Q BITS

www.qcs.org

Wednesday
December 10, 2008
7:00 PM
**Staples
Showcases
Holiday Gifts!**

QCS Review

OfficeMax IMPRESS Print & Document Services

impress0267@officemax.com/bv.officemax/max/solutions/services/Copy
presented by
Shannon Bragg
Supervisor
Allison Thompson

by Joe Durham

In today's fast paced, deadlines are yesterday, and school projects need completed now, OfficeMax IMPRESS offers printing services that are professional, with graphic variety and styles and completed on time. Shannon and Allison visited the QCS to share the manifold ways that we can use their expertise and equipment to produce cards, calendars, and business documents that are pleasing to the eye, and reasonably priced.

Allison said that one of their more popular products are personalized Calendars. You can bring your own photos on CD, a USB stick or email them online. OfficeMax IMPRESS will complete you work within 24 hours. Holiday Greeting cards are favorites also. Again your own photos and graphics can be included with ease. This packages also include envelopes.

This year the OfficeMax IMPRESS is creating "Letters From Santa" to personalize the younger sets expectations for the holidays. And following the family theme, memory books can be fashioned today and completed with a 2 days turnaround.

This Month in *Q BITS*..

The QCS thanks NBS ,
the host of the qcs.org site
Network Business Systems NBS
www.nbson.com

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

The *QCS* is a member of

apcug

Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

Would You Like to receive your *QBITS* via email?

The *QBITS* can now be produced in Acrobat PDF format and sent to your email box. If you desire to have the newsletter sent to you electronically instead of by US Mail, notify:

Patty Lowry,
QBITS co-editor
(563-332-8679)
heidiho@soloconnect.com

The QCS will then arrange to email your next issue to you.

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

OfficeMax can also do Wedding

The Quad-Cities Computer Society or QCS is an Iowa nonprofit organization for charitable, scientific, and educational purposes primarily to educate the public concerning the advantages and disadvantages of microcomputers and to publish a newsletter for distribution to members, area libraries and educational institutions. The QCS is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable and educational organization by the IRS.

and Graduation settings which include invitations, RSVP, and programs.
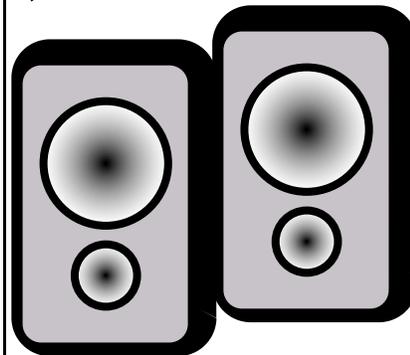
A wide range of Business features that are available including business cards, flyers, sign-up sheets and the like.

Shannon mentioned they can produce posters, signs and magnetic advertisements. During the political season OfficeMax made magnetic car signs for both political parties.

No matter the project need or design, OfficeMax IMPRESS has an in-house graphic design artist to help you be creative with your ideas. Their networked PC's, Xerox Copiers and Canon Poster printer are there to output your work quickly and professionally. Shannon Bragg has been working at OfficeMax IMPRESS for 10 years, and Allison has just begun working there 3 months ago.

The QCS thanks Shannon and Allison for describing how OfficeMax can bring our memories and projects to life. Joe Durham, Marilyn Mix and Raold Zvonik won raffle prizes at the conclusion of the meeting. Joe Wessenberg was not present to receive the Membership Attendance raffle of $30. It will go up to $35 next month and a good incentive to come out and join us at the next meeting Wednesday, December 10th!

Speaker System & Subwoofer Donated to QCS!

The QCS thanks Jerry Heimberger for a donattion of a speaker system and subwoofer which will improve the sound for presentations at our main meeting.

Participatory Democracy in an Electronic Age
by Joe Durham

Written into the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (ESSA) was the requirement that the Treasury department make its transactions and use of the $700 billion investment on our behalf transparent and open to the public. As a result many transactions and reports are available online at the U. S. Treasury department: **www.treas.gov/initiatives/eesa**.

At the top of the ESSA page there is a link whereby you can sign up to receive via email updates to ESSA program actions as they occur. I would encourage you to sign up and follow along. All of the government's documents are in PDF form and thus available to read on any computer, or operating system.

For the average citizen it is hard to grasp the massive nature of these investments. Billions of dollars will be invested through this program. But within the notices are interesting glimpses of the power of government and how it works to act in our behalf in times of economic peril.

One can read the contracts that were issue to the financial agents, auditors, and inspectors that are hired to administer the ESSA. The minutes of the Financial Stability Oversight Board are online. Individual expenditures of the $700 billion authority are posted two days after they are issued.

John Q Public can now follow the evolution and operation of this Treasury program and as the years proceed with all of these online aids, documents and notices see its successes and failures along the way.

Some of the more interesting links listed at the ESSA home page are:
Completed Transactions.
Contracts

Transaction Report
Tranche Reports
Bylaws
Minutes (Financial Stability
  Oversight Board)
Press Releases & Statements.

Use the Investopedia online dictionary to help you understand the financial jargon that you encounter along the way: **www.investopedia/dictionary**. This site helped to educate me in this new language.

This Treasury online service window has the potential to educate, and inform us as the process move forward. The Internet may enable us to cast our own opinions about the ESSA action rather then relying upon the opinions of others. A part of democracy that our founding fathers certainly could not have imagined over 232 years ago.

!Danger: Music Download!

by Mike Morris, Editor-in-Charge,
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"On September 8, 2003, the recording industry sued 261 American music fans for sharing songs...."

That partial quote is from an Electronic Frontier Foundation article (**www.eff.org/wp/riaa-v-people-years-later**) that provides an in-depth description of RIAA (Recording Industry of America) activities, with many references. Lawsuits filed by the RIAA over the past five years have resulted in severe financial hardship to individuals that were targets of RIAA legal action—and some of those defendants claimed that they were not aware that they had violated the law.

Legal consequences for anyone caught in a violation of copyright infringement laws have now increased.

On October 13th, 2008, a new law, the Prioritizing Resources and Organization for Intellectual Property Act was signed that provides new federal enforcement powers and higher penalties for copyright infringement.

For details, see this CNET news story:
http://news.cnet.com/8301-13578_3-10064527-38.html.

Briefly, (from the CNET story©—used with permission from CBS Interactive, Inc., copyright 2008, all rights reserved) "...the law consolidates federal efforts to combat copyright infringement under a new White House cabinet position, the intellectual property enforcement coordinator, who will be appointed by the president. ... The law also steepens penalties for intellectual-property infringement, and increases resources for the Department of Justice to coordinate for federal and state efforts against counterfeiting and piracy. The so-called Pro-IP Act passed unanimously in the Senate last month and received strong bipartisan support in the House."

We often forget that under our legal system, ignorance of the law is no defense. For those readers with family members, friends and acquaintances that are casual computer users, now may be the time for a reminder that, however tempting, free music downloads may result in serious legal problems. And, for any member of those same groups that use the internet as their primary source of music, that reminder may be an absolute necessity.

To paraphrase a different warning, "free music downloads may be injurious to your financial health." You, your family, friends and acquaintances all need to be informed consumers before downloading "free" music or sharing music files.

Best ways to stay safe online

Advice from the Journal of the Thousand Oaks Personal Computer Club

Activate protection.
If your operating system or software has a firewall, spam Mocker, or other built-in security application, make sure it's turned on. The firewall included with Windows Vista is adequate. The Mac one is lacking, but Apples are generally less targeted by hackers. Zone-Alarm 7.0 is a free firewall for Windows XP. Search for it at **www.download.com**. Also activate spam filtering and other online protection provided by your ISP or e-mail service, such as Yahoo, Google, or MSN. For spam, that may be enough.

Update and renew
Set your operating system and security software to update automatically. Spam, spyware, and virus- detection programs incorporate "rules" or "definition" files that must be updated regularly to catch the latest threats. If your computer remains disconnected from the Internet for long periods, you should ensure that automatic updates are occurring, or update manually. And when your soft- ware warns you to renew your service, be sure to do so, ensuring that protection doesn't lapse.

Upgrade your computer and browser.
If you're running Windows XP or earlier Windows versions, consider upgrading to the more secure Windows Vista, which lets you surf in a

protected environment that prevents online threats from damaging your operating system and contains a two-way firewall that blocks both incoming and outgoing threats. (The outgoing firewall needs some improvement to make it more effective.) At a minimum, upgrade to the Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox 2 browsers Both notify you about known forged, or "phished," Web sites.

Install a toolbar with security features

We haven't formally tested these supplementary online tools, but we think they're a good second line of defense. The Earth- Link Toolbar (**www.earthlink.net/Software/free /toolbar**), for example, incorporates a scam and popup blocker, spyware scan, and home page protection. The Netcraft antiphishing toolbar (**toolbar.netcraft.com**) warns about known phished sites and can reveal a site's hosting company and even its registered owner, if you go to sites after in- stalling McAfee Site Advisor (**www.siteadvisor.com**), the program lets you know whether McAfee tested it and, if so, what it found, including viruses, spyware, spam, pop-ups, phishing, and consumer scams. It even overlays its site reports on Web search results and automatically blocks access to sites that exploit browser weaknesses.

Shut off your computer

Turning off your computer when not using it for long periods (or at least disconnecting the Internet cable) can reduce the chance that a malicious remote computer will access it. And you'll save energy.

Use public computers with care.

Avoid using computers at libraries, hotels, or airports for conducting financial or other personal business. The same goes for using your own computer on a public wireless network, especially if

you're not on a secured Web page or haven't disabled your system's computer-to-computer connections.

Watch what you download

The myriad of free utilities, games, and other software on the Internet can be useful, but many are laden with viruses and spyware. Try to download only from well-known manufacturers or trusted sites such as those at **www.download.com**, **www.snapfiles.com**, and **www.tucows.com**.

Consider a suite

For a simple route to broad protection, select one of the security suites recommended on page 36*. Just remember that you might be paying a premium to duplicate some components already on your machine or available free. We recommend having at least a gigabyte of memory to prevent the suite from slowing down your computer. Run antivirus software. It actually works and you need it. That's true even if you own a Mac. Although Mac users have much less to fear from viruses and spyware, they aren't immune to them. And an antivirus program will prevent virus-laden files from being transferred from Macs to PCs.

Run two antispyware programs

Spyware is so insidious, and some-times difficult to detect, that it warrants double protection. Set the better of the two programs to block spyware in real time. Use the other to scan whenever you suspect something might have escaped the first program.

Use "disposable" e-mail addresses to thwart spammers

If spam's a problem, consider using disposable addresses for different purposes. For example, use "smithshopping08" for buying online. If that address starts getting spam, abandon or change it. Many ISPs provide extra ?associate? e-mail ad-dresses that you can change

at will. For convenience, configure your e-mail pro- gram to check all your addresses simultaneously. Or set up disposable accounts at a free e-mail service such as Google or Yahoo. A caution: Guard the primary e-mail address you got from your ISP, because you can't change that one without abandoning your entire account.

Use a credit card

Credit cards offer better protection than other options when shopping online. Even better, some issuers let you generate virtual account numbers that are valid for a single purchase with a fixed dollar limit. Use those and you won't have to give online retailers your permanent card number.

Don't assume a certified site is safe

Although it's vital to have a secure connection when sending personal information online (indicated by "https" before the Web address and a padlock or other icon on your browser), it's no guarantee the Web site is reputable. Similarly, certification symbols from the Better Business Bureau, TRUSTO, and similar organizations provide some reassurance (assuming they're being used with authorization). But they're no substitute for reading the fine print and researching a site by talking to friends and checking online reviews before turning over credit-card or other information. Guard personal Information. Never respond to e-mail requesting your passwords, user names, Social Security number, or other personal information, no matter how official it looks. If you're asked to call a telephone number, verify it independently.

Avoid using hyperlinks in e-mail

Hyper- links can show one address but take you to another. Before clicking on links in Web pages, hover your cursor over the URL and see whether the address

that appears at the bottom of your browser looks as if it's related to a page or site you expect to visit. When you arrive at the site, verify that the URL shown In your browser's ad- dress bar is the correct one. Pay attention to the part of the URL between "http://" (or https://) and the next slash. Look for tricks such as the use of a zero where the letter O should be. Verify the address and then type it into your browser. Or use a favorite or bookmark you've already stored in your browser.

Type carefully

Tricksters sometimes create lookalike sites that use common mistyping's of popular URLs.

Report phishing

If you receive a phishing e-mail, forward it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (**reportphishing@antiphishing.org**), the Federal Trade Commission (**spam@uce.gov**), and the company or organization that is being impersonated. You also can file a complaint with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at **www.ic3.gov**. If your antiphishing toolbar doesn't recognize a fraudulent Web site, report the site to the toolbar provider.

Review your accounts regularly

Review your credit-card and bank statements as soon as you receive them. Report suspicious charges or withdrawals immediately.

Reprinted from the September 2008 issue of Toggle, newsletter for the Tacome-Seattle Area Microcomputer Users

Mac versus PC
By Sandy Berger,
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We have all seen the popular Apple television commercials encouraging computer users to switch from Windows to Mac. Not only are the commercials convincing, but Apple has made some moves that make the Mac a viable option for computer users. In years past, the biggest drawback to purchasing a Mac was that Windows software was incompatible with a Mac. You couldn't use Windows software that was not available in a Mac version so switching from a PC to a Mac meant repurchasing all your software applications.

Then Apple made the move from Motorola processors to Intel processors. This made the Apple hardware compatible with Windows software. Any Mac that you purchase today is able to run both the Windows and the Mac operating system. You can do this by using a free Apple program called Boot Camp that is available to all Mac users. Using Boot Camp, you have to reboot the computer every time you want to switch between the two operating systems. Another option makes using Windows on a Mac even easier. If you purchase a simple virtualization product like Parallels, you can switch on the fly.

Being able to run Windows on a Mac has been a boon to Apple. In 2004 their market share in the operating system segment was a little over 3%. Today it is close to 8% and growing.

There are fewer worries when using a Mac. For the most part, Macs are almost completely virus and spyware free. It's not that Macs are actually more secure, it's just that with the viruses and programs that infiltrate computers to steal information and to send out spam are operating system-specific. In other words, the hackers have to create their programs to run on either Windows or Mac. Since the Windows

operating system is currently running on over 90% of computers, that operating system is the most likely target for the bad guys. So right now, Macs are ignored by most hackers.

It can also be said that Macs run their software better than PCs. The reason that this is true is that because Apple produces all of the hardware they can have strict control over every hardware component. So the software producers know exactly what hardware their software will run on. In the PC world, slight differences in the hardware can cause software headaches. As you know, with HP, Dell, Acer, Sony, Gateway, and many others producing the hardware, there is compatibility, but not necessarily full hardware/software compliance.

So why doesn't everyone switch to the Mac? Well, it can be summed up quite easily in one word, "Price". Macs always have been, and are still are, more expensive than PCs. Often Macs can cost several hundreds of dollars more than comparable Window's machines. This week Apple announced their first sub-$1,000 laptop computer. The MacBook will now be selling at $999. Their higher-end MacBook Pro will start at $1,999. In contrast, you can buy many Windows laptops for under $1,000, and some are now even under $500.

Another thing that makes the Mac more costly is that when you purchase an Apple computer it comes with the Mac OS X operating system. If you want to run Windows on your Mac as well, you will have to purchase a full version of Windows. As I write this, Amazon is selling the full version of Windows XP Home Edition for $179. A full version of Windows Vista Home Premium is currently selling at Amazon for $222. If you want to add the ability to easily switch between the two operating systems, you will have to dish out about $80 more for Parallels or another good

virtualization program. In some cases those added costs can almost double the cost of a cheap PC.

The other reason that some people won't switch to a Mac is that they don't want to have to learn to use a new operating system. But if you are currently using Windows XP and you purchase a new computer now, you will have at least a slight learning curve to make the transition to Windows Vista.

If Apple would lower their prices and create a free program that would let you run Windows without rebooting, I wouldn't mind purchasing the additional Windows software necessary to be able to run both operating systems on a Mac. In fact, I think that those two changes would have people flocking in droves to the Mac. But then, if the Apple operating system gains a bigger market share, hackers will start targeting it as well as Windows. Oh well, I guess life in the computer world really does mirror life in the real world. It seems that nothing will ever be perfect in either world. Parallels Desktop for Mac is the first solution for Intel-Macs that give you the flexibility of running Windows on a Mac OS X simultaneously without rebooting.

Microsoft Releases Photosynth Panoramic Image Creator

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Advisor Columnist, *The Examiner* Beaumont TX; radio and TV show host
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Many of us take a lot of digital photographs. I have hundreds of digital photos from two recent weddings; others may have vacation photos, family photos, scenic images, or other content. Would it not be interesting if a collection of photos with some degree of commonality could be seamlessly "stitched" together creating a 3-D panoramic view of the subject? For example, if I took the wedding pictures of my daughter's recent wedding, the images could automatically be merged into a single three dimensional, easily navigable image of the entire wedding ceremony and reception. The panoramic image can be manipulated, rotated, zoomed, and viewed from any direction. If I can do this with wedding pictures, imagine what you can do with landscapes, theme parks, or other images. This new service from Microsoft, known as Photosynth (**photosynth.net**) is currently free, but does have several provisos, one of which is that all images created will be considered as "public", and can be viewed by anyone on the Photosynth website.

Photosynth is graphics intensive, and may not run on older computers lacking adequate video power and capabilities. It will run on Windows XP (SP 2 or SP3), and on Vista. Mac users can use Photosynth if running Boot Camp. Images are displayed on a browser, and Internet Explorer 7 as well as Firefox 2 and 3 are supported. 256mb of memory is the absolute minimum to run Photosynth, and 1gb is recommended. In order to function, Photosynth installs two programs to the computer. One is a web browser plug-in (both IE and Firefox compatible), and an application aptly named "Photosynth" which is used to create panoramic images. Install of both programs is fast and easy, and is accomplished with a single download. Since the actual processing is done by Microsoft, the images (or parts of them) are uploaded to Microsoft by the Photosynth software, which requires a broadband connection. Microsoft has posted a warning, "All synths are public. Your photos will be visible to everyone on the Internet. In order to create images, it is necessary to sign up online; users who have a Windows Live ID can use it for Photosynth access.

Photosynth performs two material functions; it reconstructs the scene or object from several two-dimensional digital photographs, and then examines the images for similarities, and mathematically use that information to estimate the real shape of the object, and the vantage point the photos were taken from. Using the digital data, the three dimensional space is created, and the merged photos can be easily navigated as if they were a single photograph. Microsoft's new "Seadragon" technology delivers only the required pixels to the browser, making the loading of images that may have included hundreds of individual photos a fast and pleasing experience.

On the main page for Photosynth (photosynth.net) are dozens of samples of the output than can be created. Some of the examples are the Sphinx, composed of 239 photos taken by National Geographic; a walk around Eton College, 427 photos; The Taj Mahal, 179 National Geographic photos; the Space Shuttle, 246 photos; and many others. It is important to note that this computing power and service is

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available for free to all of us who are willing to make our images public. The "Recently Synthed" link shows the most recently created scenes (many dated today, as I type this), which include street scenes, still life, sunsets, Hawaiian scenery, Nathan's Hotdog Eating Championship – 2008, backyards, portraits, kittens (cute), athletic events, and other topics. It is a lot of fun just browsing these synths and seeing what others are doing and what the system can do for digital images.

The potential applications for Photosynth are almost endless. It could be used by real estate agents to easily create an interactive three dimensional view of a house or an apartment; industries could use it for training purposes; products can be promoted via 3D images that allow the viewer to explore the details of a product; likewise car dealers and manufacturers could easily create interactive views of any cars in inventory. Criminalists (as in CSI) could easily create 3D crime scene images; the potential uses are unimaginable.

If you are willing to release your image to the public (in the current iteration), and would like to create interactive 3D panoramic photos from your digital photos, then Photosynth would be a great place to experiment. At present the service is free, only requiring a Windows Live ID registration. If you have any interesting photos of the same subject, try synthing them.

Traveling Then and Now - "Technically" Speaking

by Gregory West
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In 1974 Richard Nixon was the first US President forced to resign, while gasoline pricing rose to a whopping 55 cents a gallon US (14.5 cents a liter). They claim the reason was that "gasoline shortages and price increases throughout the world help to cause problems in most of the western worlds' economies" (**www.thepeoplehistory.com**).

Sound familiar? What isn't familiar is the technology that accompanies us on vacations.

I remember in 1974 driving to Fort Wilderness Disney World, Florida in a Volkswagen van built into a homemade camper, all decked out with plywood beds and a Coleman cooler for a fridge with a never-ending request for ice. CAA supplied the trip maps that marked out the route and the construction sections of the highway. We had the best of the best for navigating the trip. As well, we had a brand new Instamatic camera with 7 rolls of 126 film that cost us a small fortune. Our son, four years old, rode a small tricycle back and forth inside the van to while away the hours and hours of monotonous driving as seatbelt legislation was non-existent.

Today, we still face the gas increase excuses and we are well aware of the price of a liter of gasoline today. In that regard, nothing has really changed, only the numbers and the fact that we are all buckled into our seats. Although, one thing that has changed for travelers in 2008: "tech toys"; they have now become a "must have" for every family that does ground travel on vacations.

Our kids have been replaced by grandkids and the Volkswagen homemade camper van is long gone. People today are now hauling RVs of all sorts that host most of the comforts of home.

The CAA maps and my son's tricycle have been replaced by the latest technical and computer gadgets. Let's have a peek at how technology has changed road travel, some 34 years later.

Kids today are buckled tightly into the back seats as airbag protection in the front restricts them to the back seats only. While in the back seat they have the option of viewing DVD movies run through a DVD player onto 2 separate monitors that attach to the head rests of both front seats. They listen to the movies via the vehicle stereo system or individual headphones. When they tire of the movies they can play video games by switching over to their PSP or a PS2 that plugs through the inverter. Of course there is always travel bingo if the tech stuff gets boring, but we won't hold our breath on that one.

For the driver and co-pilot there is a GPS display with voice directions, saving the hassle of trying to read the fine print on wrinkled and torn maps. Many travelers bring along laptops while traveling as their uses are many. For example, you can record your trip's information, download pictures and videos from digital cameras. The big thing these days with computers is reading digital books, or listening to audio books that have been previously downloaded from the Internet. Of course, when a live Internet connection becomes available (most RV parks have free Wi-Fi) you can check email, use Skype to call home, and research the places to see, all from your laptop.

The days of praying that there will be a pay phone nearby if we break down are long gone as many people have both a Canadian and American cell phone. For instance, one can purchase a Motorola TracFone that works only in the USA for under $10 and buy a "pay-as-you-go" card, making long distant calls back home cheaper and giving one more security on the highways in the USA.

Don't leave without your MP3 player. Podcasts of your favourite shows and lectures can be easily downloaded from the Internet. All MP3 players come with headphones that make for easy listening and do not disturb the other passengers or driver.

Walkie talkies are not a new item while on vacation, but the price certainly has come down and the range has expanded greatly. A quick stop in the grocery store for supplies will help you utilize your group to ensure precision targeted shopping whereby we all search out different items and meet at the same cashier, thus saving time. The walkie talkie is also used in many other scenarios for security and locating purposes. These units are a must have for anyone traveling with children. The Instamatic camera has been replaced by the digital camera, thus allowing people to take hundreds of pictures during a trip without any real cost. If some of the pictures are not that great they are easily deleted and forgotten without the worry of paying for more film.

An inverter will allow the truck battery to convert power from DC to AC so you can run the laptop while traveling to edit photos, read books, watch movies and connect to Wi-Fi hotspots. This also allows for the use of a PS2 plugged into the truck battery power as if you were at home plugging into a wall outlet. You can even plug in a refrigerated cooler with this inverter, making life just that much easier.
We can only imagine what traveling 34 years from now will be like and what 2042 will offer its road travelers.

QuickMonth Calendar

By Ken Peters, *Product Review*
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If you're tired of double clicking the clock to get the calendar up, then this program is for you.
www.codedawn.com/qmc/quickm onth-calendar-download/
QuickMonth Calendar is a freeware program which displays a small popup calendar on your Windows desktop whenever your mouse hovers over the clock in the system tray. The calendar display may also be toggled on and off by using the Windows+Q keyboard shortcut. The program works with XP and Windows 2000. Click the clock once to make it appear. Vista already has a popup calendar.

You can get QuickMonth Calendar by visiting the download page. QuickMonth Calendar is free and does not include any adware or spyware.

NOTE: Some antivirus programs have incorrectly detected Quick-Month Calendar as a Trojan horse. Do not be alarmed — this type of erroneous detection is called a false positive. If you receive a virus warning message regarding Quick-Month Calendar (**qmc.exe**), please report the false positive to your antivirus software manufacturer so they can update their definitions. Here are a few of QuickMonth Calendar's features:

To quickly jump to today's date, right-click on the calendar or left-click the bottom of the calendar where it says "Today." Use the buttons at the top of the calendar to change the month. You can also left-click on the name of the month to see a popup menu of all the months.

Left-click on the year to quickly change the year.

The calendar automatically detects the location of your Windows taskbar, so if you move the taskbar to the top, left, or right side of the screen, the calendar will still display next to your system tray clock (you may have to restart Windows once for the change to take effect).

The look of the calendar changes according to what your system colors are (as determined by your current Windows theme or visual style). The calendar will appear in any program when you put the pointer over the clock. I have found this program very handy when trying to find a date when writing an email or other document. When I need to look up a date, it's very nice to have the calendar popup just by hovering the pointer over the clock. It's also helpful when on the telephone and trying to settle on a date.

SIGNIFICANT BITS

By Sean N. HendersonVice President, Danbury Area Computer Society, Connecticut

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COLDFUSION IS HOT

Many DACS members reading this probably have some experience programming with PhP. Maybe this is a time to remind developers and those making application choices about ColdFusion.

When Allaire first released Cold Fusion (two words then) in 1995, it made some headlines purely because of its name. It was a number of years later when I met a person at my wife's college reunion who was a ColdFusion developer, and she raved about how easy it was to create database-enabled Web pages.

As fate would have it, I too, have become a ColdFusion (CF) developer and have to say CF makes Dynamic HTML (DHTML) and database-enabled sites really easy.

Much richer than old-school CGI (Perl or otherwise) and even still more feature rich than PhP.

The neat thing about CF's version of HTML, called CFML, is that if you can write HTML, then it's just a couple of tags and commands more to be writing dynamic websites with CFML. Some hosting providers provide a version called ColdFusion 4.5 Express. The current "standard" appears to be based on 6.1 MX. The current version is 8 (no MX) and is published by Adobe, and includes support for AJAX.

HYPE ABOUT SKYPE

Skype is a VoIP (Voice-over-IP) telephone service. For PC-to-PC users, there is no charge. Charges incur when wanting to have voice-mail, call a landline number, call a mobile number, or have a landline number or cell phone reach a Skype account.

PC Magazine recently listed their survey for various technologies, and Skype was down from last year.

My purpose in trying Skype was to see if it was a viable low-cost replacement for a mobile phone. How would that work? There are various scenarios, none of them simple. The barrier is roaming across Wi-Fi networks. (Actually, this obstacle was addressed in a recent Sybase iAnywhere Mobile presentation at DACS.) My target device is my Palm TX running PalmOS. A recent test of Skype to my brother out west has us talking for over an hour over a very clear connect. I was using a USB LCD phone connected to my laptop, connected to the home router by way of Wi-Fi. My brother similarly connected, except just speaking open air using his laptop mic and/or speakers. The sound quality was clearer than any cell phone call I've had.

ANOTHER USB GIZMO

There's an inexpensive USB LCD handset phone available for use with Skype. The UP-730 seems to work as expected and sounds better than expected. The unit was purchased for under $10 on-line. It allows scrolling through the USB contacts through the handset. Is it really necessary? No. But, it has a longer cord than most headsets and it made using Skype feel more like regular phone service, especially on longer calls.

INTERESTING PLACES TO VISIT ON THE INTERNET
by Nancy Preffitt

Computer Help – Support

Free online technical support and computer-related information for everyone, no matter the type of computer, hardware, software, or operating system. This is a great place to learn more about your computer and its hardware and software. I found the site to be a little confusing, but then, I wasn't looking up anything in particular. If you're having problems at midnight, it should be a good first help resource.
www.computerhope.com/

Clean Anything

This site lives up to its name with useful tips on how to clean pretty much anything you could possibly own or get dirty. I learned about an instant paint hardener, to put in old paint in order to dispose of it easily, but there's much more there.
www.howtocleananything.com

Simple On-line Games

This is a fun site if you like low-key fun! There are word search and similar little games with which to relax.
www.wandascountryhome.com/games/index.html

FamilySearch.Org

This boasts the largest collection of free family history and geneal-ogy records in the world, and is a great resource helping "generations meet." With a searchable database and tons of useful features, this non-profit site is a valuable tool for those who are interested in exploring family history. I learned a couple of things about my ancestors, but didn't really understand how to dig more deeply. Those of you into genealogy probably will.
www.familysearch.org

Unbelievable Coincidences

OddWeek.Com presents the "20 Most Amazing Coincidences," happenstances that will challenge even the most skeptical person. Some are major, some minor, but all will leave you wondering!
www.oddweek.com/item_82923.aspx

Up-to-date News

When you click this link, a world map comes up showing what strange and dangerous things are happening right now in every country in the entire world. You can move the map around, zero in on any one area, and actually upload the story of what is going on. This "map" updates every 300 seconds...constantly 24/7, so you can tune in to news as it happens and have the details on the map as you do. **www.globalincidentmap.com/home.php**

Google Moon
www.google.com/moon
by Joe Durham

Google Earth has made a big impact on the Internet. CNN and other news organizations use it regularly. Now Google has established a companion site to view the Moon. Several countries in addition to ours are sending spacecraft to explore the Moon more in depth as man

begins the journey to return. Google has not as yet used the Google Earth client to display this content. They are working on it. Nonetheless the scope and depth of information is very good. There are four tabs: Charts, Apollo, Visible, and Elevation.

Charts retrieves information created to guide our first landing on the moon. Apollo is a photographic history of our landings on the Moon, Visible is charted map of the surface, and Elevation is a color coded display of the contours of the Moon.

Windows Tips
presented by Larry Stone.

In response to a members question from the audience, Larry described some very practical things to change in Windows to make your computing experience more enjoyable.

Larry observed that many of the default settings in Windows explorer are counter intuitive. The default display mode is an icon representation of the files on your hard drive. A more practical and useful setting is the detail mode which describes the application associated with the file and the file extension. If you place Windows explorer in the detail mode you can easily arrange the files in your folder by name, extension type, and date of creation by clicking the tab associated with that function at the top of the window.

To make these changes, go the Tools tab in Windows explorer. Then scroll down the list to uncheck Display hidden files. You also need to click the program option near the top of that window: "Apply to All Folders". Then click the Apply button at the bottom of the window.

Now your file management will appear in more easily understood logical manner. By clicking "Apply to All Folders" you allow

Windows to also display the Local Settings folder on your machine which is normally hidden.

This change allows you to branch out the Local Settings folder to display the Temporary Files folder. Often times, Larry observed, there are many zero byte files there that eat up your computer's resources. By deleting the files in the Temp folder periodically you can improve the performance of your computer.

SIG News
The Windows SIG will not meet in the month of December. Drop byas they resume in the new year 2009 on Monday, January 25th !

Dinner Anyone?

The Quad-Cities Computer Society's Board of Directors will meet at Bennigan's in Bettendorf at 6:00 PM for the December 3rd board meeting. We want to invite anyone interested to join us. This is a chance to enjoy some good food and attend a board meeting to see the inner workings of the group. **RSVP**to Judi McDowell, 309-314-1780 or **jmcdowell@mchsi.com** by December 2nd if you intent to come. We need to let Bennigan's the number in our group.

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
	Dec 1 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	Dec 2 December 2008	Dec 3 6:00 PM QCS Board Dinner Meeting Bennigan's Davenport All QCS members Invited!	Dec 4	Dec 5	6 Dec
7 Dec	8 Dec 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net	9 Dec	10 Dec 5:45 PM Beginners SIG * 7:00 PM **Staples Holiday Gifts**	11 Dec	12 Dec Deadline for QBITS articles	13 Dec
14 Dec	15 Dec 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG Len Stevens 563-359-9672 judylenstevens@msn.com	16 Dec	17 Dec 7:00 PM Digital Media SIG Norm Dunlap 309-798-2304 normdun@gmail.com	18 Dec	19 Dec	20 Dec
21 Dec	22 Dec	23 Dec	24 Dec	25 Dec XMAS	26 Dec	27 Dec
27 Dec	28 Dec	29 Dec	31 Dec	1 Jan Party Time!	2 Jan	3 Jan
4 Jan	5 Jan 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	6 Jan January 2009	7 Jan 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	8 Jan	9 Jan Deadline for QBITS articles	10 Jan

***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
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ALWAYS CALL AS INDICATED ON THE
CALENDAR
TO VERIFY MEETING TIME, LOCATION, AND
TOPIC INFORMATION
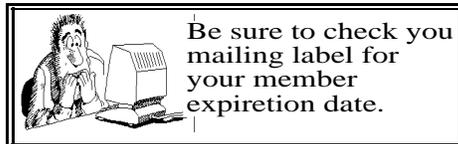ALL QCS MEETING FACILITIES ARE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE.**

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

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

QCS Meeting
Wednesday
December 10, 2008
7:00 PM
**Staples
Showcases
Holiday Gifts!**