



The BYTES of LAS VEGAS

Official Newsletter of the Las Vegas PC Users Group

FEBRUARY
2006
Volume 21
Issue 1



*Supporting your
technology interests*



Join Us and Enjoy
**“Whittle's Picks for
the Digital Home!”**

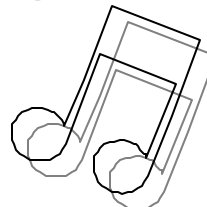
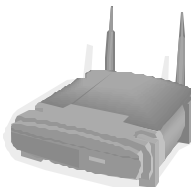
Presented By
David B. Whittle

Wednesday, February 1, 2006
at 6:15PM at the
West Charleston Library Auditorium

More info inside and at
www.lvpcug.org



<< **“In This Issue...”**
Contents on Back Cover



Published monthly

February through December

The Bytes of Las Vegas
is the official publication of:

Las Vegas PC Users Group, Inc.

A Non-Profit Corporation

1350 E. Flamingo Road #188

Las Vegas, NV 89119

Phone (702) 263-5910

Web Page <http://www.lvpcug.org>

Editor e-mail: editor@lvpcug.org

Editor: Sharon Fry

Cover Design: Donna Sword

Advertising Director: Open

Newsletter Distribution Coordinator:

Phil Barr

The Bytes of Las Vegas is the monthly newsletter of the Las Vegas PC Users Group, an independent, non-profit group. We encourage members to submit articles for publication. Articles must be submitted by the first Wednesday of the month preceding the month of publication. All articles received after that date will be considered for the following month's issue. By submitting articles, the author gives permission for publication in this newsletter and in other user group publications.



Articles may be sent electronically to editor@lvpcug.org. Text may be in ASCII, Rich Text Format, MS Word, MS Publisher, or WordPerfect. Graphics may be sent separately provided they are referenced for proper placement. The Editor reserves the right to edit all submissions, and cannot guarantee publication.

The information contained in this newsletter is believed to be correct and accurate; however, the Las Vegas PC Users Group does not assume responsibility for the consequences of errors or omissions in the articles or misuse of any information provided. Any information used from these articles is at the user's own risk. Upon written notification of errors or inaccuracies in hardware or software reviews, LVPCUG or the editor will print a correction in the issue following receipt and verification of the correction.

Unless specifically stated otherwise, opinions expressed in any article, advertisement, or column are those of the author and do not represent an official position of, or endorsement by, the Las Vegas PC Users Group, its members, its officers, board of directors, the newsletter editor, or the newsletter staff. Permission is granted to other computer users groups to reproduce in whole or in part, for internal, nonprofit use, any of the articles published in this newsletter, provided that credit is given to The Bytes of Las Vegas and the authors of the reproduced materials. This permission does not supersede the rights of the authors of copyrighted material. ©

Change of address should be sent to the
Membership Chairman:

E-mail: membership@lvpcug.org

Send postal mail or ship to:

LVPCUG

1350 E. Flamingo Rd #188

Las Vegas, NV 89119

Remember, the Postal Service does not forward the Bytes.

Las Vegas PC Users Group

welcomes

“Whittle’s Picks for the Digital Home!” by David B. Whittle

At our General Meeting • **Free and Open to the Public**
West Charleston Library Auditorium, 6301 West Charleston
February 1, 2006 • 7:00 pm, with pre-program at 6:15 pm



The LVPCUG is hosting a presentation by David B. Whittle, author of “Cyberspace: The Human Dimension” and named by Working Woman Magazine as “one of America’s most original technological thinkers.” Dave’s been a leader in the PC revolution since 1979, and an opinion-leader in the PC industry since his days as OS/2 Evangelist at IBM in the early ‘90s. Most recently, he’s been writing for Smart Computing. Now he’s bringing to you his favorite discoveries from recent trade shows in order to show new products that open up new horizons of possibility or solve problems you might be facing.

Dave will introduce some of his favorite technologies, products, and services that solve real problems for real people and can help make life a little bit or a lot better for each of us. “Whittle’s Picks” are hidden gems from companies large and small, old and new, with outstanding, innovative offerings -- including muvee™ Technologies (www.muvee.com), 3D Album (www.3D-Album.com), iSeeMedia (www.iseemedia.com), and the Invisus PC Security Solution (<http://myinvisusdirect.com/usergroups>). See exciting new possibilities from these companies and learn how the digital revolution can enhance your life. You will come away from this meeting entertained and informed. Dave will provide time for questions and will bring valuable door prizes, informative handouts, and actual product for sale at significantly discounted prices arranged exclusively for user groups (members only).

If you’d like to take advantage of these special prices at the meeting and take product home with you, remember to bring cash, check, or a credit card. See you then!

Anyone interested in computing, from novices to experienced users, is always invited and welcome to attend any of the LVPCUG meetings. Information on all the Special Interest Groups is available on the LVPCUG web site.

As always, the General Meeting is **free and open to the public**. Invite your family, friends and colleagues! Some things to remember:

- **Members, check in** to receive a ticket for the **door prize drawings**.
- **Renewals and new applications** will be available at the **Membership** table.
- **Printer cartridges and cell phones** are collected for recycling at check-in.
- **Interested in reviewing a product** for the group? Look for these opportunities at the check-in table.
- **Opening Q&A** period at **6:15 p.m.**
- **Presentation** begins after a short break at about **7:00 p.m.**
- **Drawings** for Member door prizes will take place **after the featured presentation**.

For information, please call **702-263-5910** or see us at **www.lvpcug.org**. ☺



Helping Hands (For Members Only)

“Users Helping Users”

When you need help with computer related problems, call a **Helping Hand** volunteer. This service is available only to LVPCUG members.

Please be courteous when you call and make sure the time is convenient. Have ready your manuals, questions, etc. and be at your computer. Or, e-mail a description of your problem along with your phone number and best time to contact you.

Beginners & Quicken

Marilyn Mills • 361-6363 • mcmxx@earthlink.net

Communications, Linux/Unix

Rob Winchell • 795-7153 evenings
r_winchell@newsguy.com

Microsoft Access, Databases in General

Donna Sword • 795-2653 evenings
sword_nv@hotmail.com

Microsoft Office, Publisher, Adobe Acrobat

Sharon Fry • SharonFinLV@hotmail.com
290-3518 evenings/weekends

Microsoft Excel, QuickBooks Pro

Debbie Hathaway • debhathaway@juno.com
497-3995 cell

Windows 98, Nero CD Burning Software, Music Match Jukebox, Cool Edit, Digital Music

Rich Vance • 438-3394 • r.p.vance@cox.net

Windows XP, Miscellaneous

263-5910 • fixitgeorge@lvpcug.org

If you feel that you could be a **Helping Hand** in any area, please contact one of the Board Members, or contact the Editor and ask to be added to the list. We can always use more volunteers in this area. “Users Helping Users” is what it’s all about!



LVPCUG Board of Directors 2005-2006

— Officers —

President	Rob Winchell
president@lvpcug.org	(702) 795-7153
Vice President	George Yocum
vp@lvpcug.org	(702) 263-5910
Executive Director	Dennis Kemper
director@lvpcug.org	(702) 263-5910
Treasurer	Jerry Stoken
treasurer@lvpcug.org	(702) 263-5910
Secretary	Richard Robusto
secretary@lvpcug.org	(702) 263-5910

— Board Members —

Advertising Director	[Open]
advertising@lvpcug.org	(702) 263-5910
APCUG Representative	Phil Barr
apcug-rep@lvpcug.org	(702) 566-7669
Director & Editor, NewsBytes	Karl Rehak
newsbytes@lvpcug.org	(702) 243-6301
Director at Large	Ceazar Dennis
	(702) 263-5910
Editor, Bytes of Las Vegas	Sharon Fry
editor@lvpcug.org	(702) 290-3518
Editor, Down the Road	Howard Mark
hmark@earthlink.net	(702) 263-5910
Membership Chair	Dan Spitz
membership@lvpcug.org	(702) 645-5310
Product Review Chair	Don Sabatine
productreview@lvpcug.org	(702) 451-6805
Program Chair	Donna Sword
program@lvpcug.org	(702) 263-5910
Public Relations Chair	Dan Voglund
pr@lvpcug.org	(702) 263-5910
SIG Coordinator	Wendy Jaroslowski
sig-coordinator@lvpcug.org	(702) 339-3812
Technical Director	Rob Winchell
techdirector@lvpcug.org	(702) 795-7153
Webmaster	[Open]
webmaster@lvpcug.org	(702) 263-5910

General Meeting Notes: December 2005

Wednesday, December 7, 2005 • West Charleston Library Auditorium

George Yocum started the meeting with pertinent information about the Bytes and their scheduled mailings and some of the problems inherent in getting them to the members appropriately. He announced that there would not be a meeting in January due to the conflicts of APCUG and CES conventions going on then.

He touched upon Microsoft's upcoming new operating system, Vista, and memory requirements in order to receive the full benefit of this. Another area discussed was the new hard drives and the cost differentials resulting in much more conservative pricing. He showed quite a few websites of interest such as OldVersion.com and TechSupportAlert.com which are very helpful and provide all kinds of free older software including anti-virus and anti-spyware programs. George's presentation of these items of interest elicited many queries, and these George answered to the satisfaction of all. It made for a very interesting segment of the meeting.

Rob then made an announcement about the election committee needed for next year's election of officers, the contest for Bytes Cover, and the recycling of eyeglasses in conjunction with the Lions organization.

The main part of the meeting was a presentation by Jonathan Schenk from

Door Prize Winners

General Meeting • Dec. 7, 2005

**Photo Impact 7
CD&DVD Maker**
Ed Keller

**Photo Impact 7
Backup Now! 4**
Joe Lombardo

**Photo Impact 7
Imaging Software**
Richard Robusto

**CompUSA Training
Class Voucher Cards**
*Randy Czaplicki, Tony
Cefalu, Phil Barr, Paul
Hug, Linda DiGiovanni*

PC Annoyances Book
*Bill Seugling, Tom Linn,
Charles Finnilla, Herb Bann*

**Search Engine
Marketing, Inc.**
Don Sabatine

FrontPage Software
Ken Taylor

Digital Images Software
Leland Beel

**Home Networking
Simplified**
Gena Mize

**CD-DVD Maker 7
Software**
Karl Rehak

Tiberian Sun Software
Norm Tornek

Scrapbook Software
Lee Eastburn

T Shirt
Adam Satterlee

LapLink Gold 11.5
Bob Ward

Caramel Corn Canister
*George Yocum,
Sharon Fry, Bill Bogane,
Harold Evans,
Mary Snyder, Jim Richter,
Duane Hines,
Charles Frederick,
Richard Vance*

NTI -NewTech Infosystems. His main focus was on NTI Software such as DVD Authoring Software, Backup Software and CD & DVD Burning. He demonstrated the usability factors in using these programs and the many

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

advantages they presented. He touched upon capturing, editing and burning. Mentioned was how to cut out pieces of video, insert text, blur out items and how to export the finished product to almost anything. The software discussed was NTI CD&DVD -Maker 7, NTI Backup NOW! And NTI Shadow 2 Win/Mac. He offered these to the members at a half price of \$40.00 each for the first two and the Shadow free with the purchase of either of the other two products. The User Group thanks Jonathan for his efforts in presenting this program.

Following this was the grand drawing for a goodly amount of door prizes which were awarded. (See Winners list on page 5.)

The meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard T. Robusto
Secretary



Have you heard...?

COMPUTER
OUTLOOK
"radio talk show"

**With Host:
John Iasiuolo**

Online Streaming Audio Mon.-Fri.
5:00-6:00 PM Pacific Time

Visit computeroutlook.com
to listen "live or archive"
and much more!

Do You...

- ... Want to learn more about **desktop publishing, web page authoring, journalism and more** in a friendly and fun, hands-on environment?
- ... Have **knowledge to share** in any of those areas ?
- ... Possibly have **free time** on a **Sunday afternoon** ?

What's this all about?

Contact

Sharon Fry, Bytes Editor
at editor@lvpcug.org
for more information.

Tech News

By Sue Crane, Vice President / Editor, Big Bear Computer Club, CA
sue.crane@charter.net • www.bigbearcc.org

Microsoft Previews IE7

Internet Explorer's program manager, Eric Lawrence, recently posted a blog that said IE7 plans to support the Transport Layer Security protocol by default. He also explained how IE7 will behave differently from earlier versions when it encounters potential security problems. From an HTTPS page, users will be forced to access insecure content via the information bar, since only the secure content will be rendered by default. IE7 is also rumored to have tabbed browsing similar to competitor Firefox.

A Computer for Every Kid

A \$100 laptop? A global effort is underway to make it happen by next year. It was a pipe dream only a few months ago but soon will be reality. An ambitious effort from MIT Media Labs to put a \$100 portable in the hands of every child in the world is picking up big corporate partners, top engineering talent, and interest from several countries. One Laptop Per Child (OLPC), a nonprofit venture, is expected to start distributing machines late next

year and to produce 100 to 200 million in 2007.


AMD Plans 4-Core Opterons By 2007

Advanced Micro Devices put a quad-core server processor on its road map and promised to upgrade its software investments, as it outlined its general technology direction for the next couple of years. The new processor will incorporate four cores connected together by a new version of the Hypertransport Interconnect technology, and will support DDR3 (double data rate 3) memory. The 2006 dual-core chips will also introduce AMD's Pacifica virtualization technology and its Presidio security technology into AMD-based systems. AMD's goal for 2006 is to improve its standing within the business PC market, both in desktops and notebooks.

Phishers Use Phony IRS Tax Refund to Scam Consumers

A spam e-mail message has been sent around the world telling people they are eligible for a \$571.94 tax refund from the IRS. The e-mail offers a link to a fraudulent IRS Web site, but the link actually goes through a legitimate Government Web site. The link in the phishing e-mail goes to a forged IRS Web site that asks for a Social Security number, tax returning filing code and credit card details including security codes and PIN. The government is aware of the issue and is working to fix it.

(Continued on page 8)



3400 W. Desert Inn Rd. #4
Las Vegas, Nevada 89102

Westbound Desert Inn
at Polaris

(702) 362-1784

FAX (702) 362-7018

Robert Cain

(Continued from page 7)

New TiVO Product Promotes Targeted Ads

After introducing a generation of television viewers to the joys of skipping over ads, TiVO plans to launch a new service to let its subscribers seek out the advertisements they've cut loose from their TV viewing. Digital video recorder (DVR) maker TiVo is positioning the new service, scheduled for a mid-2006 launch, as a way for subscribers to find targeted ads in categories that interest them. The opt-in technology will let TiVo subscribers use keyword searches to look for information on specific products or services. The ad service will be free for subscribers; pricing for advertisers is still being determined.

Microsoft Considers Making Desktop Apps Free – With Advertising

Although no specific plans have been made, executives within Microsoft are examining whether it makes sense to release ad-supported versions of products such as Works, Money, or even the Windows operating system itself. Microsoft officials confirmed the authenticity of the paper, dated winter 2005, but declined to comment on its contents. But Chief Technology Officer Ray Ozzie and Chairman Bill Gates outlined some of the opportunities and the challenges Microsoft faces in a series of October memos. In the blunter of the two memos, Ozzie said Microsoft had an obligation to act on the shift to ad-supported software. "...It's clear that if we fail to do so, our business as we know it is at risk," Ozzie wrote. "We must respond quickly and decisively." The company's exploration of ad-supported software extends even to Windows, it's most important product. An ad-supported version of the operating system could make some sense, Microsoft researchers argue, noting that the

product reportedly earns \$9 per year per user.

A New Kind of Music Label

40 years ago Jac Holzman changed music distribution with the release of The Doors' album on his independent Elektra music label. He's introducing a similar change with Cordless Recordings – the first all-digital music label operated by a major record company, the Warner Music Group, which is launching on the Web and on digital music services such as iTunes and RealNetworks' Rhapsody. Music from the label's first six bands is being sold only online in 3-song "clusters" instead of albums. The bands will be promoted on blogs and sites like MySpace. Artists get to keep ownership of the master recordings they release under Cordless. If they want to release their music elsewhere after a short contract is up, they are free to do so. The Cordless Recordings labels is an experiment for Warner Music, which has increased its focus on digital distribution, and a bet that inexpensive Internet distribution and marketing may give labels a cost-effective way to nurture new bands. On the label side, it's an attempt to reach out to a music-consuming world that is deserting radio and record stores for iTunes and MySpace.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ☺

“Prez Sez”

By Rob Winchell, President, LVPCUG

Look for Rob's column in future issues of the "Bytes of Las Vegas".

Absence Makes the E-Mail Grow Fonder

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor;
Columnist, AARP Computer & Technology Website, www.aarp.org

“Absence makes the heart grow fonder” is never truer for me than when I’m on the road, away from my wife, four cats, and e-mail. My wife and cats forgive my travels but it’s a challenge e-mailing remotely. Fortunately, technology provides many ways to access e-mail. You’re on your own, however, explaining to people you’re visiting why you need a break from vacation, sightseeing, or family, to check for in-box nuggets.

Aside from pressure to stay in touch (some people are addicted to e-mail), it’s worth thinking about e-mail before traveling, especially for an extended period. Many ISPs (Internet service providers) limit the e-mail they’ll store for you. If you exceed this amount your e-mail may “bounce”--that is, be returned to senders. That frustrates people writing to you and causes problems with lists to which you’re subscribed.

You can suspend list subscriptions to

reduce e-mail volume, but that’s a nuisance and won’t help if someone sends you huge notes with vacation pictures.

If you have dial access you can’t do much other than ask correspondents not to send large notes. Always-on cable or DSL users can leave e-mail software enabled, downloading mail as it arrives. But things can still go wrong--power may fail--leaving e-mail stranded at the ISP.

This article describes using remote computers for e-mail; it doesn’t cover traveling with a laptop (which may require reconfiguration for sending e-mail) or using your cell phone or wireless PDA (which should be straightforward).

Facilities for reading e-mail will require your normal e-mail password; if your PC logs in automatically, you may not remember it! It’s a nasty surprise--realizing when you’re far away--that you’ve forgotten your password.

The easiest way to read e-mail when away from home is through your ISP’s facility. If you normally read e-mail via a Web interface, your life is simple indeed: find an online computer, enter the ISP’s e-mail Web address (URL), and you’ll have your familiar interface. This also works for Yahoo!, Google’s Gmail, and

(Continued on page 10)



**CUSTOM
POSTER - PRINT FRAMING**

**CUSTOM OIL PORTRAIT PAINTING
RESTORATION OF DAMAGED PHOTOGRAPHS
MODIFICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS
ALL MEDIUM OF ART AVAILABLE**

**Steve Michaels, Proprietor
TT&E Company
5041 Via De Fortuna Way
North Las Vegas, NV 89031
Tel: 702-639-9767 Voice/Fax 24/7 eMail: ttec@elvis.com**

(Continued from page 9)

other national e-mail services.

Even if you usually read e-mail using a PC program such as Outlook Express, Eudora, or Thunderbird (which all use an Internet protocol; called “POP3”), your ISP may provide Web access to e-mail, so ask. If it’s available, practice using it before leaving so you can learn the process and have ISP tech support handy instead of a long-distance call away. Again, take your ISP information with you so you can log on, get help, etc.

Some ISPs provide an e-mail interface called Telnet. This text-only (not graphical) interface was developed in the Internet’s early days. It’s fast, efficient, and accessible from most PCs, but isn’t intuitive and best suits technically oriented folks. If you’ll use this on the road, practice beforehand is essential.

A very simple tool for accessing many ISP’s e-mail is Mail2Web [www.mail2web.com]. Enter your e-mail address and password; the Web site fetches and displays your e-mail. Notes you send will appear to be from your normal e-mail address. Yahoo! provides a similar facility for reading POP3 e-mail.

AOL members can visit AOL’s Web site [www.aol.com], click the Mail link, and access e-mail.

If you use an always-on Windows XP PC,

you can—with technical setup beforehand and assuming no ISP-imposed blockage—use its built-in Remote Desktop feature to operate your home PC remotely as if you were sitting in front of it.

Two final issues: First, keep security in mind when using strange computers. Don’t allow passwords to be saved; when finished, clear the browser cache and close applications you’ve used. Second, be careful setting an “away” message for everyone who e-mails you. Some less-than-clever notification systems annoy people and interfere with mailing lists.

This article originated on AARP’s Computers and Technology Web site, www.aarp.org/computers, and is copyrighted by AARP. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, disseminated, or transferred, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to AARP. It should be unchanged and this paragraph included. Please e-mail Gabe Goldberg at gabe@gabegold.com when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author.

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ©



Online “My Family Health Portrait”

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director;
Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio & TV Show Host

Recently, a relative in another state was hospitalized via an emergency room admission. His new wife of just a year did not have much information on the family health history, so urgently needed by the physicians in order to diagnose and treat my relative. Urgent phone calls followed, gathering the requisite family medical history to enable the appropriate diagnosis and treatment. Philosophically, what if a comprehensive family medical history could have been immediately available? This circumstance is not unique, but a reasonable solution has been available for free for over a year at www.hhs.gov/familyhistory, courtesy of the U. S. Surgeon General’s Office

This site explains the necessity of such data with the statement, “Health care professionals have known for a long time that common diseases — heart disease, cancer, and diabetes — and even rare diseases — like hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell anemia — can run in families. If one generation of a family has high blood pressure, it is not unusual for the next generation to have similarly high blood pressure. Tracing the illnesses suffered by your parents, grandparents, and other blood relatives can help

your doctor predict the disorders to which you may be at risk and take action to keep you and your family healthy.” In order to accomplish this task, the Surgeon general offers two simple options; one, an online web maintained version hosted on a secure server (that is what the “https” means in the internet address) at <https://familyhistory.hhs.gov>, the other a 1.6mb downloadable “Zip” file which may be stored on a home computer, and utilized in the privacy of the home. The files created in either version can easily be exchanged among family members via email or disc.

In the online version, a family history can be newly created, or an existing version can be uploaded from the home computer to the secure Surgeon General website where the data can be managed, and then saved back on the home computer; no personal information is saved or captured by the government computer, protecting the privacy of the user. It should be noted that much effort has gone into the creation of this web-based service, in that it explicitly works equally well with almost all known browsers, including Internet Explorer, Firefox, Mac Safari, Netscape, and many other browsers.

The first step in using the online version is to “Create a Family History”, or to “Load a Saved Family History” if a file had been previously created. The preliminary step is to create a personal profile, where basic information such as name, gender, height, and weight are entered. The personal profile

(Continued on page 12)



CENTURY 21 Aadvantage Gold
“The #1 CENTURY 21 Office in the World”
Archie M. Fox III

REALTOR - GRI

2625 N. Green Valley Pkwy, Suite 150

Henderson, NV 89014

Office: 702-719-2100

Toll Free: 1-800-378-8795

Fax: 702-454-4111

Cell: 702-370-2201

Email: archie@realtoramfox3.com

www.realtoramfox3.com

(Continued from page 11)

continues with a simple checklist of major common diseases (such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes), and age of onset, followed by a fill in the blank chart of other diseases. After the personal health history is created, there is then an opportunity to create a family profile. The family profile states "Only add family members that are biological (blood) relatives (not adopted or step-relatives)." Similar fill in charts are presented to complete the information for the other family members. Data can be modified, added, or deleted at any time. Once the user has completed entering the basic family information, a button "Go to My Family" takes the user to the basic "Family Health Portrait" where a family health tree can be displayed or printed; this family tree contains symbols and abbreviations immediately recognizable by a health care practitioner as a basic family health history. Other family members, such as aunts, uncles, and other blood relatives can be added to the list as well. Other family members listed on the family tree can have their own personalized family tree created at this point, and the entire file can be downloaded to the user's computer, leaving no personal data on the HHS computer.

If for privacy or other reasons, the user does not wish to enter personal family health data to the secured website, the downloadable

version is a self-contained version of what is available on the website. Once uncompressed with any zip utility (built in to Windows XP), the file is easily and quickly installed. The software does require the Microsoft ".Net" utility, version 1.1 or later, available for free at windowsupdate.microsoft.com. Once installed, the entire process is completed in the privacy of the home, with no personal data leaving the computer, unless the user desires to send the data files to other family members to complete or use as a basis for their own family health history.

With this information readily available both within a family unit, and shared with other blood relatives as appropriate, family health histories can be easily maintained, and distributed or printed as needed.

Many times we cannot recall family health problems that family members may have had which may give us a predisposition, or otherwise genetically affect us. With this free service and software from the Surgeon General, we may all be better able to provide our health care professionals with the information that may prove so vital to our health care and treatment.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ©

• WEBSITES •

U.S. Surgeon General's Family History Initiative

<http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory>

My Family Health Portrait

<https://familyhistory.hhs.gov>

[http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/
download.html](http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory/download.html)

Sony BMG – Shame on You!

By John Brewer • December 2005 eMonitor, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Computer users may have noticed the recent brouhaha about Sony music CDs. Is there a valid issue or simply a lot of heat with no real threat?

The issue developed from the desire of Sony-BMG to copy-protect its music CDs. If the music CD is played in a personal computer, and the “accept” button is clicked, then software known as XCP is installed. XCP reportedly uses “rootkit” technology. Wikipedia states that a “rootkit is a set of software tools frequently used by a third party (usually an intruder) after gaining access to a computer system. These tools are intended to conceal running processes, files or system data, which helps an intruder maintain access to a system without the user’s knowledge. Rootkits are known to exist for a variety of operating systems such as Linux, Solaris and versions of Microsoft Windows. The rootkit concept is the dominant controversial aspect of the 2005 Sony CD copy protection controversy, which has made the previously obscure concept of a rootkit much more widely known in the technology community, and to the general public.”

The technical issues seem to be rather complicated, but a survey of the articles available on the Internet is disturbing. Apparently, rootkits install a backdoor to the computer and are difficult to remove. Apparently, there is a patch available that may or may not remove the Sony software. Personally, this author thinks the only alternative is to avoid Sony CDs or to avoid playing any Sony CDs on a personal computer. The music industry is very serious about copyright violations and may think that the “end justifies the means” in this particular matter.

The following is a portion of a Sony response dated November 18, 2005. “You may be aware of the recent attention given to the

XCP content protection software included on some SONY-BMG CDs. This software was provided to us by a third-party vendor, First4Internet. Discussion has centered on security concerns raised about the use of CDs containing this software. We share the concerns of consumers regarding these discs, and we are instituting a mail-in program that will allow consumers to exchange any CD with XCP software for the same CD without copy protection and receive MP3 files of the same title . We also have asked our retail partners to remove all unsold CDs with XCP software from their store shelves and inventory. Please click here for exchange program details.

“Our new initiatives follow the measures we have already taken, including the voluntary suspension of the manufacture of CDs with the XCP software. In addition, to address security concerns, we provided to major software and anti-virus companies a software update, which also may be downloaded at <http://cp.sonybmg.com/xcp/english/updates.html> . We will shortly provide a simplified and secure procedure to uninstall the XCP software if it resides on your computer.”

Sony sounds like it is trying to respond in a responsible manner. However, this type of response is also an attempt to institute damage control. Sony has been sued by the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Attorney General for the State of Texas regarding this practice.

EFF filed its complaint in a California state court on November 21, 2005. The EFF Web site states that “by including a flawed and overreaching computer program in over 20 million music CDs sold to the public, Sony-BMG has created serious security, privacy and

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

consumer-protection problems that have damaged music lovers everywhere.

At issue are two software technologies: SunnComm's MediaMax and First4Internet's Extended Copy Protection (also known as XCP), which Sony-BMG claims to have placed on the music CDs to restrict consumer use of the music on the CDs, but which in truth do much more, including monitoring customer listening of the CDs and installing undisclosed and in some cases hidden files on users' computers that can expose users to malicious attacks by third parties, all without appropriate notice and consent from purchasers. The CDs also condition use of the music on unconscionable licensing terms in the End User Licensing Agreement (EULA).

After a series of embarrassing public revelations about security risks associated with

the XCP software, including warnings issued by the United States Government, Microsoft and leading anti-virus companies, Sony-BMG has taken some steps to respond to the security risks created by the XCP technology. Sony-BMG has failed, however, to address security concerns raised by the MediaMax software or the consumer privacy and consumer fairness problems created by both technologies."

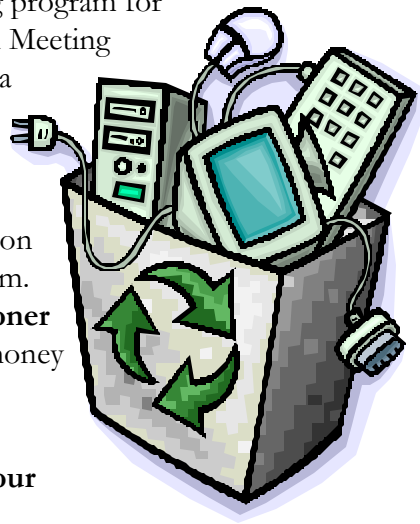
The Attorney General of the State of Texas has also filed litigation regarding the same spyware from Sony. The Web site for the AG addresses the litigation. Today [Texas] "sued SONY-BMG Music Entertainment as the first state in the nation to bring legal action against SONY for illegal "spyware." The suit is also the first filed under the state's spyware law of 2005. It alleges the company surreptitiously installed the spyware on millions of compact music discs (CDs) that consumers inserted into their computers when they play the CDs, which can compromise the systems.

You can help LVPCUG and our planet at the same time!

As you may already know, LVPCUG has a recycling program for most of your inkjet cartridges. If you follow the Board Meeting Minutes, you know that this program has grown to be a significant source of income for the Group, thanks to your support.

Thanks to the efforts of Donna Sword, our past President, we have expanded our program in conjunction with **Funding Factory**, a "Recycle & Redeem" program. Now, we can accept **ANY inkjet cartridges, laser toner cartridges and cell phones** for recycling—and earn money and more!

Collect these items from your family, friends, and neighbors to **support your LVPCUG while helping our planet's environment.** ☺



The Attorney General's lawsuit alleges the New York-based company violated a new Texas law protecting consumers from the hidden spyware. The company accomplished this by using new technology on certain music CDs to install files onto consumers' computers that hide other files installed by SONY. This secret "cloaking" component is installed without the knowledge of consumers and can cause their computers to become vulnerable to computer viruses and other forms of attack.

"SONY has engaged in a technological version of cloak and dagger deceit against consumers by hiding secret files on their computers," said Attorney General Abbott. "Consumers who purchased a SONY CD thought they were buying music. Instead, they received spyware that can damage a computer, subject it to viruses and expose the consumer to possible identity crime."

SONY insists on its Web site that it has recalled all affected CDs. However, Attorney General's investigators were able to purchase numerous titles at Austin retail stores as recently as Sunday evening.

According to SONY's Web site, the company recently distributed millions of CDs across the nation on 52 CDs by various artists. These CDs contained embedded files used for copy protection – or XCP technology. The files prompt consumers to enter into a user agreement to install SONY's audio player. By opting into the agreement, which Sony represents is the only way a consumer can listen to these CDs on a computer, the consumer is unaware that SONY secretly installs files into the computer's Microsoft Windows folders. Consumers are unable to detect and remove these files.

SONY-BMG claims on its Web site that this XCP technology merely prevents unlimited copying, is otherwise passive and does not gather personal information about a computer user. However, the Attorney General's

investigation into this technology revealed that it remains hidden and active at all times after installation, even when SONY's media player is inactive, prompting concerns about its true purpose.

The Attorney General's lawsuit also alleges that a phantom file is installed to conceal the XCP files from the user, thus making it difficult for the user to remove the files from his or her computer. Moreover, recent news accounts allege that newly created viruses that exploit this phantom file have been spreading. A user unfamiliar with installation – and removal – of this technology may be vulnerable to new security risks and possibly identity theft.

Because of alleged violations of the Consumer Protection Against Computer Spyware Act of 2005, the Attorney General is seeking civil penalties of \$100,000 for each violation of the law, attorneys' fees and investigative costs."

Sony-BMG – shame on you!

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.

In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, this material is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes. The article may contain sources for content as attributed within the article.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



Bytes Bulletin Board

DO YOU WANT TO BE NOTIFIED when the “Bytes” is available on the web site? Send your request for our e-mail notification to Dan Spitz, Membership Chair at membership@lvpcug.org.



From Cheryl Wester, APCUG Advisor for Region 12:

“APCUG Annual Conference. The 2006 Annual Conference had almost 230 attendees who enjoyed various presentations and meals sponsored by vendors, the Vendor Faire where they could talk with vendors and book meeting presentations, as well as Round Tables where they could enhance their personal computer knowledge and UG management skills. Thanks to all of the participating vendors – all attendees are encouraged to send them a thank you for sponsoring the various activities. For a recap of the activities and various Round Table presentations/handouts, go to <http://apcug.net/events/conference06/conf06files.htm>. You will also find a copy of the Proceedings Manual with a detailed listing of the Round Tables & presenter bios, website & newsletter contest winners, Jerry Award winners, and the Daily Reports that will give you an overview of some of the conference happenings.

“It was wonderful meeting so many people from Region 12. We had representatives from Nevada, Idaho, and Hawaii. Lou Torraca came from Hawaii to attend our conference and Doug and Ruth

Parsons and Martin Torres represented their group from Idaho. Nevada has too many to mention but they had the biggest turnout for our region. I hope that next year more states from Region 12 will be represented.”



If you attended APCUG 2006 or International CES 2006 we would love to publish your related items, large or small. Please e-mail editor@lvpcug.org with your experiences.



Do you have a blog (weblog)? Care to share with the rest of us? We’d like to hear about it at editor@lvpcug.org.



From Steve Peyrot, APCUG Treasurer:

“I started a small web site (yes, it is very basic) for the dissemination of UG offers to user group members of my own user group as well as regional user groups in this area.

“You are welcome to use any of this info and pass along to your folks.”

Steve’s web site for user group offers can be found at <http://www.UserGroupie.com>



SEND US YOUR questions, tips, stories! Remember, the “Bytes” is **your** primary means of communication with LVPCUG members, so let’s hear from you at editor@lvpcug.org ☺

February 2006 – Las Vegas PC Users Group – Meetings & Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan. 29	30	31	Feb. 1 6:15p –8:30p General Meeting Dave Whittle	2 – <i>Groundhog Day</i> –	3	4 12:00p–4:00p Systems & Apps. Review 6:00p–8:00p Saturday Night Bites & Bytes
5	6	7	8 6:30p–8:30p Databases	9 6:30p–8:30p Windows Developers	10	11 9:30a–11:00a Genealogy 1:00p–3:00p Using Office Suites 3:30p–5:30p Multimedia Lab
12 12:00p–2:00p Digital Imaging Techniques	13 6:30p–8:30p Mobile Computing	14 – <i>Valentine's Day</i> –	15	16	17	18
19 1:00p–3:30p Linux/Open Source 4:00p–6:00p Novice (New Users)	20 – <i>President's Day</i> – 7:00p–9:00p Internet SIG	21	22 6:30p–8:30p Board of Directors Meeting	23	24	25 9:15a–3:00p How-To Workshop 3:00p–5:00p Wireless Networking
26	27	28	Mar. 1 6:15p –8:30p General Meeting	2	3	4 12:00p–4:00p Systems & Apps. Review 6:00p–8:00p Saturday Night Bites & Bytes

Visit www.lvpcug.org and <http://my.calendars.net/lvpcug> for the latest scheduling updates.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and Meetings



Note: Times and locations are subject to change. If you are planning to attend a particular SIG (Special Interest Group) meeting, it is best to **e-mail or call ahead to confirm** that the meeting will take place as listed here. When possible, schedule changes are also posted at www.lvpcug.org on the front page.

In addition, if you are interested in a SIG not listed here or if you would like to start a SIG, please contact **SIG Coordinator, Wendy Jaroslowski**, phone 702-339-3812 or e-mail her at sig-coordinator@lvpcug.org.

The SIGs are one of your benefits of membership!

General Meeting

First Wednesday 6:15 PM

West Charleston Library, Auditorium
6301 W. Charleston (west of Jones)

*Information Line (702)263-5910
or www.lvpcug.org*

This monthly general meeting covers topics of interest to all members and guests. The typical meeting includes a beginners/Q&A session of approximately forty-five minutes. This is followed by an update of relevant activities, including SIGs. Each meeting has a feature presentation, usually by a major computer related vendor. See page 3 for information on the next General Meeting.

Remember...

**All of the LVPCUG
meetings are FREE and
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.**

**Tell all your family,
friends & neighbors!**

Board of Directors Meeting

(president@lvpcug.org for confirmation)

Fourth Wednesday 6:30 PM

Clark County Library,
Reader Services Meeting Room
1401 E. Flamingo (east of Maryland Pkwy)

President, Officers, Board Members

Open to members and others. The Board of Directors discusses organizational LVPCUG issues relative to meetings, programs, communications, education, public information and finances.

Databases

Second Wednesday..... 6:30 PM

Clark County Library,
Reader Services Meeting Room
1401 E. Flamingo (east of Maryland Pkwy)

***Leader: Donna Sword (702)795-2653
Email: program@lvpcug.org***

Databases are not as scary as they sound! Beginners to advanced users, and even non-users are welcome to attend. Essentials of good database design are discussed and presented with popular database management tools such as Microsoft Access, Excel & more.

Digital Imaging Techniques

Second Sunday..... 12:00–2:00 PM

Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)

Leader: Howard Mark (702)256-3662

Email: hmark@earthlink.net

If you take photographs using a film or digital camera, this SIG will look for ways to use software such as Photoshop and Photoshop Elements, Photosuite, PhotoDeluxe and others, to learn how to scan, edit, correct or manipulate images. If you would like to copy your image onto a floppy disk or CD, you're welcome to bring it to the meeting.

Genealogy

Second Saturday..... 9:30AM

Family History Center, 9th/10th & Clark

Leader: Val Sharp (702)453-4037

Email: sharpvd@yahoo.com.

This SIG covers searching the Internet for information on family members, overcoming brick walls, genealogy publications, and genealogy software evaluations.

How-To Workshop

Fourth Saturday..... 9:15 AM

Paseo Verde Library, in Henderson
Green Valley Pkwy (south of I-215)

Leader: Dennis Kemper (702)458-0654

Email: director@lvpcug.org

Hands-on computer workshop, covering a variety of software programs and hardware questions. You are encouraged to bring your computer, or at least a disk with the problem or demo to share. If you have a specific program or problem please call in advance to ensure we will have someone available to assist with your specific problem.

Internet SIG

Third Monday 7:00 PM

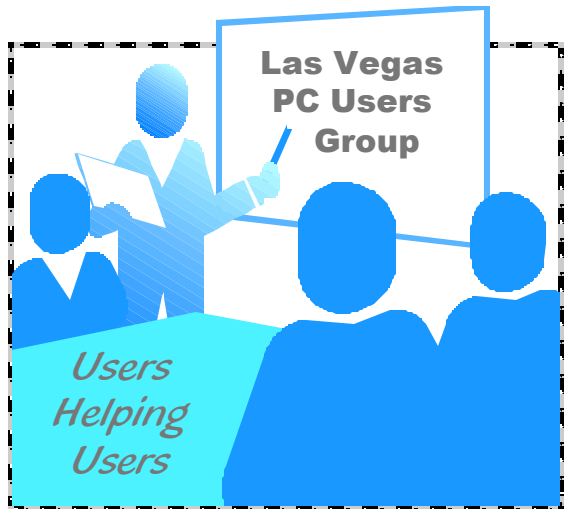
Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)

SIG LEADER NEEDED

Contact SIG Coordinator at (702)339-3812

Email: sig-coordinator@lvcpug.org

Covers use of the Internet: how to access the service, Internet access providers, hooking up, surfing the Internet, how to find information, the use of Internet utilities to find information, and software packages supporting the Internet.



Linux/Open Source

Third Sunday..... 1:00–3:00 PM

Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)

Leader: Joseph Mottola (702)310-9980

Email: mottola@softcom.net

A free operating system that is an alternative to Microsoft windows operating systems. The many flavors of this operating system and applications will be covered and explored.

(Continued on page 20)

Mobile Computing

Second Monday 6:30–8:30 PM

Location Pending – contact Leader for notification of latest information

Contact SIG Coordinator at (702)339-3812

Email: sig-coordinator@lvcpug.org

Exchange of information regarding the use of personal digital assistant devices using Microsoft's Pocket PC software and others.

Multimedia Lab (fmr Digital Music)

Second Saturday..... 3:30–5:30 PM

Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)

***** SIG CO-LEADER NEEDED *****

Contact SIG Coordinator at (702)339-3812

Email: sig-coordinator@lvcpug.org

Topics to be covered include – but are not limited to – downloading MP3 music, converting audio CDs to MP3; organizing and playing an MP3 music library with software programs such as Music Match Jukebox, WinAmp, Sonique, etc; making audio CDs on a CD-RW drive; digital recording from external sources; and editing digital music. This group has also begun to venture into digital video.

Novice (New) Users

Third Sunday 4:00–6:00 PM

Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)

Co-Leader: Charles Frederick (702)452-9440

Email: cifgrf4041@yahoo.com

Topics of interest to the beginning computer user, explained in simple easy-to-understand terms. Each session is complete; beginners are welcome to start attending meetings at any time.

Saturday Night Bites & Bytes

First Saturday..... 6:00 PM

***** LOCATION(S) NEEDED *****

***** SIG LEADER NEEDED *****

Contact SIG Coordinator at (702)339-3812

Email: sig-coordinator@lvcpug.org

(Request notification of each meeting's location by e-mail to director@lvcpug.org)

A time to have a bite to eat and socialize with other users, and enjoy presentations and discussions that cover a variety of general topics of interest to PC users. All discussions are based on member input.

Systems/Applications Review

First Saturday..... Noon– 4 PM

Nevada Power Building, Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (west of Jones)

SIG Leader - Linda DiGiovanni 395-6676

Email: Lindigiovanni@spinfinder.com

A meeting focusing on the Windows environment. Members helping members in the exchange and sharing of knowledge and information.



Using Office Suites

Second Saturday..... 1:00–3:00 PM

Nevada Power Bldg. Wengert Room
6226 W. Sahara (near Jones)

Leader: Wendy Jaroslowski (702)339-3812

Email: sig-coordinator@lvpcug.org

Leader: Sharon Fry (702)562-2028

Email: SharonFinLV@hotmail.com

The Using Office Suites SIG centers around discussions and presentations of techniques applicable to “office” or “productivity” software applications. These include word processing, spreadsheets, personal information managers, presentations.

We demonstrate usually with Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint), but we also explore other products with similar functionality, such as OpenOffice and WordPerfect Office. Most information applies to any applications of this genre.

This is an open group driven by member input, so if you run across a problem that you need help with, e-mail the Leaders or bring in a CD or diskette, and the entire group will assist in finding a solution to the problem. Each meeting will usually center around a specific feature of a particular program. Any related programs or add-ins will also be explored. Tools and texts that are available will also be introduced.

Windows Developers

Second Thursday..... 6:30–8:30 PM

Sahara West Library, Board Room 2nd Flr.
9600 West Sahara (west of Fort Apache)

Leader: Richard Rosenheim (702)897-1117

Email: windev@lvpcug.org

The Windows Developers SIG is a forum for those who develop programs and applications targeted to run in a Windows environment. The SIG addresses topics relating to Windows development issues and languages. While the primary focus is on Visual Basic, attention is also given to database design and programming, web programming, and program algorithms. In addition, any other area of interest to the membership (such as Windows API, Visual Basic, C++, Delphi, Java and ActiveX programming , etc. can be addressed.)


Wireless Networking

Fourth Saturday..... 3:00–5:00 PM

Paseo Verde Library, in Henderson
Green Valley Pkwy (south of I-215)

Leader: Harold Rozinski (702)870-8946

Email: wirellessig@yahoo.com

Covers the basics of wireless networking, wireless network criteria and expectations. Discuss the benefits and pitfalls of wireless technologies; introduction to wireless networks in the home, business and traveling (hotspots); site survey for location rules, regulations. 



Thanks to **www.ViaWest.net** for the
Las Vegas PC Users Group web site.

See us at **www.lvpcug.org**

Other User Groups in Las Vegas and Surrounding Area

Association of Information Technology Professionals (A.I.T.P.) - Monthly dinner meetings at Palace Station the fourth Wednesday of each month (except July and August) . Social hour begins at 5:45 p.m., dinner at 6:15 p.m. speaker at 7:00 p.m. Reservations, or additional information, contact Roberta Weller at 702-233-1225, rweiler326@earthlink.net.

Commodore Users Group - Meets on the first & third Saturday of the month. Al Jackson ajax@wizard.com 702-645-2402

Kingman Arizona CUG
www.kingmanarizonacug.com
Email: rbth1@hotmail.com

L.V. Netware User Group - Meets second Tuesday of month. Roland Hughes
702-455- 4273 rolandh@co.clark.nv.us

Las Vegas Linux Users Group Meetings first Saturday of each month at Century 23 Computers from 11:00 am - 3:30 pm. It is located at 4101 Meadows Lane Las Vegas, NV 89107. (Across from Meadows Mall). About once every quarter we have a Sunday meeting for those that can't make the Saturday meetings. Please check our calendar each month in case the meeting day changes.
www.lvlug.org


Meadview (AZ) PC User Group - Meets first Thursday of month. Chuck Shull
928-564-2782 Railrider86@citlink.net

Pahrump NV Computer UG - Meets first Monday of month at 1pm in the Pahrump Moose Lodge. Don Norvell 775-727-1246
DonNorvell@air-internet.com

Southern Nevada Amiga Group
Ron Gatreks 702-645-4610
captg@skylink.net

Southern Nevada Users Group - Meets second Monday of month. David Gaberel
702-658-6462 davegabere@sierranv.net

Sun City MacDonald Ranch Computer Users Group – Members are residents of Sun City MacDonald Ranch. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 9:00AM in the Community Club House. Contact Ms. Sam Giordano at samespin1@cox.net.

Sun City Summerlin Computer Users Group
Meets first Thursday of Month. For more information call 615-5735. You must live in Sun City Summerlin in order to join this organization. 

Las Vegas PC Users Group General Meeting

First Wednesday of each month
February thru December
6:15 pm at West Charleston Library
W. Charleston at Torrey Pines
Guests Welcome Anytime!

A USB Primer

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D. • Sarasota PCUG, Florida

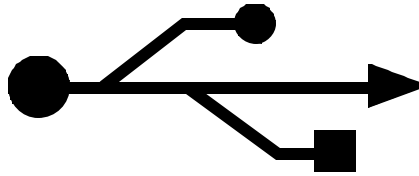
By now, most computer users are familiar with the term USB or Universal Serial Bus. This connection port on your computer is designed to replace the older serial, parallel and PS2 ports. Probably within a year you won't find any new computers with these older ports. They will have only USB. There are some things you might find useful about USB ports and hubs which could reduce or eliminate problems in dealing with them.

USB ports have a number of advantages over the old system of parallel/serial ports. They do not require I/O memory space or individual IRQ lines. Anyone who has had to work with older computers and operating systems will remember the problems of trying to prevent IRQ conflicts when connecting external devices such as scanners or modems. How many times did the sound card manage to steal IRQ's that you had to have for another device? USB also allows for automatic device configuration and hot-plug capability. The hot-plug or hot-swap function means that you don't have to power down the computer and go through a restart when you want to connect

a new device. Instead you simply connect or disconnect the USB cable. The computer will recognize the device and connect to the proper driver. That is assuming this isn't the first time you have used the device and that the driver has already been installed. You commonly have to install drivers for external hard drives, printers, scanners, card readers, etc. You generally don't have to install drivers for mice and keyboards that connect to the USB ports.

Next, consider that USB operates at three possible speeds: low speed or 1.4 megabits/second, full speed or 12 megabits/second, and high speed or 480 megabits/second (mbps). Low speed and high speed can be used with either USB 1.x or USB 2.0 hosts. The high speed can be used only with USB 2.0. The host is the computer that provides the USB connections. For USB 2.0 operation the host computers "root port hubs" must support USB 2.0. That means the computer must have USB 2.0 drivers that are supported by the operating system. Windows XP (service pack 1.0) and Windows 2000 both support USB 2.0. The root port hubs are the USB connectors on your computer and are usually connected to the motherboard. You can also identify them in the Device Manager where they will show under the USB Host Controller.

Although the USB specifications indicate you can daisy-chain up to 127 devices



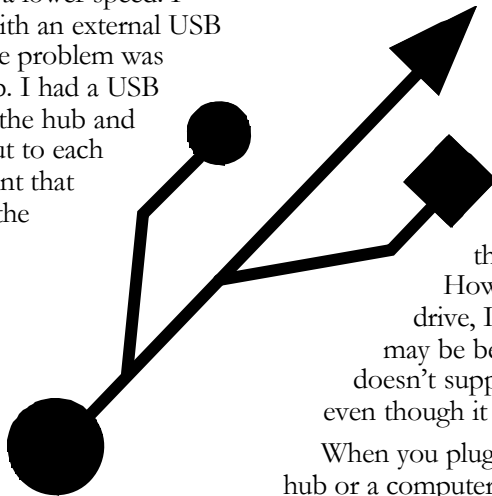
 <p>HELP A VET</p>	<p>IT DISTRIBUTOR</p> <p>HARDWARE/SOFTWARE LEASING</p> <p>COMPUTERS • MONITOR • PRINTERS</p> <p>MULTIMEDIA • FAX MACHINES • SOFTWARE</p>
	<p><i>Quality Goods Quality Services</i></p> <p>TONER INK CARTRIDGES</p>
<p>TT&E Company</p> <p>www.ttecompany.com • ttec@elvis.com</p>	
<p>5041 Via De Fortuna Way North Las Vegas, NV 89031 Tel: 702-678-5005 Fax/Voice</p>	<p>Steve Santiago Proprietor Tel: 702-639-9767</p>

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23)

from one port, this is not likely to happen because of the power drop that occurs over long connections. You can get external hubs that allow you to connect 4 – 7 devices to a single root port hub. The external hubs are repeaters that relay transaction information from the computer to a device connected to the hub's port. There is a catch to this as well. Some USB 2.0 hubs will decrease their maximum output if you have a USB 1.x device attached to a port. This means that any USB 2.0 device attached to the hub may not function or will function at a lower speed. I learned this the hard way with an external USB 2.0 hard drive. I thought the problem was the drive, but it was the hub. I had a USB 1.0 card reader attached to the hub and as a result the current output to each port was reduced to the point that it was not sufficient to run the drive. This occurred even though the hub and the drive had external power supplies.

An ample power supply is necessary to operate USB devices. Root hub ports can provide 5 volts and up to 500 milli-Amps (mA) of current. The power specifications state the USB ports should provide between 100 mA and 500 mA. Devices connected directly to the computer are able to obtain the maximum current. So let's take a situation where we have a hub connected to the computer's root port hub. The hub is receiving 500 mA of current at about 5 volts. If only the current received through the connecting cable powers the hub, the output from each of its four hubs will be only 100 mA. This is referred to as a "bus-powered" hub because it receives its current



solely from the USB bus in the host computer. However, if the hub has its own power supply and is receiving at least 1.6 Amps from this supply, then it can provide a 500 mA output at each port. In this case, the hub should be able to support high-speed USB 2.0 devices.

On some computers you will find an icon in the system tray that is a "hardware disconnect". In this instance, you need to double click the icon and wait for it to permit you to disconnect the hardware device. This icon does not appear with all USB devices.

Since installing SP2, I haven't seen this icon in my system tray. There are some reports of computers with SATA drives showing this icon. Since the SATA drive is supposed to be hot-swappable like USB devices, I'm not surprised that the icon shows up.

However, with my Seagate SATA drive, I still don't see this icon. That may be because my motherboard doesn't support the hot-swap function even though it supports SATA drives.

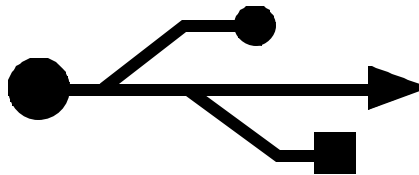
When you plug in a USB device to either a hub or a computer port, there is an initial identification process referred to as the "configuration" step that occurs. During this configuration process the device can not draw more than 100 mA. If it does, the process will fail and it will appear that the device failed to work. The configuration process identifies the device, its drivers, and its power requirements. Only after this process is complete will the device be able to draw more than 100 mA current. Since this process is not instantaneous, some time must be allowed by the user before attempting to use the device. In addition, this

(Continued on page 25)

(Continued from page 24)

configuration may not occur if the device is plugged into the computer before the computer is turned on and booted. In these cases, it may be better to connect the USB device after the computer is fully operational. Most of the time, the computer will identify and configure the device during the bootstrap.

Microsoft has a knowledge base article on trouble-shooting USB problems (#310575). Typically the problems relate to drivers or power problems. However, they also point out that high-speed devices should be connected with high-speed cables only. The low speed cables may distort the signal as a result of their reduced amount of shielding. Another really complete source of trouble-shooting information can be found at: <http://www.usbman.com/winxpusbguide.htm>. This has references for Windows ME as well as XP and Windows 2000. However, anyone who hasn't dumped Windows ME should seriously consider doing so as soon as possible. WinXP is such a tremendous improvement over ME and will really make your computing experience much more enjoyable. My computer hasn't locked up



or crashed in more than six months, probably longer. I really don't keep track anymore.

So what devices are typically high speed and require USB 2.0? Let's start with external USB hard drives. Seagate has a very interesting technical paper on external hard drives. In this paper they state that most 2 ½" external drives require 1000 – 1100 mA during the start-up cycle and then can function at the 500 mA maximum current available from the USB port. They also state that most USB ports can support up to 700 mA on a continuous basis. This is something I have not found elsewhere.

Consequently, my recommendation is that when looking for an external drive, pick one with its own power supply. I wouldn't want to

depend on one that drew all its power from the USB bus.

Other high-speed devices include laser printers, scanners, and multi-function printers. All of these should have their own power supply. Other devices that operate at full-speed and don't need external power are blue-tooth adapters and card readers. This is only a partial list of what is available in USB devices. Just remember when you are looking at them that the term full-speed does not 480 mbps, instead it is the slower 12 mbps.

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: bwsail@yahoo.com.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



LVPCUG

General Meetings

*6:15 pm, 1st Wednesday of
each month, February–December*

West Charleston Library Auditorium

*Always free and
open to the public!*

*For the latest info, visit
www.lvpcug.org*

Ram & Reason: A Virus and Incident Checklist

By Rob Rice, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Much has been said about virus and malicious software prevention, but what if all of your precautions fail? So there you are, happily clicking along the Internet when suddenly a popup ad obstructs your view. You start to close it and then another and then another pops up so that in just a few seconds there are so many pop-up ads that you cannot possibly close them all as they just keep coming. So what do you? Delete them as fast as you can in hopes that they will stop? Turn off the computer? Suddenly a program appears from nowhere and informs you that you have been infected with a trojan virus and the program needs to scan your system so that the trojan can be removed. The problem is that you do not remember ever having installed this program. Do you trust it?

There are some industry-accepted procedures for dealing with this type of incident and any virus or trojan infection. Just follow these five simple steps in the following order to minimize damage:

1. **Do not turn off your computer unless you are certain that your files are being actively deleted!**
2. **Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection.**
3. **Write down any error messages and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred.**
4. **Mark the computer "Do Not Use".**

5. **Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened identifying a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus, anti-trojan tools.**

Step One:

Do not turn off your computer. Not every trojan and virus is the same so this rule will have exceptions, but generally you do not want to turn off the computer unless you can see that the virus is deleting your files. If you think that it can be stopped from deleting your files without turning off the computer, then this is a better option than turning off the computer. The reason is that while turning the computer off will temporarily stop the damage more harm can come when you turn the computer back on. System files can be infected when loading, boot sectors contaminated, hard drive partitions erased, registries corrupted. For example, on a Windows system every time you make a major system change one of the first things that it wants you to do is reboot, "To allow the changes to take affect". In the case of a virus or trojan, the last thing we want to do is to allow the changes to take affect.

Step Two:

Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection. Trojans are designed to open a door and let other trojans, spyware and viruses in. Physically disconnecting its link to the

(Continued on page 27)

(Continued from page 26)

Internet stops this behavior, prevents your personnel information from going out and prevents other machines from being infected. Many checklists have this action rated number one and for good reasons. I rate it here as step two because step one is simply a quick decision that can have a significant impact on the recovery outcome.

Step Three:

Write down any error messages that appear and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred. This is important not only for repairing the system but also for identifying which alerts are real and which ones are bogus. Error messages that contain misspellings and poor grammar are likely bogus and generated by the virus.

Step Four:

Mark the computer “Do Not Use”. This is in case you get called away and have to leave the system alone for any length of time.

Step Five:

Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened to identify a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus anti-trojan tools.

It’s possible that your antivirus or anti-trojan software may have detected the attack and started running a system scan or is prompting you and waiting for instructions. If you are certain that it is your software then let it do what it wants to do and let it clean the system. If you have any doubts as to whether the program is in fact one of your programs then **DO NOT RUN THE SOFTWARE!**

(Continued on page 28)

Special Magazine Offer for the Las Vegas PC Users Group!

from “**Smart Computing® in Plain English**”

With your help, the Las Vegas PC Users Group can receive **FREE** subscriptions to **Smart Computing, Computer Power User (CPU), PC Today, or CE Tips**. For every five paid subscriptions, our group receives one **FREE!**

Place new subscription orders or renewal orders for **Smart Computing, Computer Power User (CPU), PC Today, or CE Tips** by using personalized subscription forms, phoning Customer Service at (800) 733-3809, or using our **online User Group Subscription page** at <http://snipurl.com/SmartSubscribe>.

You must include the **LVPCUG Smart Computing User Group Code** on each subscription card or renewal invoice, or give it when subscribing or renewing by phone at (800) 424-7900. When using the card from the magazine please cross out the existing source code and insert the **User Group Code**. When ordering online, be sure to select our group in the “**Give your group credit for your order**” drop-down box.

Smart Computing® LVPCUG Codes

Smart Computing
~ 8308 ~

Computer Power User
~ 461 ~

PC Today
~ 252 ~

CE Tips
~ 199 ~

Improve Your PC Skills & Help Your User Group At The Same Time!

Smart Computing®
In Plain English

Click Here!

(Continued from page 27)

Some trojans actually install and run a program pretending to be antivirus/anti-trojan software and scan your system all the while claiming to be cleaning your computer. In reality it is part of the trojan. Some of these programs look very commercial and very polished so be careful!

Rob Rice is a computer specialist working in Anchorage, Alaska. Rob can be contacted at articles@isp.com

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ☺

LVPCUG Board of Directors Meetings
4th Wednesday of month, 6:30 pm
Clark County Library



● **Classified (Line) Ads** ●

Members of the Las Vegas PC Users Group are entitled to **FREE non-commercial**:

- Three Classified ads per year
- Maximum of 5 lines per ad

Non-members and additional member classified ads:

- \$ 2.50 for up to 3 lines
- \$0.75 for each additional line

● **Frequency Discounts** ●

- 10%** for **3** consecutive ads
- 15%** for **6** consecutive ads
- 20%** for **12** consecutive ads

● **Commercial (Display) Ads** ●

Price includes free **COLOR** ad on the LVPCUG website!
Sizes and prices (per issue of the Bytes):

Full Page.....	6" wide x 7.5" deep	\$50.00
Two- Thirds Page	6" wide x 5" deep	\$36.00
Half Page.....	6" wide x 3.75" deep	\$29.00
One-Third Page.....	4" wide x 3.75" deep	\$20.00
Quarter Page.....	4" wide x 2.75" deep	\$16.00
Business Card.....	4" wide x 2" deep	\$10.00

Horizontal dimensions shown; vertical ads also available

Premium Positions Charge (if available):

Inside Front or Inside Back Cover	Additional \$25.00
Center Page, Left or Right	Additional \$50.00

● **Advertising Terms** ●

Advertiser provides ready-to-publish advertisement.

All ads must be paid in advance with checks made payable to **Las Vegas PC Users Group**

For more information, e-mail advertising@lvpcug.org or call **702-263-5910**

Who, me? Yes, you!

You, too, can do a Product Review

Have you recently...

- Read a computer book that was especially well written and helpful?
- Played a computer game that you think is really challenging?
- Found a computer show or program that's quite informative?
- Taken a course that you really enjoyed?
- Got a new piece of equipment that you feel comfortable recommending to others?
- Tried a new or unique software program that solves a problem?

Why not take some time and share your thoughts with fellow LVPCUG members?

Consider the following to help arrange your thoughts and ideas:

- Identify the item specifically with name, version and the vendor.
- Describe its purpose and what it does – its objective and selling points or features.
- Tell us its price and where fellow members can find it.
- State any requirements, and if it is for a novice, intermediate, or advanced user.
- Tell us why you selected it.
- Tell us about the original installation or your first impressions.
- Describe your experience – what you liked, didn't like, etc.
- Any unexpected result, or any outstanding feature or function?
- Any improvement recommendations?

- Make your concluding comments and recommendation. Add a rating, if you like.

Don't worry about your writing skill or grammar, or length of review. That's why we have an Editor. Just write down your thoughts, put them aside for a day or two, then read them and make sure that you said what you intended and that it all makes sense, then e-mail it to editor@lvpcug.org

Let's get into the habit of sharing our experiences with fellow members. After all, isn't that one of the reasons we all joined LVPCUG in the first place—to **share** our experiences, **broaden** our horizons and knowledge, and **take advantage** of our pool of **expertise** (that's **all of us**)—giving and getting help, **Users Helping Users?** ☺



Subscribe to NewsBytes

In addition to the regular monthly publication of Bytes, members are also invited to sign up for **NewsBytes**, a more immediate publication. It is an e-mail service geared to members who will benefit from time-sensitive information related to Internet topics, including early warning of viruses, Trojan horses and related information.

To sign up for **NewsBytes** send a message to lvpcug-subscribe@yahoo.com. For access to past **NewsBytes** or to change your settings, including your e-mail address, or to join, go to the site at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lvpcug> and registering there.

Another LVPCUG Member Benefit!

LVPCUG Membership Benefits

The Las Vegas PC Users Group welcomes new members anytime. The only criteria for membership is an interest in computers! The Las Vegas PC Users Group is an exciting non-profit organization of novices, experts, computer professionals and casual users that began in the 1980's.

Membership includes a subscription to "**The BYTES of Las Vegas**", and full access to the web site. Full members may purchase hardware, software, and books made available by the manufacturers and various vendors at discounted prices.

A **General Meeting** is held the first Wednesday of each month Feb.-Dec. in the Auditorium of the West Charleston Library at 6301 W. Charleston. The pre-meeting at **6:15 PM is a computer fundamentals** presentation with general questions and answers. At **7 PM, the General Meeting** starts with a presenter on a topic of broader interest, followed by questions and answers about the presentation. Each meeting concludes with **door prize drawings**.


What areas are you most interested in? We have **Special Interest Groups (SIGs)** that focus on various areas of computing such as help for novice users, office software, databases, programming, digital imaging, wireless networking, etc. They meet on a regular basis in a variety of meeting formats—such as workshops, discussions and classes—to share information on diverse topics. We even have a **Saturday Night "Bites & Bytes"** that shares dinner and computer expertise. And, **all of our meetings are free and open to the public.**

Helping Hands are there when you need them. A group of members with experience in particular fields has volunteered to help user group members one-on-one. When you need computing assistance, you can contact a Helping Hands volunteer.

Visit our web site at **www.lvpcug.org** Members can get answers to questions, and find out when and where the Special Interest Groups are meeting. There are links to other interesting sites as well.

Interested in using the **Las Vegas PC Users Group Web Board**? This is a private Board for our group and will be a source for help, information, etc. on a timely basis. Also there are chat capabilities for SIG information. Please contact Rob Winchell at president@lvpcug.org, Dennis Kemper at director@lvpcug.org, or Donna Sword at program@lvpcug.org for registration on the Web Board.

Free and discounted advertising is available to members in the "**The Bytes of Las Vegas**". See details in this issue.

LVPCUG Members can also take advantage of **several opportunities for savings of time and money** from various suppliers and vendors throughout the year. For example, Hal-PC has just offered an **online 7x24 training offer for over 100 courses**, including A+, MCSE, Oracle, and more. (Must be a member to take advantage of this \$200 offer.) Please contact Rob Winchell for details at president@lvpcug.org. 

"Users Helping Users"



Las Vegas PC Users Group Membership Application

(PLEASE PRINT)

Date: _____ New Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Been a Member Before? YES NO

It is LVPCUG policy to keep your information confidential. However, for contact regarding SIGs and meetings, may we release the following to other Members?

Your phone # _____ and/or Your e-mail address _____

Would you prefer to receive the newsletter via the web site (downloading PDF file) instead of a printed copy in the mail? YES NO

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION (optional but helpful):

How did you hear about the LVPCUG? _____

What type of computer user are you? (Circle all that apply)

Novice Programmer Consultant Trainer Work Related Home User

Other (please specify) _____

Please put an "X" in front of the **items you use and have some knowledge of**, and put an "O" in front of those subjects **you would like to learn more about**.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| _____ Programming | _____ Art & Design | _____ BBS/Telecommunications |
| _____ Networking | _____ Desktop Publishing | _____ Windows |
| _____ Word Processing | _____ Multimedia | _____ Databases |
| _____ Operating Systems | _____ General Computer | _____ Spreadsheets/Accounting |
| _____ Hardware | _____ Other: _____ | |

Bring completed application and check for \$30 Annual Membership Dues to our General Meeting, or mail to:

**Membership Chairperson
Las Vegas PC Users Group
1350 E. Flamingo Road #188
Las Vegas, NV 89119**





Las Vegas PC Users Group, Inc.

www.lvpcug.org

1350 E. Flamingo Road #188
Las Vegas, NV 89119

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
LAS VEGAS NV
PERMIT NO. 1125

Membership expiration date appears on address label

Time Value Mail



February 2006 In This Issue...

Features

- 3 February 2006 General Meeting
- 4 Helping Hands & Board of Directors
- 5 December 2005 General Meeting and Prize Winners
- 6 "Do You...?"
- 7 "Tech News"
- 9 "Absence Makes the E-Mail Grow Fonder"

- 10 "Smart Computing" Tips & Fun Facts
- 11 "Online 'My Family Health Portrait'"
- 13 "Sony BMG – Shame on You!"
- 14 LVPCUG Recycling Programs
- 16 Bytes Bulletin Board
- 17 Calendar: February 2006
- 18 Special Interest Groups & Meetings
- 22 Other User Groups in the Area
- 23 "A USB Primer"
- 26 "Ram & Reason: A Virus and Incident Checklist"

- 28 Advertising Information
- 29 "Who, me? Yes, you! You, too, can do a Product Review"
- 29 Subscribe to "NewsBytes"
- 30 LVPCUG Membership Benefits
- 31 Membership Application

Advertisements

- 11 Archie Fox, Realtor
- 6 Computer Outlook Radio Talk Show
- 7 Desert Instant Print
- 27 Smart Computing
- 5 TT&E Company
- 9 TT&E Company
- 21 Viawest

