Q BITS

Wednesday
April 29, 2009
7:00 PM

IH Mississippi
Valley Credit
Union
Online Banking
Security

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

This Month in *Q BITS*..

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

Monthly meetings are open to the
general public.

www.qcs.org
QCS Review
Remote Computing
Helping Another Computer User
with Don Singleton
dsingleton@apcug.net
presented remotely
with assistance from
Judi McDowell

by Joe Durham

Don Singleton, dropped in on our club from cyberspace to share with us the exciting technology of remote computing. He is president of the Tulsa Computer Society, and also acts that APCUG coordinator and teacher for this emerging field of computers. Consider this scenario: someone calls you for computer help, they live across town or the river, it is perhaps a 30 minute drive or longer, you will usually have used up a good day's time in driving for a 30 minute house call. Now with remote computing software you can offer you knowledge and expertise right from your own home.

This technology has existed for a number of years. Our President, Judi McDowell, purchased Windows XP Pro when it was released because it has the Remote Desktop feature. She has used this for several years. Today however, remote computing has reached a critical mass of user awareness, and product development to become a very useful helping tool. Don presented remotely five free programs that work on Windows XP and Vista machines, that offer different levels of ability and access for helping other people over the internet, and also to doing teaching presentations on the web: CrossLoop, Microsoft Shared View, IBM Lotus' Unyte Presentation software, and Adobe's ConnectNow interface. Our session began when Judi and Don connected via Skype to set up the voice portion of Don's seminar.

With winter upon us, be sure and check the web site for meeting information. **www.qcs.org**

The *QCS* is a member of **apcug**

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The first program was CrossLoop. Judi started it on her computer as did Don. A small interface appeared. Don invited her to view his computer. CrossLoop generates a unique code each time it is started that you pass to the invited guest. This code acts a security feature.

When the connection was made we could see Don's Outlook Express screen. He proceeded to display his file manager, and then his iGoogle homepage. He then demonstrated that Judi had control of his computer also, but asking her to activate various tab movements and settings on his desktop. The presenter has the ability to control this access. Don noted that in a large group setting it would make more sense to deactivate the mouse control access to keep the screen appearance orderly.

CrossLoop allows users to trade places. So Judi invited Don to view her screen and he plugged in an access code for this transfer. As a result the flexability of this interface allows a helper to demonstrate things on their machine and then turn around and actually carry out those ideas on the other person's computer. It was remarkable that we could also see these transformations over the net from Tulsa and Rock Island.

Microsoft's Sharedview program was displayed. Several members in our club have begun experimenting with this presentation and remote access software. In this setting you use Skype for voice and Sharedview for desktop sharing. As in CrossLoop you view the other person's desktop. But this program has a few more features and is more geared toward presentations and collaboration sessions. Up to 15 people can share the view on the net. With Sharedview an email invitation is sent that contains a url link to click. The presenter will see the person asking to join and accepts the session. Unlike CrossLoop, by default Sharedview does not give the user access to the presenter's computer, all you see it their desk-

top. There are controls on the presenter's side which can allow you to control their desktop, but they must activate it. Once the presenter moves their mouse the control is severed.

IBM's Lotus Unyte software was the next remote client viewed. Judi and Don had some difficulties getting this particular software to work properly thought they were able to use it fine in a test session. You use Skype for voice contact, and Unyte for desktop viewing remotely. An email invitation is issued as in Microsoft's Sharedview. Unyte has a paid version that has more features for $30 per year.

Adobe has created a remote presentation interface called ConnectNow. The remote desktop functions are similar to the other software covered by Don. The singular difference exists in the way you add users to the remote session. Rooms of 3 people are organized. You can see each person's id within the room. So while ConnectNow has presentation features, it is more useful as a collaboration tool among like-minded workers.

The last software examined was LogMeIn. This free software is geared to remotely access unattended computers. It just so happened that Don's main desktop went blank, but he had another computer that he was building on the network and he seamlessly was able to log in to this computer remotely and demonstrate that he could run programs on it. The free version doesn't allow you to copy or print files.

All of these programs are user friendly. It is remarkable that we could actually share in this process, the visual presentation was seamless in all five software packages. Don noted that remote sessions need a broadband access speed to work, either a cable or dsl connection. He noted that there is Linux and Mac development of these products so that is an available option also.

If you are interested in helping a fellow computer user remotely take the time to download and try out these various alternatives. Don offered to answer any questions about them via email. He is sending a copy of his Power Point Presentation to our webmaster so that it can be posted for reference. Be sure to visit our club web page at: **www.qcs.org** for links and further information concerning this session. The QCS thanks Don for his fine presentation of this exciting field.

CrossLoop
crossloop.com/

Microsoft Sharedview
connect.microsoft.com/site/ sitehome.aspx?SiteID=94

IBM Lotus Unyte
www.unyte.net/

Adobe ConnectNow
www.adobe.com/acom/ connectnow/

LogMeIn
secure.logmein.com/ home.asp?lang=en

Are you ready to control your PC by voice?
Speech Recognition Software Review
By Vicki Wassenhove
wazz123@gmail.com
QCS Webmaster & BOD

With advances in technology and more powerful PCs in our homes, "Speech Recognition" (SR) software is finally on the way to becoming a solid option for computer users.

At one time, voice commands were just something you'd see in "Star Trek" episodes, but after several decades of work in university, government, and corporate labs, SR is now appearing in many areas of our lives.

There are surprisingly good programs available to control our own computers by voice today. Among them are Microsoft's built-in features of Vista and XP, as well as good stand-alone products like Dragon Naturally Speaking, retailing around $200.

Speech Recognition software can be used in multiple computer operations. You can use it to dictate documents and email, to start and switch between applications, to control the operating system, to surf the Internet and even to fill out forms on the web.

These programs are naturally indispensable for people with certain disabilities, but the newer technology promises to go mainstream. Vista's program is already available in eight languages. And it may be time to try these programs yourself.

But wait, you ask, "are they 100 % accurate?" No. Are they temperamental upon occasion? Yes. Even one of Microsoft's early public demonstrations of the Vista program in 2006 went awry.

Nevertheless, I found the program in Vista to be quite amazing and I've talked to others that were just as pleased with their purchased software. The future generations of these programs are sure to become an integral part of every PC and I look for that to happen sooner rather than later.

I'm not ready to give up my keyboard just yet, but SR is definitely a viable option in certain situations and it is something I will continue to use.

My primary reason for trying Speech Recognition was to satisfy my own curiosity. Although the concept had always seemed intriguing and like a good topic for a QCS session, I couldn't find anyone actively using it or willing to demonstrate. I finally opened the Vista SR program myself and started following the set-up guide and tutorials provided. Nothing proved difficult in Vista and I assume that other programs have a similar user-friendly interface.

Learning SR requires you to work one-on-one with your computer using tutorials. You are guided to set up a microphone and then asked to dictate provided text. This allows the computer to adapt to your speaking style. The program improves with more practice because it "learns" from its mistakes.

Here are a few tips: If you decide to try it yourself, don't expect instant results. Your machine needs a bit of practice and experience to learn your individual voice and speech patterns. Vista provides a "wizard" that is easy to follow. There are also Microsoft SR videos available on line to help you get started.

Your first dictation from the Vista tutorial makes the process seem deceptively easy, because that is a "simulated" speech recognition experience. When you start to dictate your own text, the program will not operate as flawlessly. Practice is the key to reach an acceptable level of accuracy.

Once you finally go "solo" or read from your own text, you will need to learn the voice commands for correcting errors. Although "Spell check" is a command, you will see very few actual spelling errors in the text produced. SR programs have tremendously large vocabularies.

The majority of dictation errors are caused by misinterpretation of what was said. Causes might be a noisy background, talking too quickly or not clearly, or saying something unexpected that doesn't relate to the rest of the content. A head-set or microphone is essential in my opinion. Be sure to follow the set-up guidelines carefully. A poorly adjusted microphone will also impact your accuracy.

Speaking in complete sentences or phrases seems to aid the understanding of my dictation. You must include all punctuation needed and you can produce a full range by

voice alone, including some to produce emoticons, like a smiley face.

To correct a mistake, you have some options. After verbally selecting the incorrect word or phrase to be changed, you will be offered a numbered list of other possibilities. If that method doesn't produce the desired result, you can repronounce the correct version for a new list of options. If the correct word or phrase is still elusive, you can say "spell it" and give a letter-by-letter substitute.

There are a multitude of vocal alternatives for interaction with your computer, including every familiar keyboard command, like opening and closing programs, scrolling, saving, deleting, cutting and pasting, etc. Lists of commands are available in the tutorials and can even be called up by voice while using the program.

Saying "Mouse Grid" is another useful option. That command will cover your monitor screen with a translucent grid, allowing you to navigate by numbers to a particular area, like an icon, link, or fill-in blank. Once your cursor reaches the destination, you can give a command to "click" or begin inserting text in a blank.

Speech Recognition promises to be the way we will interact with our computers in the future, but good programs are appearing right now. Are you ready to give it an earnest try? You may be surprised by today's technology.

To locate Speech Recognition program in Vista, go to Start, Control Panel, Ease of Access and then Speech Recognition.

Some versions of XP have an earlier version of SR. To check your system, go to "Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices" in the Control Panel. Once there, click on the Speech icon and look for a Speech Recognition tab in the Speech Properties window.
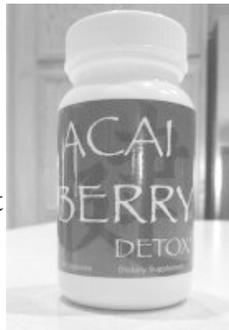
For more information about XP options and Speech Recognition helps, go to the Office SIG page on the QCS website. Look for "Speech Recognition Help from Vicki" near the bottom of **www.qcs.org/sig.office.html.**

I've Been Scammed!
by Gary Stanley
gary.stanley.net/cyber_news.htm

This is a photo of my famous bottle of Acai Berry Tablets that I ordered on the Internet. Acai berry has been touted by Oprah and other TV stars as the miracle food. Consequently, companies have sprouted up selling Acai berry tablets that are supposed to help you loose weight and detox your system.

I understand that this is a good product, BUT BUYER BEWARE! There are ads all over the Internet that will send you a free bottle of 60 tablets if you just pay the shipping charges which in my case was $3.95.

I gave them my credit card number and I received my bottle of tablets. That was about 30 days ago, and since then my credit card has been billed several times for a total of $184! I called my bank and they gave me the number for this company which is FWM Laboratories in Hollywood, Florida. They claimed that I had signed up for a subscription for these pills which I informed them that I never did any such thing and that I wanted a total refund on all monies except for the $3.95. They said I would hear from them via email within the next 3 or 4 business days so we'll see what happens.

In the meantime I want you to know about this. If you type "Acai Berry Scams" into Google you will immediately see what I'm talking about. So shame on me as I preach and preach about personal security and scams in Cyber News and then get caught myself!

Web Page Design 101 SIG
Short term SIG:
    Thursday, May 7th
    Thursday, May 14th
    Thursday, May 21st
Tri-City Jewsith Center 7:00 PM

Vicki Wassenhove, our QCS webmaster, will lead another mini-SIG to assist those wanting to design their first websites.

Web page design isn't "rocket science", according to Wassenhove, and anyone who has an interest should give it a try. The 101 SIG will give you a "jump-start" to learn web design basics using free web page and photo editors. Their first pages will be posted on a free website host. After determining their interest level, SIG participants may choose to invest in more advanced software or design a site for their own personal domain.

The free programs used in this mini-SIG can also be used to build an extensive website and the QCS website is an example. It was created and is maintained almost exclusively with the same free software downloaded from the web. Vicki believes that it is a good way for a beginner to learn the basics without any investment except time.

If you are not yet a QCS member, you may come to the first meeting as a guest. You must join the club to attend the next sessions or to receive a CD with the shareware ready to install. If you aren't yet a member, you should know that annual QCS membership dues are a lot less than the price of one computer class elsewhere.

Vicki hopes to share this SIG remotely beginning with the second session. By downloading Skype

and Microsoft Shareview, you can participate from your own home.

iPhone Meets Kindle
by Joe Durham

Recently Amazon has issued Kindle 2.0 which contains more refinements and features than Kindle 1.0. Additionally Amazon and Apple are connected through the iPhone. There is now available a free iPhone application that allows you to read Kindle books and content on the iPhone.

You can't download your books, magazines and blogs directly as you can with the Kindle. It is necessary to purchase your things online and send them to your Kindle email address. After doing so you can, if you wish download them to your iPhone.

Several commentators have noted that reading a book on an iPhone for long periods of time isn't the ideal solution because of screen size, text size, and contrast. The e-ink technology and larger screen size on the Kindle offer a more comfortable reading experience. The iPhone does have a couple of advantages.

You don't have your Kindle with you. You have some down time to fill. You can download your books from Amazon and the whispernet technology preserves your bookmark locations. Now you can start reading where you at the point at which you were last interrupted.

Another iPhone solution. You lost your Kindle for good. Amazon keeps all of your content on their web server so you can rebuild you reading experience on a newly purchased Kindle. But if you don't want to purchase a new one at the moment or are on a waiting list for a new one, you can download the books to your iPhone and read away.

The synergy of Amazon, and Apple is certain to expand the popularity of e-book reading in the year ahead. E-book use will undoubtedly grow more if the Hearst corporation sells an e-book reader for their newspapers which is currently under development. Its reader will be much larger, thin and in many ways like holding a regular newspaper.

Cyber News
By Gary Stanley
www.gary.stanley.net
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Welcome to Cyber News, an ad free, spam free online magazine emanating from Stanley's Studio in Phoenix, Arizona. In Cyber News we'll try to pass along some useful tips and information about your computer, the Internet, computer products, digital photography, other related topics, and some stuff that's not related at all.

Inauguration Day is old news now, but you can relive it by zooming in on an extraordinary photo composed by combining almost 500 pictures. This picture of the crowd in our Nation's Capitol on that special day looks like any other ordinary photo until you start to zoom in, and I mean zoom in! This is amazing and you'll find yourself occupied for some time looking at hundreds of faces in the crowd. You probably won't recognize the man with the hat next to George Bush until I tell you that it's Dick Cheney. Can you find Denzel Washington? I know one thing, it was cold that day by the looks of everyone all bundled up! Here's the Photo. **tinyurl.com/c8jabs**

Stimulus seems to be the latest "buzz word" in our society! What this really means I'm afraid we won't know for months or even years down the road. It's craziness. I was employed everyday of my life since the age of 12 and saved for my retirement, only now to see it all disappearing before my eyes. I see lazy people who don't want to work and the government is going to take care of them. That's where my money is going, and I don't like it. Um, where's my stimulus check?

We are all feeling the pinch of our down falling economy, and it's now more important than ever to keep a watchful eye on your "stuff." By that I mean being extra careful about security of your home, personal belongings, and personal data. Identity theft is at an all time high. If your credit card pin number is only 4 digits I suggest to change it to 10 and use a combination of numbers and letters. Keep a close eye on your checking account for false debits. This happened to me recently. While checking each entry I found a charge billed from Skype. I have never used Skype (which is an online video conferencing service) and I immediately called my bank to inform them of this. It was a fraudulent charge, which was credited to my account and I was issued a new credit card. We also had some stuff stolen right off our front porch last week. Keep your eyes open and batten down the hatches!

Some good news today is the drop in fuel prices! It's going to interesting to see what happens in the future of transportation. Will we be driving the same type of auto with improved mileage? Will we develop alternative fuels? Will your next vehicle be an Aptera that gets 300 mpg or a car that runs on air? **tinyurl.com/38wmgz tinyurl.com/3cg6qs**

I mentioned last month that I've been using the testing version of Windows 7 on my laptop. I'm happy to report that so far I'm very pleased with this new Microsoft operating system that will appear on the market sometime later this year. First favorable impressions are ease of use, more user friendly, faster operations and start-up. It features a snipping tool which you can use to quickly capture a graphic of anything on your screen. Vista featured

a side bar that contains gadgets, and these gadgets can be placed anywhere on the screen in Windows 7. A memory diagnostic tool is included if you suspect memory problems. Sticky notes can be placed on your screen to remind yourself of things to do. New features, stability, and reliability should make computing more fun and more productive.

There's a new free version of Google Earth now and it's mind boggling! Google Earth lets you fly anywhere on Earth to view satellite imagery, maps, terrain, 3D buildings, from galaxies in outer space to the canyons of the ocean. You can explore rich geographical content, save your toured places, and share with others. Watch a short movie and download it here. **earth.google.com/ocean/**

Speaking of movies, here's one that I know you will enjoy. It's a CBS production and opens with a short commercial, so stick with it as you will like the warmth of its content. Go. **tinyurl.com/ae5qj8**

I've discovered a web site that will tell you everything in the world about your birthday. How many hours and seconds you have been alive and even when you were probably conceived! Be sure to click on various links especially your "Life Path Number." What's your birth tree?

I have friends who love hunting. Personally, I'm not into killing animals, but this internet deer shoot is a hoot! Move your mouse to aim, shoot with your left mouse button, and tap the space bar to reload. Have fun! **tinyurl.com/4q8c85**

Like music? I can't imagine the world without music. It's a universal language and listening to it inspires me. Here's a site called "The Radio" where you can type in your favorite music and listen away. One of my favorite artists today is Michael Buble (pronounced Boob-lay) and I love his song entitled "Feeling Good." How can you not like the lyrics of "It's a new dawn, it's a new day, it's a new life?" I also like his song called

"Home." Go here and listen to your favorites. **www.theradio.com/**

I have always enjoyed American Idol on TV since its first season eight years ago, but this season is proving to be a little boring for me. In my opinion four judges are too many and at times it's more about them than it is about the contestants. I'm sick of Randy laughing at people and his "It's just alright for me, Dog" comments and Simon and Paula's horsing around all the time. Let's quit acting like third graders and get on with the show!

I like watching Glen Beck on the Fox news channel, and here he has a very interesting story about Irena that you will enjoy watching. **tinyurl.com/5basx6**

With our current economy, buying or selling a property can be very challenging! Here's a web site where you can really do your homework. Determine today's value, see what it last sold for, see it on a map, and see surrounding values. Spend some time on **Zillow.com** and you'll know as much as your real estate agent! (Isn't fully updated in all states yet) **www.zillow.com/**

You probably know about and may have visited one of Apple's retail stores located around the country, but did you know that Microsoft is planning on doing the same? They have hired one of Wal-Mart's hot shots to start the project, but will it happen in this economy? Details from the New York Times. **tinyurl.com/anhxxx**

How much of an adventure spirit do you have? I love adventure but at my age it has to be somewhat calmed. You might remember a few months ago I showed you a video of a guy hiking on a very narrow mountain path. Scary to say the least. Well here's another one that I don't think I'll be trying anytime in the near future. Take a look at this mountain bike ride down the French Alps and you'll find yourself holding your breath. Now this is an adrenalin rush! **tinyurl.com/azqjgj**

Facebook is an extremely popular social website. It's a place where people can show off their pictures,

discuss information, current events and common interests. Facebook is also a very popular place for scams. I won't go into detail here, but if you use this service you should take heed. More from PC World. **tinyurl.com/cfgf7r**

You might like to check out my blog. There you will find thoughts on many subjects and occasionally find supplements to Cyber News such as Virus alerts or other computer information that I think might be important to you. You can include it in your favorites if you like, so you can refer to it during the month. My Blog. **gary-stanley.blogspot.com/**

You may also enjoy browsing my Photo Site. **www.pbase.com/gary_stanley** You'll see over 1,000 pictures that I've taken from around the world that over 202,000 people have viewed. New photos have been added to the Portrait, Family & Friends, People, and Photo Effects galleries. Check out some beautiful sunsets taken recently in California and Mexico in the Misc Outdoor Shots gallery, and my first attempt to photograph flying birds in the Animals & Birds gallery. (New photos appear at the end of each gallery.)

Here's a photo that all you have to do is move your cursor slowly from the top to the bottom to see it go from day to night. Very cool. **61226.com/share/hk.swf**

Whether you're an amateur or a pro photographer there are a few common sense things to remember before leaving the house. Are your batteries charged, do you have a spare? Is your card formatted and do you have a spare? Both are subject to failure. Before shooting are your camera settings correct? Do you have protection for your equipment in case of bad weather? I've had all these things happen to me

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

and to people that I know, so it makes sense to think ahead!

A word about digital camera cards. Personally I don't like to rely on 3rd party software to transfer my photos from the camera card to the computer. Some programs renumber your pictures and you loose control of the situation. I create a new folder in "My Pictures" directory, then copy and paste the pictures from the card. After I have double checked that all is good, I return the card to the camera and format it. You should always format the card in the camera and not in your computer.

FromThe DealsGuy
by
Bob (The Cheapskate) Click,
Greater Orlando
Computer Users Group

Suggested Reading
I'm sure you've heard about some of the innovations that United Parcel Service has created in the interest of saving money, such as calculating their delivery routes with a minimum of left turns. This article will inform you of many other ways they are saving money, some that will surprise you **www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=212 900815**. Everything you can think of is under scrutiny. However, the most interesting part is further into the article.

Feedback
I certainly had plenty of feedback from my experience with Best Buy. It seems that many others have had a bad experience with Best Buy and wrote to tell me about it. My preference for that type of store was Circuit City, but that has come to an end. I'm sorry to bid them farewell because Circuit City always treated me right.

A Bit About Work
My wife and I have worked some great trade shows lately. One was the Fun Show, which is also called the Coin Show. I sure saw many dollars worth of coins etc. displayed by people from all over the US. Police continually patrolled the show floor and they now have police on horseback roamed the parking lot to prevent any robberies there, which have happened in the past. In fact, there have even been vendors who were followed by robbers to a distant town where they were robbed when they stopped at a motel for the night. Obviously, the robbery was substantial.

I'll also give you the URL for the IAAPA Attractions Expo **www.iaapa.org** which is a show we worked in November that is all about amusement park rides and other attractions at carnivals. It's always fun to work it and some of the rides are set up and working right there on the show floor. There is as much as 65 feet of height in certain areas of that building if needed. There were many inflatable attractions this year and lots of food exhibits (Burp).

The Power Gen Show was extremely interesting with everything from small to very large generating systems **www.power-gen.com/index.html**. Three vendors offered giant windmill generators, GE, Mitsubishi and Vesta with impressive movies illustrating the construction. If I had one of those, I could power the entire neighborhood. You might also be interested in the Electronic House Expo that will be in Orlando in March. **www.ehxweb.com/**

How About Repairing That File
DataNumen Inc. has released Advanced Access Repair 2.0. If .MDB files are corrupt or damaged, this powerful repair engine will recover the data with precision. The performance of Advanced Access Repair is improved and supports MS Access 2007 and Windows Vista. If the .MDB files are corrupt or damaged in some way, Access can neither open the files nor recognize any data in them. Advanced Access Repair uses advanced technologies to scan the corrupt or damaged Microsoft Access databases (.MDB files) and recover the data in them as much as possible.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 is based on a comprehensive understanding of the Access MDB database format. The advanced algorithm of this powerful tool allows you to recover every possible item in the MDB database files because the recovery process does not rely on the structure of the original corrupt or damaged MDB database file. Sometimes the structure is completely damaged and cannot be recognized, but Advanced Access Repair is still able to analyze the raw MDB database file byte by byte and recover most of the data.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 can successfully repair Microsoft Access 95, 97, 2000, XP, 2003 and 2007 databases, recover the structure and records of the tables in Access databases, or recover MEMO and OLE fields. It offers numerous features that are not available, or only partially available, in other repair engines. Among those features is support for the new Access 2007 format, batch recovery, command line support, shell integration, and drag & drop support. Advanced Access Repair 2.0 can also recover indexes, autonumber fields and relations, can output repaired MDB files in different formats, and can search for MDB database files on the local computer according to special criteria. Password encrypted Access databases? Recovered; deleted records and tables; no problem.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows, including Vista, and supports all versions of Microsoft Access including Microsoft Access 2007. A single-user license costs $299.95 (US). Volume buyers are entitled to discounts. Further information on the product, as well as a free trial copy is available from

www.datanumen.com/aar/.
Direct download link:
www.datanumen.com/aar/aar.exe

Use This Instead of Print Screen

Here is a suggestion by a reader who preferred not to be mentioned: When you want to save what's on your screen, many use Print Screen to save it to the clipboard. However, you don't always get everything you want, such as the cursor, using that method. Why not try FastStone Capture, which is a freebie. The following is from their Web site: "FastStone Capture 6.3, Shareware (last update: 10-15-2008): A powerful lightweight, yet full featured screen capture tool that allows you to easily capture and annotate anything on the screen including windows, objects, menus, full screen, rectangular/freehand regions, and even scrolling windows web pages. It also allows you to record screen activities and sound into video files."

FastStone also offers other software so see www.faststone.org/index.htm for a description of their various products.

Everybody Talks About It, But Here Is More Than Talk

Other than spam, a frequently discussed subject is the privacy of your computer. There is a place on the Web where there is help. Check into <http://www.saltmeadow.com/privacy> where you will find seven tools for working on the privacy of your computer. Some of them you may already know about them, and others you may not. Best of all, it is a collection of all freeware for your use.

DO YOU LOVE GAMES?

MyRealGames has launched a free gaming portal that provides downloadable and online casual games. The portal <http://www.MyRealGames.com> is aimed to ensure a great pastime for audiences of all ages. Arcade, puzzles, shooters, dress-ups, sports and more are all free now. The portal also features free games, which were only available in "try-before-you-buy" versions before. RealGames.com can be recommended to those who are tired of advertisements in games because they don't have disturbances like annoying banners between levels. The only thing obligatory is a visit of the site after a user exits a game. The games are available in both 2D and 3D, and have three working languages. With more than two hundred games, MyRealGames.com has something in stock for everybody. If you're an arcade game lover, don't forget to check out Space Bubbles. There are extraordinary power-ups and amazing bonuses to discover within every puzzle! Enjoy endless hours of bubble blasting action: <http://www.myrealgames.com/files/space-bubbles.exe>. Exercise your billiard skills with the help of Billiard Masters or Cool 3D Billiards, which you can play against computer or friends. The atmosphere of a comfortable place makes the game even better. Join billiard club at: <http://www.myrealgames.com/files/billiard-masters.exe>. Try Nuclear Bike. Complete levels as fast as possible to achieve maximum score points. Speed up! Traffic police can't catch you here: <http://www.myrealgames.com/en/play_online_nuclearbike.html>.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click **bob-click@bellsouth dot net**. Visit my Web site at **www.dealsguy.com**.

Digital Media SIG Scheduling Changes!

Due to a Holiday conflict the Digital Media SIG will meet April 22.

Please note the Digital SIG **may not** meet in the month of May. Check the web site for the latest information **www.qcs.org**

New QCS Director at Large Harry Galley

The QCS welcomes Harry Galley as a new Director at Large. We look forward to his participation on the QCS Board. He will be able to offer a fresh voice to the QCS activities and decisions.

Anti-Virus Virus
By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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I hate writing about computer viruses. It always reminds me of how many unscrupulous, money-hungry people there are in the world. Yet, there are times when I feel that I must write about a certain virus because it is causing so much havoc for everyday computer users. Unfortunately, that time has come again. In the past two weeks, my company has removed a very bad group of viruses from six different computers. So I feel it is time to send out a warning.

There are many different variations of this virus and its cousins. They have many different names, including Antivirus 2008, Antivirus 2009, SpywareScanner 2008, and AntiVirXP08. Some experts are calling them viruses. Some are calling them malware. Symantec calls them misleading applications.

McAfee lists them as a PUPs (potentially unwanted programs). Whatever you call them, they are terribly invasive.

By most accounts, these awful applications piggy-back on programs that are downloaded from the Internet. However, some experts are warning that your computer may become infected by simply visiting certain websites, especially if your operating system and/or antivirus software is not up-todate.

The gist of the matter is that once your computer is infected, you will begin to see pop-up windows that give an exaggerated report of the number of threats that your computer is infected with. The window may say something like "Your computer has become infected with 231 computer viruses and spyware." These pop-ups try to scare you into purchasing their antivirus or anti-spyware software. If you purchase it, they send you a registry key, but it doesn' work because the program they sell you doesn't exist. These viruses are also being spread by malicious websites that sell fake antispyware software. On top of that, there are many other viruses or pieces of malware that can piggy-back on the main virus. So this malware can dramatically slow down or even stop your computer. The infections being caused by these viruses and malware programs are extremely harmful and can be very difficult to remove. They often require a cleanup by a professional or a complete reformatting of the hard drive and reinstallation of the software.

As an everyday computer user, you need to be very careful about the software that you download from the Internet. Make sure that it is from a source that you know to be reputable or a website that has been recommended by a trustworthy source. You can also use a program like the McAfee Site Advisor to help you assess the validity of the website before you download the program. McAfee's Site Advisor is a small program that is used by your Internet browser to indicate the safety of websites. It is a free download available at **www.siteadvisor.com** and it is a valuable tool. Also, as usual, be sure that you update your operating system and antivirus software regularly. Don't fall for any program that pops up on your computer trying to scare you into purchasing antivirus or antispyware software.

Yes, the bad guys are out there and they have a lot of computer savvy. So we all need to be smart about the software we download and the websites we visit.

Windows Vista Basics
From cnet

Windows Vista Media Center

In this lesson you'll learn what you can do with Windoes Vista Media Center; watch, pause, and record live TV; play your DVD and music collection; listen to FM radio' and much more.

If your PC has Windows Vista Premium or Windows Vista Ultimate, it can double as a full-featured media center. That's because those versions of the operating system come equipped with Media Center, an entertainment-minded interface designed to be operated by remote (but also keyboard-friendly). Thus, your PC can serve as the heart of your living room or as an extra entertainment center in the den or bedroom.

To get the most from Media Center, you'll want a TV tuner for your PC. The ATI TV Wonder 650, for example, installs in a desktop PCI slot, while the Hauppauge WinTV-HVR 950 plugs into a USB port, making it suitable for desktops and notebooks alike. Both models let you tune in standard cable/satellite stations or, with an options antenna, over-the-air HD stations. (And believe it or not, even a typical LCD monitor offers enough pixels to fully resolve HD signals. It's like you got a free HDTV and didn't even know it.

Even better, Media Center can pause, rewind, and record live shows, just like a TiVo or cable-company DVR. It features a free electronic program guide (EPG), and it supports multiple tuners (meaning you could watch, say, *American Idol* live while *Lost* is being recorded.)

Media Center also lets you tap into you PC's photo, video, and music libraries; listen to FM Radio (you'll need an antenna, of course); play DVD's; and access online media like NPR News, XM Radio, and the Movielink movie-download service. All this happens from within Media Center's user-friendly "twist" interface.

Although many of these features are currently available in the Windows XP versions of Media Center, Vista sports a new aesthetically improved interface as well as more intuitive navigation. Vista Media Center utilized the wide-screen aspect ratio, displaying everything in a left/right layout as opposed to the traditional up/down, reducing the amount of screen scrollong required.

Still, if your sole reason for upgrading to Vista is the new-and-imporved Media Center, early reviews suggest that those already plugged in with an up-to-date Windows XP Media Center may want to wait. Thus far, Vista offers too few functional improvements aside from a fresh coat of paint.

One final note: If you own an Xbox 360, you can stream all your media (live/recorded TV, music, photos, etc.) from your PC to your game console-effectively turning it into a second media center.

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".

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Officers 2009-2010

Elected Officers

President	Judi McDowell	(309) 314-1780	jmcdowell@mchsi.com
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Be sure and note the change of the April General Meeting to April 29th and the Digital Media SIG changed to April 22nd.

QCS Meeting Dates

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
		April 2009	1 Apr 6:00 PM QCS Board Dinner Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	2 Apr	3 Apr	4 Apr
5 Apr	6 Apr 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	7 Apr	8 Apr General meeting **See April 29**	8 Apr	10 Apr	11 Apr
12 Apr	13 Apr 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net	14 Apr	15 Apr	16 Apr	17 Apr	18 Apr
19 Apr	20 Apr 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG Len Stevens 563-359-9672 judylenstevens@msn.com	21 Apr	22 Apr 7:00 PM **Digital Media** SIG Norm Dunlap 309-798-2304 normdun@gmail.com	23 Apr	24 Apr	25 Apr
26 Apr	27 Apr 7:00 PM Windows SIG Larry Stone 309-787-5574 lstone521@mchsi.com	28 Apr	29 Apr 5:45 PM Beginners SIG 7:00 PM **IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union**	30 Apr	1 May	2 May
3 May	4 May 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	5 May **May 2009**	6 May 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	7 May	8 May	9 May

*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.

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

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Membership Level

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

QCS Meeting

Wednesday
April 29, 2009
7:00 PM

IH Mississippi Valley Credit Union