been fortunate to participate in a beta testing of Roots-Magic4. I currently use version 3 of RM and love it. So, knowing how reluctant I am to changes and new programs, you probably think I will report negatively on this completely new and revised version.

My first encounter was bad as I couldn't even exit the program and had to resort to Ctrl-Alt-delete. Oh, Oh, I thought—another release that shouldn't happen. This beta is being tested by a closed community for the very reason of trying to iron out the bugs before it is released to the public. We are encouraged to send reports of any problems which I did and almost immediately an email was sent telling me to reload the program. Problem solved.

To learn more about RM, or to purchase, go to: rootsmagic.com/. A bargain at \$30; upgrades are \$10 less. It is the easiest and best genealogy program on the market—including the free ones. If you purchase now, you'll get a free upgrade to v4 when it is released. Download a trial copy if you are reluctant to part with the money. You'll be glad you did! The bugs will be ironed out soon, unlike the releases from some other company giants we know . . .

Microsoft Office 2007 Tips

OFFICE 2007

Check for Hidden Content Before Sharing Your Documents

The 2007 Microsoft Office system programs Word, Excel, and PowerPoint include a new built-in Document Inspector tool that enables you to search for and remove potentially private hidden content before sharing your documents. To access the Document Inspector, first save your document. Then, click the Office button, point to Prepare, and then click Inspect Document. Depending on the program you are using, this tool searches for different content types—such as comments, unresolved tracked changes, and headers and footers in Word 2007. Of course, just because the tool finds relevant content [such as headers and footers] doesn't mean you should remove that content. The Document Inspector finds content that may be hidden depending upon the individual document's settings or the way you view the document. Review for yourself the content found by the tool to determine if you want to remove it from your document. Keep in mind that some types of content the Document Inspector finds [such as custom XML data] may be required for the document to function properly.

POWERPOINT

Preview Slide Shows

For a quick preview of a slide show while you're editing a presentation, hold down the CTRL key while clicking View Show on the Slide Show ribbon. Instead of opening in full-screen mode, the presentation, starting with the current slide, appears in a small window over the slide being edited. To edit the slide and see your changes in real time, align the PowerPoint window so that the preview slide is in view. Any modifications that you make appear in the preview window.

EXCEL

Change the Default File Location

Many users find that they tend to open workbooks from the same folder on their computer. If that Windows Vista folder isn't Documents [My Documents in Windows XP], you can change the

folder that Excel 2007 displays when you want to open or save a workbook. Here's how: Click the Office button. Click Excel Options. In the left column, click Save. Type the desired location in the Default file location box.

WORD

Line Breaks Without Bullets

When you're creating a bulleted or numbered list in Word or PowerPoint, you might want an item to appear in the list without a bullet or without incrementing the number. You can start a new line without a bullet by pressing SHIFT+ENTER. The next time you press the ENTER key, the new line will continue the bulleted or numbered list.

Editing in Print Preview

After you have worked on a document in Word, click the Office button, point to Print, and then click Print Preview. You can still edit in print preview mode: Disable the magnifier by clearing the Magnifier check box on the Preview tab, and edit the document as you want.

Switching Cases in Word

Word offers several case options: lowercase [hello], title case [Hello], and uppercase [HELLO]. You can switch between them very easily. Select a piece of text, and then press SHIFT+F3.

Preview Type and Color Formatting

You can see how formatting will look in Live Preview before applying it to the Word document you're working on. Select a formatting option [for example, click Page Layout, click Page Color, and then point to a color], and Live Preview will temporarily apply it. To keep the result, just click the color, or keep browsing for alternatives.

VISTA

Fix a photo - and automatically back it up

One of the most useful new programs, Photo Gallery enables you to automatically import and organize your photos. Click Fix and you can crop out unsightly backgrounds, remove red-eye and adjust the lighting, too. But the most impressive feature is that it automatically backs up every photo: press CTRL and R and it'll restore it just as it was when you first imported it. ◆

Text to Audio / Files + Folders

— Kim Komando

CONVERT TEXT TO AUDIO

You just received a 10-page Word document in your e-mail inbox. But your busy schedule doesn't leave you much time to read it.

So, what do you do? Ignore the document and hope for the best? Or maybe you give it a quick skim for vital points.

Well, I have a better idea. You should just listen to the document.

HearWho is a free service that converts text to MP3 files. Just enter the text in the box. Then, make a few selections and click Start Conversion.

You will soon have an MP3 file of your document. It could take a few seconds or a few minutes. It depends on the size of the document and how busy the server is.

You can load your MP3 file onto any music player. Or, burn it to a CD for listening in the car.

Now, the voice is computerized. But it isn't too creepy! www.hearwho.com

EDITOR'S NOTE:

I copied the above and pasted into the website on hearwho, then downloaded the MP3 file. It was 544kb and took 35 seconds for the computer voice to read it to me. I used the settings without changing anything. This would be very helpful to someone whose sight is not the greatest. For the most part I could understand it clearly—there is even an inflection in the sentences that you would hear if you were conversing with another person. Try it out!



MANAGING FILES AND FOLDERS

Nancy wrote from Bear, DE, to ask about files and folders. She's not sure how they differ. She needs help setting up files and folders for her recipes.

Files and folders are easy to understand, Nancy. Think of a file as a piece of paper. A folder on your computer is like a physical folder. It can hold many files.

So, when you put your recipes on the computer, each will be a separate file. If you're like me, you'll have a bunch. But, you'll have relatively few folders. You might want a folder for beef recipes, one for chicken, and one for spinach soufflés!

Let's create a folder. Click Start | My Documents (or Documents, if you're using Vista). In the (My) Documents window, right-click in a blank area. Select New | Folder.

A new folder will appear in the window. It is named New Folder, but the name is highlighted. You can type a new name for it. Let's call it Recipes. This will be the master folder. To change the name later, right-click the folder and select



Rename. Then, enter another name.

If you open the Recipes folder, there will be nothing inside. You can put the other folders inside it. Technically, they're called subfolders. But that's not important.

Go to the left window and find Recipes folder. Click it. In the right window, right-click a blank area. Select New | Folder. Name this one Spinach Soufflés (or whatever). The Spinach Soufflés folder is now inside the Recipes folder. You can see the hierarchy in the left panel.

Subfolders can also contain folders. But I wouldn't get too carried away. It can be a hassle to navigate through many levels of folders.

You can drag and drop files into the folders, if you've already created files. Or, you can save your files directly in the folders. You would do this by navigating to them in the Save dialog box in your word processor or other program. When you find your folder, just click Save. Your file will be stored in the appropriate place. Keeping your recipes in files and folders on the computer is handier than dealing with printed copies. ♦

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www.komando.com

Editor's note: After you enter all your recipes, it might be a nice idea to make a CD to share with your relatives and/or friends.

Sites to Visit on the 'Net

— by John Hunter

The New 3Rs

Repurpose, refurbish, recycle. These are the mantras of the new green movement called “sustainability.” After moving to the Finger Lakes last May, my wife and I remodeled the kitchen in our newly purchased cottage. With new cabinets soon to arrive, we had to dispose of the old kitchen cabinets.

The simple solution we found included: keeping two wall cabinets for reuse in our laundry room, giving one wall cabinet to a neighbor for use in his tool shed, and donating the remaining cabinets to a local non-profit for use in its visitor center. Not one cabinet wound up in the landfill! I feel as green as Kermit the Frog. And politically correct, too.

Should you have a need to repurpose, refurbish or recycle, there are a number of places to sell or to donate used goods or to purchase someone else’s used goods.

At www.rehouseny.com, The ReHouse Store: Architectural Salvage, you will find architectural items for purchase, and you may sell your own detritus to them as well. At my visit ReHouse advertised items from the Colgate Rochester Divinity School, currently under rehabilitation, available for purchase. 1930s solid oak doors and pedestal sinks were pictured on the homepage as examples of items available for sale. Store hours in Rochester, NY are 9 to 5 Mon., Tues., Wed., 9 to 7 Thurs., and Fri., and 9 to 6 on Sat. Maps locating the store are available for download.

The Materials Resource Center, www.materialresourcecenter.org, is another source for recycling. Located in Ronkonkoma, Long Island, this non-profit organization obtains unique scrap and surplus material from local industry and makes the items available to schools, organizations and the public in an effort to reduce the waste stream through reuse. If your group or local school needs craft items, contact the center.

One winner of a local contest was a knit 1950s style dress made from plastic grocery bags. The winner is a masters degree candidate in textiles at Kent State University. But you don’t need to be an academician to be creative. Knit away, crafty crafters.

Education Technology

Education Week, www.edweek.org, noted in the January 7, 2009 issue that some schools are using cell phones as educational tools. Teachers and district computer techs are having students use their personal cell phones to make podcasts, take field notes, and organize their schedules and homework. Educator Liz Kolb recently published a book entitled *Toys to Tools: Connecting Student Cell Phones to Education*. In the book, Kolb lists more than 100 educational uses of cell phones which include podcasts and classroom response systems. She can be reached at www.cellphonesinlearning.com.

So, if your kid comes home and tells you he was busted for having his cell phone on in school, look up this info and call the principal for a rehearing.

Counter Intuitive?

A recent study conducted by three Duke University researchers reported that a data analysis of a survey given to 1 million 5th to 8th graders in North Carolina between 2000 and 2005 found that students who **did not** have access to a computer at home had the highest scores on reading and math assessments. Among students who had access to home computers, those who reported using them twice a month or less had the best scores. Is this an anomaly or have we been sold a bill of goods on the efficacy of educational computer use? To read more, go to <http://tinyurl.com/93exly>. My money is on an anomaly.

Fair Trade Goods for All of Us

Want to feel good for doing good painlessly? Purchase fair trade foods and manufactured goods. These items may be a bit more expensive than your typical products, but through fair trade sales, third world farmers and crafters receive a greater return for their efforts than through regular marketing channels.

If you dare to try Ethiopian coffee, a good choice might be Aleta Wondo coffee. This is an unblended coffee producing a brew with flavors of chocolate, berries, and bergamot. Coffee may be purchased at www.aletawondo.com.

To see how this village uses the increased money they receive for their coffee, click on www.commonriver.org/site/aletawondo.htm. The wholesaler pledges to return at least 20% of the profits directly to the village.

Until next time . . .



Did You Know . . . — Donna Gorrell

. . . that Microsoft has Six great tips from “*This isn’t Excel, it’s Magic!*” by Bob Umlas on its website at: <http://tinyurl.com/64e829> ? The page states that the tips are for Excel 2007, but you might be able to apply the same things in earlier versions. The page contains instructions and screen shots so it is easy to understand.

. . . that you can use Excel to paste a table of data from a Web page? Once you’ve found a table you want to copy, click From Web in the Data ribbon in 2007; in 2003 click Data | Import External Data | New Web Query from the menu. Copy and paste the Web page address from your browser to the New Web Query dialog. An arrow icon will appear next to each table that Excel can import. Click one or more of these and click the Import button. The data is now in your worksheet.

. . . that you could add a Word Count Button to Word 2003? If you’re a writer, student, or anyone else constrained by word counts, you’re probably a regular user of Word’s handy Word Count feature [accessible in the Tools menu]. It’s even easier if you add it to the Toolbar. Here’s how to do it: Click Tools, Customize, and then click the Commands tab. In the Categories section on the left, click Tools. In the Commands section on the right, scroll down until you see Word Count. Left-click Word Count, hold it, and drag it up to any desirable spot on any of Word’s toolbars. If you’re not happy with the spot, just drag the new button somewhere else. Click the Close button. That’s all there is to it! As you might have guessed, you can add other Word features to your toolbars using the same method. You can also drag unwanted buttons off a toolbar to minimize clutter.

. . . that word count can be placed on the Application bar in WordPerfect? That’s the bar at the bottom of your screen that shows various things of your choosing. Right click on an empty space on the bar and choose Settings. Here you can check or uncheck a variety of items to appear on the Application bar. You can also change the size of the font that appears on the bar as well as move things around. ♦

Byting Remarks — Jerry Finkelstein

A recent New York Times article, “Blue-ray’s Fuzzy Future,” got me thinking about the transitory nature of all things electronic. Of course nothing lasts forever and we don’t need reminders of that fact like the new Brad Pitt movie about death and dying and live gloriously now because you and I are on the way out as we speak. Still, like the light we get of a star that is already dead, so is all the heavy breathing and triumphant breast beating about the relatively brand new Blue-ray, “the heir apparent to the DVD.”

It seems that the DVD is on the way out. Note the shelves at Blockbuster or any of your favorite DVD rental stores. They’ve given more and more room to Blue-ray discs. Certain new discs contain more features on the Blue-ray than on the regular DVD versions. And certain new movies on discs appear only on Blue-ray. There’s a message here and it is the same as when, just a few years ago, there was the switch from



VHS to DVD. Remember when suddenly there were all sorts of sales on the VHS tapes? We’ve now begun to see sales on DVD discs. This time around the switch is from DVD to Blue-ray. According to this New York Times article Blue-ray has a formidable rival; the life of Blue-ray is expected to be quite short.

Although the prices for Blue-ray players have dropped—some players go for under \$200—the article suggests that the window for a high-definition disc format “may be closing fast.” It’s been reported here before, and the electronic business news is reporting more and more that discs of all kinds may well become obsolete as “a new wave of digital media services starts to flow into the living room.” High-definition televisions are being connected directly to the Internet. These televisions will be able to play movies and television shows from online video-on-demand services. These services, they are already here, put the Blue-ray format in serious jeopardy. What we’ve got here are downloadable HD movies. I took special note of this sentence: “. . . direct digital delivery [is] going to put optical formats out of business entirely *over the next few years.*” [Italics mine.]

Oh well, remember the 78 record? The LP? The tape format for music? CD? VHS? Remember the typewriter? I know people, no longer children, who never heard the sound of the typewriter. Hold on to your DVDs and the DVD player. They’ll be really something to show to your grandchildren. ♦







explorer

Open Source software

Tuesday ♦ February 3, 2009 ♦ 6:00 PM ♦ Whitesboro High School



Happy Valentine's Day

what's.com/ing				February 2009		
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 GROUND HOG DAY 	3 Monthly General Meeting 6:00 PM Whitesboro HS	4	5 O & A SIG 6:30 PM Whitesboro HS Room 527	6	7
8	9	10 Board of Directors Meeting 6:30 PM	11	12	13	14 
15	16 	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 	26	27	28
National Freedom Day - February 1 Boy Scouts of America founded - February 8, 1910 Lincoln's birthday - February 12 ~ Washington's birthday - February 22 Ash Wednesday - February 25						