## Wednesday
## August 13, 2008
## 7:00 PM
# Blogs
**The new way to
communicate online**

**presented by
Rachel Piper**

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## This Month in *QBITS*..

The *QCS* is a member of

**apcug**

**Monthly meetings are open to the
general public.**

# QCS Review
# Life Lock
**www.lifelock.com**
presented by Mario Racanelli
(Identity Theft Victim)
by Joe Durham

Mario Racanelli shared his life experience with identity theft. He began with a brief DVD video excerpt from the TV program *Secret Lives* which chronicled his real life case. A con man named Jim Savage took Mario's identity, ran up millions of dollars in expenses, conned money from several people, got married in his name. This fake person was at large on felony warrants.

In essence Mario's life was turn upside down and inside out. The police could inadvertently arrest Mario on the outstanding felony warrants, a result of this other crook's doing, with guns drawn. Fortunately his local police department suggested that he be given a case number that the arresting officer could use to verify that he was **not** the criminal at large.

The FBI was never able to actually determine how James Savage aquired Mario's information. They theorize that it may have been when Mario used a card in a restaurant while visiting New York City.

Eventually James Savage was arrested, and is behind bars for 20 years. This didn't stop Mario's travails with the law and credit. The IRS claimed that he was liable for back taxes on the millions of unreported funds. As a result Mario had to spent a great deal of his own money with attorney's and accountants to clear his name and credit.

The bottom line is that you must take action to protect your identity in this electronic age. Your social security number is used in many different venues: medical reports, insurance, driver's licenses, credit reports and for loans.

Views and opinions expressed by presenters
do not necessarily reflect those
of the Quad Cities Computer Society

Mario said that there are several steps that you can take yourself to protect your identity. He handed out a sheet that lists handy reference numbers and online links. In many cases these referrals and checks have to be renewed during specified times periods.

He also handed out a sheet identifying the steps that a Life**Lock** account can accomplish. Life**Lock** automates the process for you, guarantees that your Social Security Number will be secure, and will keep all references up to date on your behalf. Life**Lock** doesn't control identity theft before the date you sign up, but it does handle all occurrences from that time.

In addition to identity theft protection, junk mail and pre-screened credit car applications are stopped. He noted that doing this for children is also useful so that they are not bombarded by pre-screen credit applications and thus would not be tempted to get credit cards and misuse them.

Take a moment to drop by the Life**Lock** site **www.lifelock.com** to examine their services. Mario's life has finally returned to normal. He said that there will always be occasions that his identity will be challenged and Life**Lock** is there to protect his personal and financial stake in life. LifeLock service is $10 / month or $110 / year. QCS members receive a 10% discount by using the promo code **MARIO** when you sign up.

The QCS would like to thank Mario for his fine presentation of his struggles and successful resolution of this prsoblem. There were many engaging questions that emerged as a result of his fine presentation. Three QCS members won prizes at the conclusion of the night presentation.

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**The August meetings of Genealogy SIG and Digital Media SIG  are Canceled.
The Microsoft Office SIG will not meet in August.**

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## My Follow Up to Identity Theft Protection
By Judi McDowell, QCS member.

After hearing Mario Racanelli's story of Identity Theft, I decided to investigate ways to PREVENT something like that happening to me. Deterring identity theft is the first step recommended by government officials such as the FBI and the FDIC. Here are things I learned, some I knew and some I did not.  I am sharing them with our Qbits readers so you can take precautions too.

**1. Protect Your Social Security Number:** Don't carry your social security card in your wallet or purse.  Don't write your social security number on a check. Only give your social security number to those who REALLY need it, such as employers or financial institutions for wage and tax reporting. Some businesses may ask for your social security number if they need to do a credit check, such as a loan application or renting an apartment. But some businesses may ask for your number just as part of their general record keeping.  If someone asks for your social security number that you don't think needs it, ask them a few questions, such as, why do you need it, how will my number be used and what steps do you take to protect my number from being stolen.  Ask what will happen if you do NOT give them your social security number.  They may deny the service you were requesting and then it will be up to you to determine if you want to provide them with your number.  The decision is always yours.

**2. Treat Your Mail and Trash Carefully:** Many identity thieves start by searching trash bins for personal information. Always shred any receipts, checks, bank state-

ments, insurance policies or credit card applications that you are throwing away. Anything with your name, address and any other personally identifiable information. Promptly remove mail from your mailbox. If you are going to be away for a few days, ask the Post Office to hold your mail until you return. Only deposit outgoing mail in post office collection boxes or directly at the post office. Never use an unsecured mail box.

**3. Select Intricate Passwords:** Place passwords on your bank, credit card and phone accounts, but avoid using your mother's maiden name, your phone number, the last 4 digits of your social security number, or any single word that appears in the dictionary. A combination of letters, numbers and special characters make the strongest passwords. When opening a new account, if they ask for your mother's maiden name, ask if you can use a password instead.

**4. Verify a Source Before Sharing Information:** Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail or on the internet unless YOU initiated the contact and know exactly who you are dealing with. Identity thieves are clever and may pose as representatives of banks, ISPs or even government agencies trying to get people to reveal information such as Social Security numbers, mother's maiden name, credit card numbers and other identifying information. Before sharing personal information, confirm that you are dealing with a legitimate organization. Never click on a link in an email or cut and paste it into the web address bar, instead type the URL directly into your address bar or use the telephone and call the customer service number listed on your bank statement or from the listing in the phone book.

**5. Safeguard Your Purse or Wallet:** Protect your purse or wallet at all times. Never carry your social security card or number with you. Only carry identification cards and the debit and credit cards you actually need for the places you are going.

**6. Store Information in Secure Locations:** Keep your personal information in a secure place at home, especially if you have roommates, employ outside help or are having work done in your house. Keep your purse or wallet at a safe place at work. Only share personal information with family members that have a real need for it: Ask about security procedures at your workplace, your doctor's office or at any institutions that have your personal information. Ask who they share your information with and how they dispose of it.

**7. Be On Guard When Using The Internet:** We all love the internet, it can supply us with information, entertainment and access to countless other services, but it can also leave you vulnerable to online scammers and identity thieves if you are not careful. Malware is short for "malicious software". It can include viruses, spyware, worms, Trojans and more. Criminals create enticing websites, desirable downloads and compelling stories to lure you to links that download malware—especially on computers not using adequate or up to date protection. Some signs of malware residing on your computer might include: Your computer running slower than usual, not starting or shutting down properly, browser hijack—not your normal start up page, even favorite listings that you did not put there and emails you did not send. If you suspect your computer may have Malware, you should stop shopping, banking and other online activities that require passwords or other sensitive infor

mation. Then confirm that your security is active and up to date. At a minimum you should have anti-virus, anti-spyware and a firewall. These programs are available individually (some for free) or as a suite from many reputable companies. Remember if you purchase a new computer, you may receive security software preinstalled, but it usually is only a trial version and will expire within a few months if you do not purchase the full version. After you have confirmed your security software is up to date, run a scan on your entire system and delete any problems identified. Some experts even recommend using a second spyware removal software that might find something the first one missed. If problems persist on your computer after you have exhausted your own capabilities, it might be necessary to hire a professional computer technician to help. Once your computer is running smoothly take precautions to avoid Malware. Remember the following precautions:

   A. Never click on links in email or open attachments unless you know who sent it and why.
   B. Only download and install software from websites you know and trust.
   C. Talk about safe computing with kids or other users of your computer, sometimes gamers will disable anti-virus programs because it interferes with their gaming experience.
   D. Keep your operating system up to date with the latest security patches and enable automatic updates for your security software.
   E. Make frequent backups of your important data and store them on removable disks. Also make a boot disk and keep it handy in case your computer becomes infected and will not boot
   Remember the safer you make your computing experience the more enjoyment your computer will bring.

## Moving on to Vista – Part 8

by Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, WA
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Windows Vista is becoming more popular every day, but there are still several special features that few people are aware of! Besides the energy saving features I mentioned last month, there's another feature that goes largely unnoticed by the average user. It's about displaying time in multiple time zones using Vista's system clock. It works very well, particularly since we work with countries all around the world and are no longer confined to one time zone. It also helps when you intend to chat with a friend or family member who lives in another part of the country. Now, instead of calculating different time zones in your head, you can have a handy toolbar on your Vista computer that will tell the time for you.

1. The first step is to right click on the clock in your system tray at the bottom of your desktop.
2. Select Adjust Date/Time.
3. Click on the Additional Clocks tab at the top of the window.
4. Choose the checkbox that you want to show the additional clock.
5. Next, pick a time zone and give it a title.
6. You can add up to two additional time zones this way.
7. Apply your changes.

To see the additional times, just hover your mouse over the clock in the system tray.

Vista's Service Pack 1 is out, if you have automatic updates enabled on your PC its should already be installed. So what does SP1 do? Microsoft previously announced that Service Pack 1 would improve the operating system's performance and security. It would speed up file copying, waking up from sleep and

hibernation faster and add and extract files from compressed folders faster.

When you install SP1 it apparently checks to see if you have installed previous updates and if it doesn't find them it installs them. Then in proceeds to install it's "new" features. I had used automatic updates to keep my installation current and Service Pack 1 installed quickly on my laptop without any apparent problems.

Did I see any improvements? <sigh> Not really. I saw no noticeable improvements in performance. As far as I could tell start-up time was the same and file copying was the same but the file copy fix? I had previously installed (see Moving Up to Vista – Part 7). Other people have reported similar impressions. One person reported Vista with SP1 compressed files faster than without SP1 but it is still slower than Windows XP.

What about new features? Frankly, the only one I looked for and found was the disk defragmenter. Pre SP1 when you selected the defrag function you had no choices. The function simply defragmented your all of your hard drive. With SP1 installed, the defragmenter first examines your computer and makes a suggestion as to whether your drives and partitions need to be defragemented. There's also an option to schedule defragmenting at regular time intervals. I don't remember if this was available pre-SP1.

If you select the button? to defrag your hard drive, you see a new screen which gives you the alternatives to defrag all of your partitions and drives or select specific partitions and hard drives to be defragmented. As with pre-SP1 Vista, you can defrag your hard drive(s) while continuing to use your computer. There is no specific information that tells you how badly fragmented your drives are or how much space is used. In my opinion, the disk defragmenter in Windows XP was more useful. For that kind of detail you'll need to use

a third party disk defragmenter. I would say that Vista's defragmenter with SP1 is improved but still a disappointment.

And that's my general impression about Vista SP1. I'm disappointed. The speed improvements that were predicted just don't seem to be there. Maybe the security is improved but it's not obvious to me. Maybe Service Pack 2 will be better...

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## Firefox 3 – Hot New Browser

By Ira Wilsker
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WEBSITES:
Free Download
**http://www.getfirefox.com** –
Features
**http://www.mozilla.com/ en-US/firefox/features/** -
Add ons
**https://addons.mozilla.org/ firefox/** -

After a lengthy wait, Mozilla has released the latest and greatest release of the very popular web browser, Firefox 3. This new release, available for free download from www.getfirefox.com, has many new features, making it a very strong competitor to Microsoft's ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer.

Firefox evolved from an earlier browser, Mozilla, which in turn grew out of the Netscape browser as AOL announced the cessation of Netscape development. Since its first release several years ago, Firefox in its current and previous

versions has developed a wide following, with hundreds of millions of copies downloaded. The newly released version 3 has tentatively set a Guinness world record with over 8 million copies downloaded in its first 24 hours of public release, despite overloaded servers that discouraged countless people from downloading it the first day of issue. According to published reports, the number of copies of Firefox 3 downloaded surpassed 14 million downloads in the first 72 hours. Obviously, many people are using it.

Rhetorically, so why are so many using Firefox 3 rather than Internet Explorer (IE), which is installed by default on all contemporary Windows computers?  There are several other fine browsers in circulation, such as the newly released update to Opera, and Apple's Safari (for both Windows and Mac), but for Windows computers, Firefox is firmly in second place, right behind Internet Explorer. If Internet Explorer was not preinstalled on Windows computers and integrated into the operating system, there is a good chance that Firefox 3 could surpass IE in a fair competitive market. Firefox 3 is faster rendering web pages than IE, has superior tabbed browsing, is written in tighter code taking fewer system resources, and has many advantages over IE. There is no reason why PC users should not download Firefox 3 for Windows (7.8mb download), and install it, as it runs happily on computers that already have IE installed. On a fresh installation of Firefox on a Windows computer, Firefox will nondestructively import the favorites (bookmarks), cookies, and other information from IE, without making any changes or impeding IE in any way. If Firefox 3 is installed on a computer that has an older version of Firefox installed, it will automatically install it as an upgrade, including all bookmarks, passwords, cookies, and other information. Once installed, many users, such as me, prefer to use Firefox instead of IE. In my case I would say that I use Firefox for 98% of my browsing tasks; it would be 100%, but I have IE setup to access another internet account that I have, but rarely use.

According to the Firefox 3 website at www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox, over 15,000 improvements were made to version 3 over version 2. The newly released version 3 is claimed to be faster, safer, and smarter than the previous version, and also IE! One of the new features, which I have personally verified, is the fact that web pages do indeed load faster than on IE and previous versions of Firefox. Firefox 3 also consumes less system memory and system resources, leading to improved computer performance when Firefox is loaded and running, compared to the previous version, or even IE. Firefox 3 is also more secure than previous browsers, and incorporates the latest technologies to help prevent phishing (identity theft), and other website forgeries. A neat new feature in Firefox 3 is "Instant Website ID", where clicking on the tiny website icon ("site favicon") at the left of the URL in the menu bar will display site information and identification, which will likely indicate if the site is as intended, or a web forgery.  Firefox 3 has also been engineered to work smoothly and compliment Vista's parental controls, as well as most antivirus and other security programs.

Another interesting feature unique to Firefox 3 is the "Smart Location Bar" that shows detailed information on websites recently visited, and is accessed by clicking on the right side of the menu bar. This Smart Location Bar is intelligent, in that it adapts to persona preferences to locate better website matches. Typing a "tag" or keyword in the menu bar opens a detailed list of previously visited websites containing that keyword, making it very fast and easy to locate websites that have previously been visited. Another very useful feature is the integrated spell checker, which underlines any misspelled words typed in a browser window; right clicking on the word opens a list of suggested spellings, which a mouse click will instantly replace the incorrect word with the correctly spelled word.

Malware of various types, including worms, Trojans, viruses, and spyware is a growing menace to internet users. Firefox 3 integrates a sophisticated anti-malware feature that provides some protection if the user either intentionally or erroneously accesses a website that contains attack code. If such a dangerous website is accessed, a full screen (browser window) display will appear as a warning. Firefox, working with other organizations (including Google) maintains a continuously updated list of so called "attack sites", so there is nothing for the user to update or maintain. In the event the user does happen to fall into a suspect site, such as a very freshly created phishing (identity theft) website, the forgery can be quickly reported by simply clicking on HELP – REPORT WEB FORGERY; this will connect to a Google service that collects such information on a real-time basis, verifies the forgery, and automatically adds it to the malware list, as well as forwards the information to groups like Phish Tank (www.phishtank.com) for further action.

Many of us use multiple passwords and user names on countless websites.  Firefox 3 has an excellent integrated and secure password manager. When a password is first entered, Firefox 3 asks if you want it to remember that password and logon information, without any annoying pop-ups. Speaking of pop-ups, Firefox 3 incorporates a sophisticated and easily configurable pop-up blocker which can stop pop-ups and pop-unders, speeding and making more enjoyable the surfing experience. In some cases, pop-ups are not irritating advertisements, but instead contain important information; these can be easily allowed

when desired.

Many of us choose to tweak the appearance and features of our browsers, and Firefox 3 happily obliges. Firefox has many themes and "personas" that can be selectively implemented to change the appearance of the browser to meet our individual tastes. For those of us who want additional features, Firefox offers over 5,000 free "add-ons" (addons.mozilla.org/firefox), which are easy to install devices to customize the browser to work as desired. I have installed about a dozen add-ons, including some security add-ons (PhishTank, McAfee SiteAdvisor, and others), as well as an enhanced download manager (the one integrated in Firefox 3 is very adequate for most users). I also have selected to use differently colored tabs on the top of the browser window, an add-on that can make a tab an IE window (for the rare cases when a website is intended for IE only), a PDF manager, and several other add-ons.

Firefox 3 is an outstanding and free product. It is a very worthwhile competitor to Internet Explorer, and users should try it to see if they like it. I like it, and use it almost exclusively on my desktop and notebook computers. That is the best recommendation I can give it.

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## Skype 4.0
By Joe Nuvolini
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I've been a Skype subscriber for some time now. What is Skype, you say? Well, it's an online chat/phone/video service which has, as of the end of March, some 309

million registered users. Last I heard, that is more subscribers than all the US telephone services combined! It allows you to make computer to computer calls free worldwide. It can support 12 million users at a time. In addition to audio and video chat, you can instant message, send text messages to phones, and share files. You can call from computer to phone as well.

It has three levels of service for the computer to phone service. For $2.95 per month you can make free computer to phone calls anywhere in the US and Canada. The $5.95 service includes the US, Canada, and Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey Mexico. For $9.95 per month you get unlimited free computer to phone calls worldwide. They point out that unlimited means up to 10,000 minutes per month. Let's see, 10,000 minutes is over 6.9 days! I'm currently subscribing to the $2.95 service. To call overseas with my service it runs about 2.1 cents per minute to Europe or from Europe back to the States. Skype has been offering video calling as well since 2005. Their data compression allows quality voice transmissions on a bandwidth of as little as 2kbs and video on 6kbs. It has a new version, 4.0, which is in beta testing. It allows you to see the person you are calling full screen. For this feature to work well you need 90kbs. I'm using it and it seems to work real well. This full screen mode will be very useful for the computer user group community.

While at the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) Convention held in conjunction with the January 2008 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) attendees in their forum with the vendors discussed presentations at user group meetings. Over the years, the cost of sending representatives out to user groups for the purpose of promoting their wares has become no longer cost effective. We discussed

the use of Webinars (live presentations across the Internet).

This new version of Skype looks to be ideal for such a program and it can be done at little or no cost to the vendors and user groups. If you haven't tried Skype, you should. You can download the current version (3.8) at: **http://www.skype.com/download/ skype/windows/**. If you are adventurous and want to try 4.0 beta go to: **http://www.skype.com/intl/en/ download/skype/windows/bets/.**

By the way, if you have wireless Internet access you can purchase a WiFi phone at the Skype online store and it will allow you to make calls whenever and wherever you have wireless Internet access. There's a lot more information which you can checkout at their Website: **http://www.skype.com.**

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## The New, The Best, and The Worst
Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster,
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**Tales of Woe**
Sorry, Folks, but this month I can't think of any New and/or Best to report on, only Troubles, with a Capital 'T.' So let's get started.

**Spinrite 6.**
Son Mike's computer recently refused to boot, and his main concern was the potential loss of some recent data files that he had not yet backed up. Regrettable, but it happens to the best of us - literally. The local school system lost all the students' test results of the current term because the computers crashed. The data were not securely

backed up. Whom to blame? No one other than the operator, IBM, symbol of computing excellence. According to the local paper, the IBM representative claimed that this had never happened before and could not be explained. Sound familiar?

Back to Mike. When it was clear that he could not boot from the hard drive, not even in safe mode, the next step was to use a Windows XP setup disc and use its Repair function. Windows labored mightily, trying to repair his drive, but kept getting bogged down with a variety of obscure error messages. At one time he got a DOS prompt that allowed him to list the files on his computer, but when he tried to copy them he was denied access. When we booted his computer with a Live Ubuntu Linux CD he could also see his precious files, but access was again denied.

There is a lesson to be learned from this. The Windows XP operating system runs on a partition configured in the NTFS format. When data files are saved in that format, Windows XP (and Vista) by default protect those files from access by others. That is a nice safety feature for those who really need it, but it makes the data unavailable over your network, or evidently even from a DOS prompt. You can beforehand designate specific data files to be shared, but it is a lot of bother, easily forgotten. Here is the lesson: store all your data files on a separate partition set up in the older FAT32 format, and they'll be available whenever and wherever you need them. Even better, also back them up to an external drive in FAT32 format.

At this point I remembered reading about a terrific file recovery program, Spinrite 6, available for $89 from Gibson Research Corporation, owned and operated by Steve Gibson, the well-known computer guru (www.grc.com). We downloaded the program and converted it to a bootable disc. After booting Mike's computer with the Spinrite disc it immediately announced that his drive was subject to imminent failure. Well, that's what we spent the $89 for. We started the file recovery mode, with a warning that this could take a looong time, think 24 hours or so.

Several days later, after running something like 60 hours during which the program every so often would get bogged down and had to be restarted, the program had progressed to 93% completion and refused to go any further. No indication that any files were available to be recovered.

Mike installed Windows XP on a new drive and put the old wreck in an external hard drive enclosure connected to a USB port of his computer. The old drive was unreadable at this point. Still unwilling to give up, Mike tried the old standby, Windows' checkdisk with the /F parameter (for "fix") to let Windows try to repair salvageable parts of the drive. It worked! After several repeats of the procedure he was able to recover most of his lost files that meanwhile also had become accessible. So much for Spinrite, mark one up for good old DOS.

## Acronis

After creating the Spinrite disc, and before using it on Mike's computer, I tested it on my desktop computer by doing a routine check of my hard drive, expecting it to be in perfect shape. To my surprise Spinrite halted about 5% into the inspection because the hard drive was overheating. Newer serial (SATA) hard drives are equipped with a SMART program that reports many operating parameters of the drive. Windows can't read SMART, but Spinrite can. On inspection I found that the cooling fan for the hard drive compartment was kaput. It was easily replaced by the local people who built my computer, but even then the drive continued to overheat, a clear warning that it may fail any time.

I bought a new 500 GB Maxtor drive (on sale for $99!) which came with a utility, "MaxBlast" to copy an exact image of my setup to the new disc, avoiding the necessity to reinstall everything. The way it wanted to go about it was to do a three--way partition of the 500 MB drive, similar to the 3 partitions in the old (250 MB) drive, but twice as large. It was going to copy everything on the old drive to the new drive, including my Linux programs in their partition, with the warning that the Linux system would no longer be bootable. That was not what I had in mind, I just wanted to copy an image of the C: partition from the old to the new drive. Since MaxBlast turned out to be version 10 of disk manager Acronis, I gave Acronis-11 a try in the hope that it would be more flexible. I uninstalled MaxBlast and tried to install Acronis 11, but it balked. I tried to remove all traces of MaxBlast from the Registry, but Acronis still wouldn't install. I uninstalled as much as possible of Acronis and tried to reinstall Max-Blast. No luck; darn. So much for Acronis.

After clean installations of Windows XP and Ubuntu Linux on the new drive, Windows could not find my Internet connection. After struggling several days I finally realized that my motherboard needed to be software-configured and that I did not have the correct drivers. Thanks to the local availability of the guys who originally built the system I got the correct drivers and all was well. Ubuntu never had any problem. It downloaded and installed the required Linux drivers automatically.

## Ubuntu

Windows Vista is not the only operating system with compatibility problems on installation. Ubuntu and other Linux distributions have more than their share of installation problems. Most of these appear to be due to proprietary graphics systems for which Linux has no drivers

(yet). I have been recommending for years that people ought to start using Linux, but on both occasions where I convinced someone, it turned out that Ubuntu was incompatible with their systems. Computers with integrated graphics and many laptop computers have low-cost proprietary hardware (made in China) that is attuned to Windows, but unlikely to have Linux drivers. Standard graphics cards from major manufacturers are more likely to have Linux drivers available, and those based on the NVidea chip set have Linux support from the manufacturer.

You can try to run Ubuntu from the CD-ROM without installing it on the hard drive, a so-called "live" installation. If that works, your system is probably compatible and you can proceed with a permanent installation. If it doesn't work, not much is lost since the distribution is free. In any case, Linux is a large program and requires at least 256 MB of RAM and 10 GB of hard drive space.

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# *For Anybody Who Has Thought About Trying Linux*

By Drew Kwashnak, Linux SIG Leader, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT
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For anybody who has thought about trying Linux, it has become easier than ever before with Ubuntu 8.04 LTS Hardy Heron. As with most Linux distributions, Ubuntu is available as a free download and is freely distributable. It is even available already installed on Dell computers. The most common method is downloading the ISO image from Ubuntu's website (**http://www.ubuntu**. **com**) and burning it onto a CD.

From the site, you can download the Desktop version or Server for 32-bit and 64-bit systems. There is even an option to download what is called an alternative version which is just the installer and does not include the LiveCD portion, which also includes an installer. If you are like me, until a couple months ago, and living on dial-up or you do not have a CD burner handy or just don't want to put in that much effort then you can order a free CD through the corporate sponsor of Ubuntu, Canonical, ShipIt department.

I have been very pleased with the speed with which their CDs arrive. Alternatively, the website contains links to vendors where you can buy the CDs from under $5 to more, and they can handle large orders as well.

Once you have your CD in your hot little hands, trying Ubuntu is as simple as placing it in your CD-ROM tray and rebooting your system. If system will boot from the CD and after a short moment you'll be greeted with the Ubuntu welcome screen.

If you want to "try before you buy," then you can choose the default "Try Ubuntu without any changes to your computer" and your hard drive will not be touched during your session unless you choose to. You don't even need a hard drive to select this option; you just will not be able to install it from the session.

If you are more certain or just daring then you can go straight into the installer and in about 60 minutes (45 minutes if you know what *Different Strokes For Anybody Who Has Thought About Trying Linux* by Drew Kwashnak you are doing) you're booting to your new Ubuntu installation.

Ubuntu will scan your hardware and load the modules and drivers necessary for your system. If you have hardware that has proprietary drivers available, Linux cannot include them in the CD for legal reasons. Ubuntu works around this by providing a Restricted Drivers tool that lists all such hardware found on your system and provides the ability to download and install the necessary drivers in a click or two, legally.

Now that you have Ubuntu up and running on your system, what can you do? Plenty! Ubuntu brings you a full featured operating system complete with:
• Firefox 3.05 beta web browser
• OpenOffice.org 2.4 full featured office suite compatible with pre-Office 2007 Word, Excel, PowerPoint and some Access files.
• Evolution personal information manager for email and calendar goodness, a Microsoft Outlook user can feel comfortable with. There is even plug-ins to allow Evolution to access existing Microsoft Exchange servers.
• Pidgin multi-protocol instant messenger including Yahoo, MSN, AIM, Jabber, IRC and more.
• Gimp (GNU Image Manipulation Program), a powerful Photoshop-like image editing program that includes filters, layers and a host of goodies.
• F-Spot image manager for categorizing and minor editing of all of your pictures as well as easily importing pictures from your digital camera.
• And much, MUCH more…
If Ubuntu doesn't come with a particular application, thousands of free applications are available from the Ubuntu online repository which are easily installed and updated from the Synaptic package manager.

When you decide to install Ubuntu onto your hard drive or virtual machine you only need to click the "Install" icon on the desktop to start the process. After seven or so easy questions the installer will copy the files over to the hard disk. Depending on your

system's speed this could take about 60 minutes, more or less. It will even detect if you have Windows installed and offer to transfer over your files and compatible settings from your Windows accounts!

Of course, if the limitations of the LiveCD, such as settings are not saved from session to session, and you are hesitant to partition and install the full operating system on your hard drive Ubuntu offers yet another alternative called Wubi. Wubi is, from the Ubuntu website: "Wubi is an officially supported Ubuntu installer for Windows users that can bring you to the Linux world with a single click. Wubi allows you to install and uninstall Ubuntu as any other Windows application, in a simple and safe way.

Are you curious about Linux and Ubuntu? Trying them out has never been easier!"

Wubi can be downloaded as an .exe file directly. With Linux the installation is not the end, only the beginning! Whether you try the LiveCD, Wubi or a full installation you will find a wealth of quality applications, refreshing freedom and a community unlike any other! If you have problems, questions or want to find out more then you need look no further than the third Wednesday of every month for the DACS Linux SIG at 7:30 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center!

Drew Kwashnak: Has been losing more nights of sleep with Linux since 2002 and just can't keep from downloading and trying the latest versions! When not working with Linux he works with ASP.NET and Microsoft SQL Server for a small financial company. He is also the DACS Linux SIG leader and a father of 3.

Links:
Ubuntu:
**http://www.ubuntu.com**
Get Ubuntu:
**http://www.ubuntu.com/ getubuntu**

ShipIt:
**https://shipit.ubuntu.com/**

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## SIGs ARE NOT JUST FOR BEGINNERS
By QCS Member Judi McDowell

In my opinion, our SIG (Special Interest Group) meetings are the most valuable resource of our computer user group. These groups are small and informal. The leader may have a definite goal for each session with information to share or he/she may just facilitate a very informal discussion answering questions and sharing general information.

I have been a member of the QCS for a long time and have attended many SIGs throughout the years. In the last couple of years though I have attended less and less thinking they are primarily for new members and beginners.

I was pleasantly surprised in July when I decided to attend the Internet SIG on a warm summer evening. Ted began the evening showing information from the NOAA weather service website, his favorite site to check weather RADAR. He then proceeded to demonstrate Wikipedia, Wiki how and Wiki quote. I have used Wikipedia on several occasions and have even looked at Wiki how, but did not realize Wiki quote was available. We also visited Google Earth always an exciting adventure around the city or around the world without needing any gas for our car.

He then showed us a new fun tour for users of the bike trails of the local area. The River Action Group has developed an exciting plan for an audio tour of the bike trail from the Arsenal Bridge to the Centen-

nial Bridge. At selected stops walkers will be able to call a special phone number from their cell phone to hear a recorded message. Each message will give historic information about that particular location. I can't wait to go for a walk or bike ride and take part in this interesting tour.

So if you are considering a visit to one of our SIG meetings, remember they are not just for beginners because there is always something new to learn and enjoy by sharing information with other participants.

## Going Green?

During last month's program, there was quite a discussion about whether to leave your computer on verses shutting it off when not in use. I, personally, like to leave my computers run so they are kept up-to-date with auto updates and backed up with scheduled backups. These tasks are done in the early AM so my computers are fully functional when I sit down to use them. However, others asked why not just leave them on the nights that the backup runs instead of 24/7.

I didn't think it was using much energy by running 24/7 but decided to check it out and run some tests using my "Kill-AWatt" meter. (Measures watts, amps, hours, kill a watt hours, ect.) I started with my newest computer (which is approx 2 years old and probably the most efficient). This machine is running Vista and I had the Power Options set to turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and put computer to sleep to "never". With these settings the computer was drawing between 110 and 140 Watts of power with a total average of 2.63 KWH (kill-a-watt hours) per day. Cost per day was $.026 ($7.87 a month) based on my most recent bill.

I then changed the Power Options to turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and put computer to sleep

"after 2 hours". The watts dropped from between 110 and 140 while I was using the computer to 6 while in the sleep mode and the total average of KWH dropped to 0.65 per day. Cost is now down to 6 cents a day ($1.94 a month). With the current power options (turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and sleep "after 2 hours") the computer will wake up and get updates as well as run the scheduled backups. So with a simple change to a power option, I was able to reduce power consumption by approx 76% and save $5.93 per month with out affecting my user experience.

   I plan on testing my XP machine next to see what it is costing and to see if it can be reduced. Thanks go to Louise and the rest of the group for a great discussion on energy use.
Jerry Grommes
Editors Note: To get more info and tips on energy savings try Louise's link under "Favorite Sites".
Reprinted from the July 2008 SCUG News issue, monthly newsletter of the Sandwich Computer Users Group.



## http://mwug.apcug.org

   The Midwest Regional Conference will be in Chicago on September 19 -21, 2008. Vendors will do presentations, there will be roundtable discussions and a vendor fair plus vendor booths throughout the conference. Check our the web site.
   You can register online or print out the registration form and mail it to the address on the form. Be sure and check the dates for early bird discounted registration.

## Officers 2008 - 2009

**Elected Officers**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| President | Judi McDowell | (309) 314-1780 | jmcdowell@mchsi.com |
| Vice-President | Patty Lowry | (563) 332-8679 | heidiho@revealed.net |
| Secretary | Diana Wolf | (309) 797-5413 | theqcs.sec@mchsi.com |
| Treasurer | Cheryl Heimburger | (309) 496-9435 | cheimbur@hotmail.com |
| Directors at Large | Jerry Heimburger | (309) 792-1471 | jerry@revealed.net |
| | Susan Peterson | (309) 764-2030 | felspaw@sbcglobal.net |
| | Karen Reynolds | (309)-797-6572 | kajor31539@gmail.com |
| | Emily Smith | (309) 794-9320 | gladriel19@revealed.net |
| | Len Stevens | (563) 359-9672 | judylenstevens@msn.com |
| | Ken Welzenbach | (563) 326-5436 | kenwelz2@mchsi.com |
| | Vicki Wassenhove | (309) 787-2239 | wazz123@gmail.com |
| Director, Past-President | Patty Lowry | (563) 332-8679 | heidiho@soloconnect.com |

Director/SIG leader:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Beginners | Jim Kristan | (309) 755-8277 | jmkris@gmail.com |
| Genealogy | Len Stevens | (563) 359-9672 | judylenstevens@msn.com |
| Digital | Norm Dunlap | (309) 798-2304 | normdun@gmail.com |
| Internet | Ted Huberts | (309) 792-9470 | slowhand54@sbcglobal.net |
| Office | Judi McDowell | (309) 314-1780 | jmcdowell@mchsi.com |
| QBits | Joe Durham | (309) 764-5570 | joseph_us@yahoo.com |
| Windows | Larry Stone | (309) 787-5574 | lstone521@mchsi.com |

**Appointed Officers**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Membership Director | Susan Peterson | (309) 764-2030 | felspaw@sbcglobal.net |
| Program Director | Patty Lowry | (563) 332-8679 | heidiho@soloconnect.com |
| Public Relations Dir. | Ruth Thompson | (309)-794-4179 | rujan2000@aol.com |
| Publicity | Judy Ramsay | (309) 764-3394 | kajor31539@gmail.com |

Finance Committee

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chairman | Mel VanderHoek | (563) 355-5085 | vanderhoek@netexpress.net |
| Special Events Director | Open | | |
| Volunteer Events Dir | Open | | |
| APCUG Rep | Patty Lowry | (563) 332-8679 | heidiho@rsoloconnect.com |
| Membership Records | Susan Peterson | (309) 764-2030 | felspaw@sbcglobal.net |

QCS Web Site

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Web Master | Vicki Wassenhove | (309) 787-2239 | wazz123@gmail.com |

*QBits* newsletter

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Co-editors | Joe Durham | (309) 764-5570 | joseph_us@yahoo.com |
| | Patty Lowry | (309) 332-8679 | heidiho@soloconnect.com |
| Mailing | Patty Lowry | (563) 332-8679 | heidiho@soloconnect.com |

**Other**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resource Center Mgr | Judi McDowell | (309) 314-1780 | jmcdowell@mchsi.com |



Be sure to check you mailing label for your member expiretion date.

## *QCS Member Raffle*

   Duane Eaganhouse was not pressent at the July General Meeting for the Member Attendance raffle. Next months drawing worth $20.
   You too can win by attending the main meeting each month!

## Access Point Donated to QCS

The Quad-Cities Computer Society wishes to thank Dale Wells of Computer Repair Center for donating an access point to extend the range of our internet connection.

**Computer Repair Center**
872 Middle Road
Bettendorf IA 52722
PH: 563-359-0042
Fax: 563-359-3411

**www.computer-repair-center.com
dale@computer-repair-center.com**

# QCS Meeting Dates

| Sun | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 1 Aug | 2 Aug |
| | | August 2008 | | | | |
| 3 Aug | 4 Aug 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG **CANCELED** jmcdowell@mchsi.com | 5 Aug | 6 Aug 6:00 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com | 7 Aug | 8 Aug Deadline for QBITS articles | 9 Aug |
| 10 Aug | 1`Aug 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net | 12 Aug | 13 Aug 5:45 PM Beginners SIG * 7:00 PM **Blogs** | 14 Aug | 15 Aug | 16 Aug |
| 17 Aug | 18 Aug 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG **CANCELED** judylenstevens@msn.com | 19 Aug | 20 Aug 7:00 PM Digital Media SIG **CANCELED** normdun@gmail.com | 21 Aug | 22 Aug | 23Aug |
| 24 Aug | 25 Aug 7:00 PM Windows SIG Larry Stone 309-787-5574 lstone521@mchsi.com | 26 Aug | 27 Aug | 28 Aug | 29 Aug | 30 Aug |
| 31 Aug | 1 Sep 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG **CANCELED** jmcdowell@mchsi.com | 2 Sep September 2008 | 3 Sep 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com | 4 Sep | 5 Sep Deadline for QBITS articles | 6 Sep |

**\*Beginner's SIG meets at Tri-City
Jewish Center
before the QCS program
Jim Kristan
309-755-8277
jmkris@gmail.com**

**ALL QCS MEETINGS NOW HELD AT
TRI-CITY JEWISH CENTER
2715 30TH
ROCK ISLAND, IL 61201
ALWAYS CALL AS INDICATED ON THE
CALENDAR
TO VERIFY MEETING TIME, LOCATION, AND
TOPIC INFORMATION
ALL QCS MEETING FACILITIES ARE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE.**

## QCS officers

**President:**
Judi McDowell
309-314-1780
jmcdowell@mchsi.com

**Vice-President**
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**Secretary**
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**QCS**

HELPING

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Moving?  Send an address change to:
**felspaw@sbcglobal.net**

**QCS Home Page URL
http://www.qcs.org**

Name:

Company:

Address:

City:

State, ZIP+4:

Home Phone:

Work Phone:

E-mail:

Referred by:

**Membership Level**

|  | | New | Renewal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Full Time Student | $20 | ☐ | ☐ |
| Individual | $30 | ☐ | ☐ |
| Family | $40 | ☐ | ☐ |

**Wednesday
August 13, 2008
7:00 PM**

# Blogs

**The new way to
communicate online**

**presented by
Rachel Piper**

midwest regional conference

**apcug**

www.mwug.apcug.org