



microCHIP

the Newsletter of the

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Microsoft Windows Home Server and the HP MediaSmart Server



by Peter Dowley with assistance from Jeff Dowley.

John Bickford gave us an overview of Windows Home Server(WHS), a multi-talented software product, and the HP ex475, a storage unit which includes WHS and a set of HP WHS add-on functions. John used presentation materials from Microsoft, and included information obtained directly from the Windows Home Server development team. He also demo'ed his personal HP ex475, which gave our audience a running example.

The HP MediaSmart Server ex475 comes with 1 Terabyte (TB) of storage (in two 500 GB drives), and its design supports adding storage units up to a 4 TB total. The HP unit is a package that has Microsoft and HP support. The 1 TB box sells for about \$710 - \$750; again, the WHS software is included. WHS is also available separately in an OEM edition for about \$150.

It is possible to assemble your own hardware to work with WHS. There are hundreds of add-on applications and services that have been developed by a very active technical community.

SO: Why do you want these products?

Answer: because your home use of PC's isn't what it used to be.

— Your household includes several PC's - yours, your spouse's, the laptop, and some hidden PC's: those wireless Picture Frames, and a Media Center PC hooking all that sound and video gear together. A max of 10 PC's is supported.

— You want file sharing, and photo sharing, and printer sharing

— You have (or want to have) a family website,

— All of this needs B A C K U P - secure backup, remotely accessible backup, scheduled automatic backup, etc., and,

— Lastly, you need not be at home in your cellar vault to work with the data on this unit: you can use Remote Access, and protect that with strong passwords.

There are some interesting design points in this ensemble:

— a small part of the box's storage is designated as the C: drive (for the op sys), and all the rest is the D: drive, which then spans all assigned physical disks. When a new physical disk is added, D: simply grows in size.

— the backup methodology is oriented to the expectation that you have multiple PC's running various versions of Microsoft Windows operating systems. These operating systems will have many parts in common. Your application programs may also have

parts in common. Home Server's backup hashes each sector it saves, and compares these hash values across all the hash values from all the saved files. If the data has already been saved, Home Server keeps track of which PC has this (code, sector, hash) and only saves one copy. Later, after updates have been applied in one or more of your PC's, only sectors that have changed are saved - Home Server changes its meta-data. Yes, this means that the first backup of your home system is slow, and also very strongly implies that your first backup should be done using a hard-wired connection.

— if you don't want to become a victim to one of the storage drives failing, you can select "Duplication", which says that a subsequent backup will go to a second physical drive.

— All drives are NTSF and are readable in case of server hardware failure.

So if it is time to consider treating your home's PC investments as a family of units rather than as a hotel's worth of strangers, look into logically connecting them together through use of Windows Home Server and an HP MediaSmart Server. ☐

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April 10 WEB 2.0

John Lansdale and Chris Novell have re teamed up to speak on Web 2.0 April 10 at 7:30 p.m. for the Mid-Hudson Computer User Group open public meeting at Best Western Inn and Conference Center, Rte. 9, Town of Poughkeepsie.☐

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Monthly Meetings

Scheduled the second Thursday of every month. Check www.mhcug.org for possible changes to general and SIG meetings. Local radio stations will be advised if a meeting is cancelled unexpectedly.

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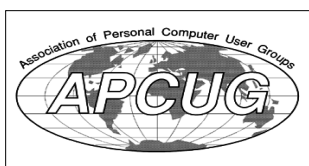
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Bits, Bytes 'N Kudos



by Dick Kranz

The annual APCUG user group convention held every year in Las Vegas convened for the last time in January 2008. This was done in favor of establishing regional gatherings like the membership and LDC conference we are holding at Palisades Center Mall in Rockland County. Just like the Vegas convention, popular vendors such as Microsoft, Pinnacle and others are spending big bucks for the opportunity

to meet with us at a nearby location. We can expect there will be some valuable handouts as well. Vendors are given the option to give out their products in lieu of costly vendor participation fees. Modus operandi of this conference is being evaluated as a model for other regions to follow.

Registration costs have been kept to a bare minimum by arranging to use the community rooms at Palisades Center Mall. Meeting room facilities will accommodate over 400 attendees. One can even treat their spouse to a \$15 bus trip to Times Square. Your family can shop or enjoy the many entertainment establishments in the Mall while you attend the conference. Money-saving earlybird registration of only \$49 has been extended to mid April as an accommodation to those just learning of the event. Registration entitles you to attend any one or all three days of activities on May 16, 17 and 18. Lunch and breakfast for two days are included as well as a welcome bag and T-shirt.

While this event is being held under the umbrella of APCUG, rest assured that local Region 1 members have put their best foot forward to coordinate an event you will be proud to attend. Attendees will mingle among friends and leaders you have already come to know. All that, combined with APCUG leadership, makes for an event you will surely not want to miss. Your registration and attendance will show your support to those who are working so fervently on behalf of your user group. Go to <http://www.apcug-ldc2008.org> for more information and latest details.

Kudos to Peter Dowley for this months front-page lead story! It is certainly a very informative and well-written article. Please check the bylines of our writers and give them your personal kudos when you see them at a meeting or special-interest group. They put in so much time and effort for your value and entertainment. Why not print out and share an article with a friend or two. What a nice way to interest them in your user group. ☐

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Special Interest Group News

Technology Workshop

by Harry Elder

This month I used *Audacity* - 'The Free, Cross-Platform Sound Editor' from soundforge.net to record the presentations and conversations at the meeting. Audacity is easy to download, install and use for various audio recording and editing purposes. It saves recordings in its own *au* format and will also save audio in *wav* and *mp3* formats. Plus, it's free. Everything went well, but I think I need an amplified microphone to best catch all the conversations in a large room. At least I can hear our meeting moderator and presenter, Dan Sullivan, since he was nearest to the microphone, but the general discussions around the room came in weak. This isn't the fault of Audacity, but with my microphone.

Heard around the room (if only faintly through my headphones) –

- Does anyone have an interest in scientific computing – statistics, finite element analysis, etc.?
- Questions and comments on Juno – a value priced Internet Service Provider (dialup).
- Issues with backup images made with Acronis.
- Favorable comments on Microsoft's *OneNote* – touted as being an excellent productivity and organizational tool.
- Questions on shopping for cars on line, which led into a short discussion on Craigslist. Craigslist is a free online bulletin board service and classified ads service. Find it at www.craigslist.org. Select your country, state, city, and region, and then choose the topic category you want to browse or post to.

The Presentations

Dan showed us a device he just bought called *Navigon*. It's a small GPS about the size of a shirt pocket, and has many nice features found in larger GPSs. He paid about \$150 for it, which is about as low as they go for now. It offers text to speech conversion, so you can listen to directions while driving instead of reading the screen. It also has a *reality* mode that shows you the landscape in 3D representation and allows you to see a near real image of the road and intersections you are approaching. Dan said that he downloaded a User's Guide of about 87 pages, and has just started using it, so perhaps we can hear more about this at a future meeting.

Have you ever tried a freeware or shareware program, then deleted it, only to discover that the program changed your registry, wouldn't uninstall cleanly, or worse? Enter *Sandboxie*. Sandboxie is a shareware program that installs on Windows systems, then allows you to test new software in an isolated environment. The advantages are that you don't change any of your system settings – such as the registry, files, folders, paths, etc. until you are sure you really want to use and keep the software you are trying.

Dan presented a walk-through of 'installing' and testing an application in Sandboxie. Sandboxie will let you commit the application, or parts of it, after testing if you're satisfied with it. Or, you can delete it out of Sandboxie, or simply shut down Sandboxie – the application will disappear without a trace. Dan suggested that you still always test software with good, up-to-date anti-virus protection installed and enabled, along with other generally accepted 'best-practices' enabled.

The next Technology Workshop will be held on the third Monday April 21 in Conference room "B" at Guardian Storage Business Development Center, 3 Neptune Rd. Town of Poughkeepsie. Contact Technology Workshop leader Dick Kranz for additional information. □



Foliage in Infra Red by Les Muldorf

AutoMatting™ – Unique Digital Matts ..Extraordinaire

From Image Trends Inc. – The Science of Imaging

by Neil Longmuir, a member of the Winnipeg PC User Group Inc., Canada

www.wpcusrgrp.org

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“AutoMatting automatically creates a unique matt for each image which is designed to make the photographer’s work more attractive and appealing to the customer in a slide show or viewing mode.” AutoMatting is a digital matting software program that creates a unique matt for each image. The traditional way to display photographs, was to mount the photograph to a matt board, and fit that mounted photograph into a matt opening cut to the size of the photograph. Matting a photograph helps separate the photograph from the surrounding background. Matting a photograph gives each photograph its own visual unique and attractive look.

The way images are shown to customers, friends or family tends to be a bit boring. A set of prints is made from a roll of film or digital images. The pictures would be taken out of the photo lab envelope and passed around to customers, friends and family to look at.

This approach is fine if there are only a few pictures, but what if there are a large number of images. One solution is to create a slide show. Creating a slide show takes time to create. One major problem with a typical computer monitor or TV display is that the **aspect ratio** of the monitor or TV is **not** the same as the standard typical 3x2 aspect ratio of the images. Then, when we mix portrait (vertical) images with landscape (horizontal) images the images are not the same size. Portrait images are smaller than landscape images and have vertical black bars on each side. Landscape images have smaller black bars on the top and bottom. The bottom line is that you want your images to be visually more attractive to the viewer.

The solution to making the images more attractive is to use AutoMatting to create a unique matte for each image in a folder and resize that image to the aspect ratio of **any monitor or TV screen**.

Also, if there are sub-folders under the main folder, those sub-folders can be included by checking the included sub-folders in the upper left corner. Once the images to be processed are selected, press Process Images at the bottom of the screen.

AutoMatting operates in a batch mode and creates a sub-folder of images using the colors and patterns in the original image plus a unique beveled edge border. The final result is an image that looks great on the display medium with no black bars appearing on the display.

Conclusions

Automatting is a perfect example of a software application that was “thinking outside the box.” This “New Wave” thinking application has given **all** end users whether they are professional photographers or ordinary every day photographers a great way to show their images to everyone on whatever display medium.

This is a terrific product. AutoMatting is available for a free “try before you buy” download. Visit www.imagetrendsinc.com and download the trial version for yourself. The cost to purchase this program is \$49.95 and is available for both the Windows and MAC platforms. This is a very impressive innovative product that works great for a new look to your images.

Neil’s rating (***** – five stars)

I would also like to thank the kind folks at Image Trends Inc. for providing me with a copy of the AutoMatting for review.

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Q&A

moderated and written by Les Muldorf

Q: I recently installed a new hard drive. When I try to connect to the internet, it takes two tries: does not connect on the first try, but does on the second. I am running Windows XP.

A: Check the connections profile in Internet Explorer. There may be a problem with the paths.

Q: My laptop freezes up unexpectedly. This can happen at any time and when running any program. Nothing new has been added-memory, drives, - nothing.

A: Some file on the drive is corrupted. Try system restore or reformat the drive(as a last resort). You can check the startup menu and try eliminating one driver at a time until problem is solved.

Q: I am looking for a new wireless router. Any suggestions

A; There are many brands out there. Three of the most popular are Netgear, Linksys and D-Link. Wireless G is most stable. Wireless N is now available and is stable. In Apple laptops, wireless is built -in, however, in older windows laptops, a wireless card will be needed. ☐



Palace of the Legion of Honor by Les Muldorf

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Special Interest Groups

Special Interest Groups are for people with common computer interests—novice through expert.

Call group leader to verify schedule.

Upgrade/Repair

Leader: Dan Sullivan
Tel: 229-0241

e-mail: dansull@optonline.net
Schedule: 4th Mon. 7:00 PM
Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

Technology Workshop

Leader: Dick Kranz
Tel: 297-1813, 896-7376 or 265-4169 or e-mail:

president@mhcug.org
Schedule: 3rd Monday, 7:00 PM
Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

Digital Photography

Leaders:
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Jim Warner
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Schedule: 4th Thurs. 7:00 PM
Location: Business Development Center Conf. Room B

Ulster Computing Workshop (formerly HVPCC)

Leader: Robert Morales
e-mail: 4bobmorales@earthlink.net
Schedule: 3rd Thurs. 7:00 PM
Location: Ulster Comm College Hasbrouck Bldg. Room 219

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Hasta la Vista - Customize Your Data Locations

by Lee Reynolds, a member of the Broward Personal Computer Association, Florida

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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

I'm told the literal meaning of "hasta la vista" in Spanish is "until the seeing." Or maybe a more adequate translation is "see you later". But in this column, I'm using that phrase to invite you to take a look at Microsoft's latest version of Windows: Vista.

If you take a look at the new Vista Start Menu, one change from Windows XP you will see is that there is a link at the top of it which is your account name. If you click on that, you will open up a Windows Explorer window, which shows all your user folders, such as:

- Documents
- Music
- Pictures
- Desktop
- Favorites
- Etc..

In Details view, this is handy since one column shows the Folder path for each of these.

Most of the folders will be on your boot drive (normally, C:) in this path:

C:\Users\

There are several entries in this list which have the little "shortcut" arrow in their icons, for example:

- Application Data
- Cookies
- Local Settings
- My Documents
- Recent
- Send To
- Start Menu
- Templates

If you click on any of these shortcuts, except Recent, you will immediately be presented with an error message: "<folder path> is not accessible Access is denied", then you have to click the OK button to dismiss the message.

All of those shortcuts are there for compatibility reasons, in order for the system to be able to access certain locations that were used in Windows XP. The actual path of each of those locations has changed in Windows Vista. For example, the folder that was accessed in this way in Windows XP C:\Documents and Settings\

C:\Users\

Backup and Partitioning

I like to backup my entire system periodically with a drive image program from Acronis called True Image.

However, I also like to try and keep most of my data separate from the program files and windows system files making up the boot drive.

I took advantage of the built-in drive partitioning software of Vista (more about this in another article), in order to create several other partitions on my C: drive, and one of these is reserved for storing the contents of such folders as Documents, Favorites, Music, and Pictures. (I did something similar for an old computer using Windows XP.)

This not only reduces the size of the backup image of my boot drive, it also makes it much easier to backup my rapidly changing data to CD-RWs or DVD-RWs.

In Windows XP, in order to move the data locations to another partition, I was forced, in some cases, to edit the registry. In Windows Vista, this is no longer necessary.

There is a Windows user interface to change folder locations of your user account profile. Just right click on your Documents folder, for example: Select Properties from the context menu, and then you will see a new tab in the folder properties windows called Location.

Click on that tab, and you will now see this message: You can change where files in this folder are stored to another place on this hard drive, another drive, or even another computer on your network.

All you have to do is type in the new location, and click OK. You will then be presented with a message, asking if you want to move all of the files from the old locatio to the new location, and recommending that you do so, or else you will see two of the designated folders in your profile.

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How to Forward E-mail

By Vinny La Bash, a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida

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Let's examine a typical email scenario. After opening your e-mail, you find a message that you simply must share with all your friends. You press the "Forward" button and one way or another get all their e-mail addresses in the "To:" box. Feeling quite satisfied after pressing the "Send" button, you sit back and take satisfaction in the joy you are sending to others.

You should be ashamed of yourself. You have just exposed everyone on your mailing list plus any people who received the e-mail ahead of you to unending streams of spam, spyware, viruses, and other assorted electronic junk and mischief that hackers are prone to these days. What you have done is prove conclusively that you don't have a clue about the proper way to forward e-mail. Your license to compute should be revoked immediately.

As messages get forwarded in this way they move along the internet, and the list of e-mail addresses embedded in the note gets longer and longer. All it takes is for just one of these folks to get a virus or some other kind of malware, and everyone who has their e-mail address in that list can be infected.

Anyone can take those e-mail addresses, sell them or send out their own junk mail. Assuming you are a mature responsible adult, you most likely would not want to harm anyone, even inadvertently. What does a conscientious person do to stop or better yet, prevent damage?

When you click the "Forward" button you enter the edit mode of your e-mail client. Before you do anything else DELETE all the other e-mail addresses appearing at the top of the message. Let me repeat. DELETE them by highlighting them and THEN pressing the Delete button on your keyboard. It doesn't take long. When you've finished, delete any other junk that isn't actually part of the message, such as information about the original sender. Delete anything that is not part of what you want to send.

If you're sending the message to more than one person, do not use the To: or Cc: fields for adding e-mail addresses. Always, always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the e-mail addresses. The people receiving the message will see only their own address.

Some e-mail clients don't automatically show the blind carbon copy option. If that's the case, click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the e-mail address and choose the BCC: option. It's not much effort, and it eliminates the possibility of someone using the e-mail addresses inappropriately. When you send using the blind carbon copy, everyone receiving the message will see "Undisclosed Recipients" in the heading information.

If your e-mail client requires that something be in the To: field, send the message to yourself and use the BCC: field for everyone else.

Remove any FW in the subject line. Better yet, clean up the subject line completely by fixing any spelling or grammatical mistakes. Why let someone else's errors appear as your own?

Sometimes you will receive an e-mail that is a petition. It states a position and directs you to add your name, address, and sometimes other information. Then you're supposed to send it to as many people as possible. If enough people do this, an email can contain hundreds if not thousands of names and addresses.

The longer the list gets the more valuable it becomes to a spammer or hacker because the names and email addresses are valid. If you really want to support the idea behind the petition, a personal letter to the eventual recipient carries a lot more weight than a piece of paper with a long list of names. When you think about it, lists like these can be generated from telephone books. Do you really think that a member of congress is going to pay attention to something that could be so easily faked?

Sometimes these petitions come with statements or warnings that the e-mails are being traced. Don't believe it. While technology is constantly improving, there is still no way to trace e-mails through the internet.

One kind of really annoying e-mail is the one that promises that something wonderful is going to happen, but only if I forward the message to at least ten people in the next ten minutes. However, if I fail to do so, some unspeakable evil will surely befall me. I always fail to do so, and nothing bad has happened yet, but I wonder if this could be the reason I haven't won the lottery.

Before forwarding some version of an Amber Alert, take a little time to check out the story behind the message. Most of these messages have been circulating around the internet for years. Some of them have been around for a decade. Almost all of them are much less than they seem.

Some sites that will help:

www.hoaxbusters.com

http://urbanlegends.about.com/od/internet/a/current_netlore.htm

<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/bulletins/h-05.shtml>

<http://www.snopes.com/snopes.asp>

<http://www.vmyths.com/> ☐

All submissions for the Microchip must be in the hands of the editors by the Thursday following the General Meeting. Any articles or information received after that date will be held for the following month's publication. Send submissions to editor@mhcug.org

Moving on to Vista – Part 5

by Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, Washington

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As most PC users know, after you've used your computer for a while the data on your hard drive starts to get fragmented. This affects your computer's performance and causes programs to run more slowly. With Windows XP, as well as all previous versions, you had three ways to defragment your hard drive. You could do it manually (click Start → All Programs → Accessories → System Tools → Disk Defragmenter). You could do it manually (click Start → All Programs → Accessories → System Tools → Disk Cleanup). Or you could create a scheduled task to do it for you automatically (click Start → All Programs → Accessories → System Tools → Scheduled Task and click on "Add Scheduled Task" and follow the wizard instructions).

Windows Vista automatically defragments your hard disk for you. Not only does it defragment your hard disk, but it does it in background mode. This allows you to do other things on your computer while the defragmenting program is being run. The downside of this is that programs will run more slowly while the defragmenting process goes on. On the other hand, because automatic defragmenting runs fairly frequently it should not take too long to complete.

Of course you still have the ability to defragment manually. Right-click on the "Computer" icon on your desktop and select properties. In the window that appears, click on "Performance" (lower left corner), then "Advanced Tools" (upper left corner) and then "Open Disk Defragmenter". Notice that at this point you have the options of scheduling when the defragmenter runs or running it immediately. At this point Vista will defragment ALL hard drives that it finds on your computer. Previous versions of Windows allow you to select which hard drive to defragment. Windows Vista SP1 (when it is released) is supposed to add this capability to Windows Vista.

While we are on the topic of computer performance, let's go back to the "Performance Information and Tools" screen (right click on the "Computer" icon, click on "Properties" and click on "Performance" in the lower left corner of the screen). Note that this screen provides you with some general information about the performance of your computer. It numerically scores processor, memory, graphics and hard disk performance. You'll find links on this screen that explain what the numbers mean and how to improve your computer's performance. Many of the suggestions do not require changes to your hardware but recommend changes to the programs that you run or do not run.

On the upper left side of the "Performance Information and Tools" screen you'll find a number of tasks which control how your computer performs. If your PC is a laptop, click on "Adjust power settings". On the new screen, examine the "Power Plan". The decision you make here affects the length of time that your laptop will run between battery charges and its speed. Most laptops come configured to balance performance against battery endurance. There are many options available. If you normally operate your laptop plugged into an external power source, you'll want to change the setting to maximize performance.

Before we leave the "Performance Information and Tools" screen, you should also look at "Adjust visual effects" (in the upper left corner under "Tasks"). When you click on this item you'll see three tabs. We are only going to address the "Visual effects" tab for now. The first button, "Let Windows choose what is best for my computer" is probably selected. This gives you the maximized "eye candy" on your computer but may have a negative effect on performance when resource intensive programs are running (e.g., Video editors). Notice that you have additional choices to "Adjust for best appearance" and "Adjust for best performance" as well as a "Custom" button that lets you choose what features to turn on and off. If your computer performance appears to be sluggish, try selecting "Best performance".

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Stingray City by Les Muldorf

Photodex ProShow Review

By Tom Ekvall, Northeast Wisconsin PC User Group newsletter editor

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I love creating – and watching—photo slideshows, also known as photo montages or video montages.

They are exciting as photos and video clips are set to music with special effects and sounds added to the production. Memories no longer need to be kept in photo albums or shoeboxes. The slideshows can also be burned onto a DVD or CD, shared by e-mail or uploaded to a web site, or even kept as a screen saver.

I remember many years ago my dad used to take plenty of slides with his Nikon camera and would put together slide shows (real slides) of his trips, camping outings, and other occasions that all of us would watch. He even did travelogues that he showed to senior groups and others of his trips complete with two slide projectors, a dissolve unit, tape recorder and all the equipment to put on a first class production. He did slideshows of Civil War battlefields, the Smoky Mountains and other popular sites.

Slideshows must have become a family interest as my sister who lives near Denver also enjoys putting together photo montages on DVD of her vacation trips for others using a Macintosh computer. ProShow will not work, though, with the Mac Operating System; however, it can be used with success on those newer Intel-based Macintosh computers with a program such as Boot Camp that allows Macs to run Windows-based products.

Today there is plenty of software on the market for producing slideshows ranging from free ones through Microsoft with simple effects to ProShow by Photodex Corporation of Austin, Texas, that represents to me the “tops in class” of anything available.

Slideshows can be done as part of photo editing programs, created through video editing software that allows adding photos to a video production, or as a stand-alone product.

I tried out a number of slideshow products and feature for feature, nothing can compare with ProShow, especially the Producer version targeted at professionals who want the ultimate in what a slideshow can deliver (\$249.95). The company also offers a ProShow Gold version (\$69.95) aimed at photo enthusiasts that packs a wallop in creating simply amazing shows. The price is for download versions; add \$20 for download plus box version of Producer and \$10 for Gold.

The Gold version offers many of the features of the Producer model and both outshine any other product I have seen. There is also a Standard Version for under \$29.95, but I would opt for no less than the Gold version. The latest version is 3.2 with upgrades available free for 12 months.

What the ProShow products offer is the ability to fully customize any aspect of the production from beginning to end.

The product is available only through Photodex, either as a download or as a box version. The company also has a first-class support service for unlimited free help, including that for a trial version good for 15 days that you can download. I called in with a question that was immediately resolved. The company is dedicated to providing the highest quality service. I cannot think of few other sites that provide free technical support to trial version customers. My only complaint about the trial versions is that while fully functional, the output bears a strip across the middle of the slides noting that the photo show was created on trial software. By purchasing the product you receive a registration code that will eliminate the strip. Support help is available seven days a week by phone or by email.

I installed the Producer version of the product on a HP laptop computer running Windows Vista Home Premium with an AMD Turion 64 dual core processor and 1 gigabyte of RAM. No problems with the installation and everything set up perfectly. I was able to produce my first slideshow without reading instructions, attesting to the simplicity of the product while offering many customization tools that add a “WOW” factor to the production. The product will also run on Windows XP. The Producer version requires at least 1 gigabyte of RAM and a 1 gigahertz processor. The Gold version will run on Windows ME or 98 and can get by with 512 megabytes of RAM.

My first show was one featuring the college liaison person for the Northeast Wisconsin PC User Group which meets at the Fox Valley Technical College. He has been a longtime member and is also an avid balloonist and attends the computer and electronic shows in Las Vegas. We collected pictures of him and of the user group over the years, which I then used to create a DVD show. I had most of the presentation done early, but brought my camera to our January meeting, at which time I took pictures of him talking about the Consumer Electronics Shows. Within minutes, the pictures were downloaded into the show, set to music and a DVD created in a manner of minutes presented to him as a surprise.

I found the rendering speed of the final product to be very fast to create the final product.

There are numerous features about the program (both Producer and Gold versions) I like which make it a must have. These include:

- The ability to add background music simply playing an audio CD on the computer and importing a track directly into the program; a show can also be created whereby the photos will automatically sync with the length of the music or link specific photos to specific tracks. I did a wedding show in which the wedding music began as the bride walked down the aisle (my wife). There were 150 photos and four sound tracks in the 15-minute production. I also did a one-click audio sync to a family Christmas show timing the photos (and transitions) to the length of a Christmas song recorded by my wife's cousin, who records children's music.

- Over 280 transition effects (much more than I could ever want, although it does not pay to put too many in a show without

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it becoming a distraction. The transitions can be set as to time length or set automatically for the show duration.

- Probably the best I have seen in motion effects (the pan and zoom or “Ken Burns” effect) for a slideshow program with the ability to do precise controls modifying many different aspects of each slide
- Layering capabilities that allow unlimited layers on any slide that can create amazing effects. With the Producer version, you can add video clips onto a still photo slide
- Masking and keyframing opportunities with layer opacity control on the Producer version only that enhance the layering effects as to motion with the slides with precise control
- Supports more than 100 input file types and can output to ip\Pods, cell phones, Zunes, YouTube, and other portable devices; Producer version also supports RAW photos
- DVD burner support included with both Gold and Producer
- Video clips can be added to the show with both versions while video can be added as a layer in the Producer version

Other features of note include unlimited undo's, photo editing capabilities, multiple captions and text that can be animated to one or more slides, real time preview, drag and drop rearranging of slides, the ability to customize the background, built-in audio and video trimmers.

Tutorials are available through the company's website (www.photodex.com) as well as three DVDs through the company that cover layering, keyframing and audio controls (\$49.95 each). There are several user groups that I joined through Yahoo groups dealing with Proshow and the Producer version, where users offer comments about the product and its features and upload shows for others to critique. I get numerous posts each day from group members.

For photo professionals and others in the corporate world, the Producer version offers the ability to allow viewers to interact with the presentation on a computer, such as enabling the person to access a particular web site or other information, pause the presentation, or interact in other ways. A great tool for real estate professionals who may want to showcase their properties or lead them to links of places and information of interest. The Producer version also allows optional watermarking to protect the photos in the show.

The one thing the product does not have that I could determine is the ability to print pictures from the produced show, which may be an issue for someone wanting to share pictures with others for them to print out if desired.

In summary, this is a fantastic program. Either the Gold or Producer version will provide a professional tool to create exciting slideshows that you and others can enjoy. Producing a slideshow takes only a short time and the wide variety of control options enhances the creativity you can put into the show. If you are hooked on creating slideshows, I would opt for the Producer version even if you are only a photo enthusiast based on the added features, such as keyframing, masking, and timing controls. Settings can also be saved for creating future shows.

The slideshows so far produced were simple and basic, but very entertaining. Next month I will review in the newsletter the more dramatic effects that can be created such as keyframing, layering, and masking and training tutorials available from the company to create these effects. After watching videos produced by others on the ProShow user group sites, I can attest to the amazing things that can be done with a collection of photos.

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Doors by Les Muldorf



Growing Your User Group in Today's Digital Age!

Join us the weekend of May 16th, 17th and 18th, 2008. The APCUG will host the Leadership Development Conference, 2 days of workshops in West Nyack NY, 30 miles north of New York City. This is the first meeting of Eastern Regional Groups in over 10 years.

All are invited to attend. The \$49 early bird registration fee (\$60 for non APCUG members) includes breakfast and lunch for two days as well as a LDC welcome bag and T-shirt. This rate is good until March 31, 2008

Friday evening will be a welcome event for those who come early.

Saturday is an entire day of speakers and workshops devoted to building and increasing your groups membership. Since so many of our groups are looking for ways to build their membership, we have gathered experts with proven track records, who will give many fresh ideas on this topic. They will "Train the Leaders" by teaching new ideas that are easy to implement in your club. Learn what has worked for others and exchange ideas. This is an area of interest to all. In the evening there will also be a vendor faire with demonstrations of product, software and valuable giveaways for all attendees. If you know of a vendor that would like to participate have him contact Sam Wexler at swexler@apcug.net or vendorinfo@apcug-ldc2008.org.

On Saturday there is a bus trip into the Times Square Theater District of New York City for spouses & significant others. They can have lunch, see a Broadway show or just visit New York City. This will leave around 10:30 AM, and will have a \$15 nominal cost.

Sunday's workshops are on technology, promoting your club, and the ins and outs of running a club. Bring your Board and User Group members as this promises to be a must attend event full of information that everyone can use. We have scheduled dynamic speakers and workshops on promoting your group, leadership development, programming and the newest technical trends of interest to all.

This conference will be held at the Palisades Center Mall, one of the largest in the US. There are many restaurants, shops, movie theaters, a bowling alley and ice skating rink so that all can enjoy their time in NY. The Palisades Center Mall is located near major highways for easy access by car, bus and train, less than an hour from New York City. There are also hotels/motels within a few miles to fit any budget. See our web site for special event rates and book early.

We look forward to having you attend. This conference promises to be filled with many worthwhile ideas and great contacts to help you run your club and increase your membership. Registration and current information can be found at <http://www.apcug-ldc2008.org>.

For additional information contact APCUG Advisor Sam Wexler at swexler@apcug.net. Please reserve early, especially to get lodging at special rates.

Minutes of the Mid-Hudson Computer User Group Board of Directors

Submitted by Ed Terpstra

President Dick Kranz called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Board Members in attendance were Les Muldorf, Rolf Nijhuis, Peter Dowling, Eli Cohen, Linda Ritch, Dan Sullivan, Jim Peabody, Ron McDermott, and Ed Terpstra. MHCUG Members Jack Marsella and Jerry Clark were also in attendance.

A motion was made by Linda Ritch and seconded by Jim Peabody to accept the minutes from the February meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Eli Cohen presented the Treasurer's report. It was decided drawing donations would be sent to Eli.

A required status report for the MHCUG will be sent by Eli to the government.

John Bickford will present Windows Home Server at the March 13th General Meeting. John Lansdale and Christine Novell will present Web 2.0 on April 10th. Les Muldorf will speak on his experiences transitioning from PC to Mac at a future meeting.

Upgrade/Repair and Technology SIGs are well attended and supply much information and discussion. Les Muldorf discussed what judges look at and for in photographs at the Digital SIG. A new avenue of interest for the SIG is Video.

The status of the Ulster Computing Workshop is somewhat confused at the moment. Jack Marsella will communicate with Bob Morales on the issue.

A Long Term Commitment and Service to MHCUG Award was discussed.

Webmaster Jerry Clark has done great work on the MHCUG website and we thank him for what he has accomplished and are indeed fortunate he is aboard. The host for MHCUG is unable to handle dynamic pages which Jerry would prefer, so he had to revert to HTML pages. Rolf Nijhuis reported on the soon to occur Science Fair. Rolf has long served as a judge and asked if anyone on the board was interested in judging. Ron McDermott indicated he was willing to do so.

A motion was made by Peter Dowling and seconded by Les Muldorf that the MHCUG participate as a club in the Science Fair and award certificates and gift memberships to the winners, (limited to 10). Les Muldorf seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Barbara Van Itallie contacted Dick Kranz asking for volunteers to scan documents and offer computer skills to assist the Dutchess County History Society. It was suggested that she attend the General Meeting and give a small presentation regarding what skills they would like to acquire. Dick Kranz will contact her with the suggestion that she attend.

Thinc Program Director Asha Upadhyay made a presentation regarding a meeting to be held at Marist College on March 20. It is an open meeting pertaining to creation of Electronic Health Records for each individual entitled, "Vision 2014: Innovation & Healthcare in the Hudson Valley".

A motion was made by Eli Cohen and seconded by Dan Sullivan to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM. □



A Foggy Morn by Les Muldorf

Help Line

Having a problem? Volunteers have offered to field member's questions by phone. Please limit calls to the hours listed below. Days means 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Evenings means 6 to 9:30 p.m. Be considerate of the volunteer you're calling, remember this is a free service. If you'd like to have your name added to the list, call or e-mail the editor, or see us at the next meeting.

Program	Name	Phone #	E-mail	Time
Access (MS)	Eli Cohen	897-5921	mhcug@yahoo.com	(e)
APL (all flavors)	Ray Polivka	462-2698	polivka@acm.org	(d e)
CAD	Fred Krasselt	565-5622	krasselt@aol.com	(d e)
FlightSoft	Clark Zeaman	814-663-0538	zeamanc@juno.com	(d e)
Internet	Art Scott	849-1378	artscotti@gmail.com	(d)
Lotus 123 Macros	Ralph Pollard	462-3389	ralphpollard@verizon.net	(e)
Lotus for DOS	Bill Rogers	452-9104	—	(e)
MS Office	Bryan Rifenburg	590-0092	MCPPro20@yahoo.com	(d e)
Paradox 4.5	Jim Warner III	297-3175	jhwiii@optonline.net	(d e)
Partition Magic	Dan Sullivan	229-0241	dansull@optonline.net	(d e)
PC/AT Hardware	Phil Van Itallie	462-3924	pvanitallie@yahoo.com	(e)
Personal Finances	John Bickford	435-8615	johnbick@us.ibm.com	(d)
SAS	Ralph Pollard	462-3389	ralphpollard@verizon.net	(e)
Symphony 3.1	Jim Warner III	297-3175	jhwiii@optonline.net	(d e)

Please help us to keep the **Help Line** current by advising us about changes. If you have particular knowledge or expertise about a program or product, please ask to be listed here.

All members of the MHCUG are encouraged to take photographs of any club activity for publication in the MicroChip. Now that we are in a digital format on the web, photographs can be displayed in glorious color or stunning black and white. In addition, we would also like you to exhibit your photographic skills and submit photos of the beautiful Hudson Valley. Here is an easy way to get your name in print. Please forward any pictures to lesml@optonline.net Give me your name and the title or subject of your pictures so I don't have to make anything up.

Need help on a subject and there's no name listed for it here? Try contacting one of the SIG leaders or post a message on our Website FORUM. Simply go to www.mhcug.org and click on the "Forum" menu item, then follow instructions. Answers will be returned to you by e-mail, as well as being accessible via the Website.

Wanted New Members



**Bounty Hunters
Needed**

**Sponsor a
new member**

**Get a 3-month
membership
extension**

For each new member you bring in you receive a three month extension on your current membership. Ask the new member to name you as sponsor on their application.

New Appl. Renewal Addr. Change

The MHCUG is a nonprofit educational organization which promotes activities encouraging the use of computers by its members. The MHCUG encourages professionalism and the development of technical skills.

A **Member** may be anyone with an interest in computers who supports the purpose of the MHCUG.

A **Student Member** must be under 25 years of age and attending an educational institution full-time.

If new applicant or renewal, please check one:

Member: dues: \$35 per year

Student: dues: \$15 per year

Full-time ID (reqr'd) _____

I am enclosing a check for 1 2 3 yrs (Students renew yearly)

Check No. _____

Mid-Hudson Computer User Group, Inc.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City State Zip: _____

Telephone: () _____

E-mail: _____

Would you like an e-mail reminder of upcoming meetings? Yes No

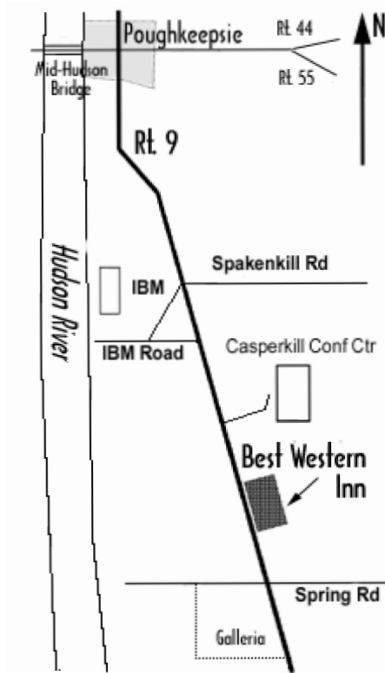
How did you hear about us? _____

If sponsored by a member, please provide name: _____

Dues Amount _____ Additional Contribution Amount _____ Total _____

Make check (on US bank only) payable to:
Mid-Hudson Computer User Group
 Send form and check to: Attn Treasurer
 Mid-Hudson Computer User Group
 PO Box 1962
 Poughkeepsie NY 12601-0962

How to find us on the night of the meeting



☞ Our Next Program ☞

Where: Best Western Inn & Conference Center
Rt. 9, Poughkeepsie

When: April 10th, 2008
6:30 – 7:00 Q&A Session: Questions from the floor
7:00 – 7:30 Regular Business Meeting
7:30 – 9:00 Program

Program: . April 10 – WEB 2.0

John Lansdale possesses a background in Computers as a programmer, director and consultant since 1969. He is currently on the Board of Directors of the Danbury Area Computer Society (DACS) and is Special Interest Group Leader on Web Application Programming. John is also active in the Linux and C# groups. Chris Novell, VP-Programs of DACS will provide additional substance to this presentation by incorporating insights from her own perspective. All are invited to come and learn how Web 2.0 will impact website navigation, especially with wireless mobile and handheld devices.

Coming Events April 2008

First Thursday April 3rd, MHCUG Board meeting

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

Second Thursday April 10th MHCUG General Meeting

6:30 p.m. at Best Western Inn and Conference Center

Third Thursday April 17th, Ulster Computing Workshop

7:00 p.m. at Ulster Community College

Third Monday April 21st, Technology Workshop

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

Fourth Monday April 28th, Upgrade and Repair

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building

Fourth Thursday April 24th, Digital Photography/Multi Media

7:00 p.m. at Guardian Storage Building