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Finding Ghosts In Your Computer - Info, Info Everywhere, And Not A Thought To Think
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JOURNAL OF THE CHICAGO COMPUTER SOCIETY

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by Charlie Sickels, Managing Editor
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Commentary and news about some of the articles and also our writers, along with related matters, all intended to make this journal more useful to you.

Greetings, dear readers, in these glory days of Summer. Everything has a season, in the philosophical refrain, and this is one of the circular set encountered as the years go by. Those everythings are also apt to have their ups and downs, as all of us past a certain maturity level have learned. The first day of Summer, June 21st, is also the start of the slow downward slide in length of daylight, which I consider a downer leading to the return of Standard Time, another non-favorite among seekers of light. But we endure.

Similarly, we seek light and illumination here at Hard-Copy and present it to you as best we can in the form of information. Our first bit is the splash of information on the cover, announcing the completion of our connection with PayPal. It is a safe and convenient way to pay your voluntary commitments to CCS. Check it out. It is mostly a win-win situation, easier for you to pay us, easier for us to receive and properly allocate the payments.

The lone loser here is the US Postal Service, the purveyors of ever more costly postage stamps as they seem to explore the numbering system for a progression of prime numbers, recent cases in point being stamp denominations of 37 and 41 (the current “lifetime” denomination—provided you buy them now while available). They

did dally briefly with 39 but may have jumped upward upon discovering it was not prime. In defense of the USPS, we should note they are an essential service whose costs do not decline though their revenues do. Further, it is not true that they are preparing for a legal battle with the American Council for Even Numbers defending their right to ignore even numbers and stick to odd-numbered denominations. We should also lay to rest the totally unfounded rumor that the USPS has joined an exploratory quest with the oil industry to sue the US Bureau of Standards. This rumor has it that they would like to adjust the Table of Weights and Measures so as to lighten the ounce and cut the volume of a gallon so as to decrease the apparent cost, per “ounce” and per “gallon”, for postage and gasoline. Maybe appealing but not true. Absolutely nobody would fall for that. Not for long.

Similar topics are presented here in a major article by Steve Bass, which relates his picks of the 25 top hoaxes and pranks in the last several years. You may have heard of some; you may even have believed some, only briefly let us hope.

You may have heard of “slack fill”. It is a term applied to a packaging practice developed in recent decades. It is the decline in actual content of a retailed product’s package and replacement with empty space.

The Chicago Computer Society is a 501(c)3 educational not-for-profit personal computer User's Group with monthly meetings throughout Northeast Illinois and Northwest Indiana. All chapter and Special Interest Group meetings are open to the general public.

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Beata Kernan, at
(708) 588-0385 for a membership
application.

One outstanding example in the grocery industry is packaged potato chips. In this case there is not only slack space but it is firmed up with a puff of air, which has a few functions. One is to con the potential customer by seeming to be a larger quantity; that may have worked for the first practitioner for a while, until emulated by competitors, Then it's a case of the River of No Return. Another function of the puffed package is more surface space for logos and self promos. Another one is having unspoken beneficiaries; the haulers and shelf packers have a lighter load.

Here there is also a similarity to our field of interest. Software boxes are also mostly air. Now boxes usually contain only the CD(s) and a startup guide at most, no manual. The manufacturer can cheap out, not printing a softbound book, enabled by the larger storage capacity of CDs being able to carry a rudimentary manual. And the unmentioned beneficiaries are increasingly important 3rd party publishers. A fine example here is the Missing Manual Series from O'Reilly Publishers. This issue of Hard-Copy carries another review of a manual in the series.

Other informative articles and event reports round out this issue, along with essential CCS business and a reminder of the soon-to-be Mini-Expo VI. We could still use assistance in producing eHard-Copy. Contact me at the above e-mail address if you are able and interested. Our staff is minimally small but again, we endure. For now. ■ (TOC)

*Be Sure to check out the monthly
calendar for meetings about your
computing needs at*

www.ccs.org

*The address for Hard-Copy
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Notes From The President's Desk

by Al Cheeks
President CCS

Remote Presentation

On July 3, the South Suburban Computer Club, Windows SIG, was one of ten computer clubs selected to participate in a remote presentation conducted by Adobe. The presentation, Adobe Elements 5, was initiated from one of Adobe's east coast locations via the internet. Viewers, logged in, were able to see and hear the demonstration. Only the participants located in the SSC meeting were able to participate in the question and answer portion of the program. Adobe is still testing their Connect system, which, presumably, they will utilize it for training and presentations eliminating the need for them to travel to customer sites.

If you missed the presentation, it is still available at this location: <http://my.adobe.acrobat.com/twmhb3s.5ok75d/>

Elections

Soon you will receive your official ballot with which you will express your feelings regarding the present Executive Board. The election will, for the most part, be uncontested since there are no other stated candidates. You will have the privilege of writing in the name of a candidate of your choice. If you approve of the fashion in which this Board has managed the Society these past two years, let us know by returning your ballot with a vote for the incumbents.

For More

Info, Info Everywhere, and Not a Thought to Think

by Vinny La Bash,
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Many people think that the internet is the greatest thing since sliced whatchamacallit or the worst abomination that's ever been inflicted upon the human race. As usual the truth lies somewhere in-between. There is no doubt that the internet is a great source of seemingly limitless information, and the information found there tends to fall into three general categories:

1. Information which is totally useless. Did you know that the average cloud weighs 300,000 pounds? Neither did I, but that's the sort of thing you are most likely to get on the internet unless you are careful.
2. Information which is useful, but not at the moment. I invariably discover a great tax deduction I didn't know about on April 16th. It's too late for this year, and I will probably either forget about it next year or misfile the thing where I can't find it.
3. Information which is useful now. This is extraordinarily rare, comparable to finding eyebrows on eggs, but we all get lucky occasionally.

For More



The Chicago Computer Society



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9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Registration 8:00 a.m.

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CCS PROFILE**Know Your Board**

by Al Cheeks

In order to appreciate Nei, his bio extract is being presented to you in the first person, this will give you a better feel for him. —A.C.



I live in East Chicago, Indiana. I am a widower and have no children and no pets with me. And for you I can say, “I am trying to start my life in USA and am also trying to stay here forever.”

I was born in Brazil, South America, with a German background, which was very useful to understand 2 cultures ever since I was a kid. I graduated there in Business Administration and got a postgrad degree in Foreign Trade. All my jobs were related to international operations, sales, purchase, logistics, financing, and administration. I’ve also worked with different products: vacuum thermos, leathers and hides, frozen food, and steel byproducts.

Different languages helped me a lot to perform my job and make commercial trips to other countries. They enabled me to learn a dozen countries in North America, South America, and Europe. English (without knowing the details and slang and with a German accent), Spanish, and Portuguese are basic languages that I use every day.

*For More***CCS PROFILE****Someone you should know**

By Jeremie Hutson

If you do not know her by now you should! Bridget Archer is truly someone we all should know. Starting out in the IT industry in 1978 as a word processing manager at the University of Illinois - Chicago (UIC). Bridget fought her way through a male-dominated industry to earn a degree in Information and Decision Science at UIC, and is both a Microsoft Certified Professional and Microsoft Certified System Engineer. Throughout the years she has had many roles as a manager, consultant, professor, chair, and an academic advisor, but by far the most important role she has played is being the talented leader that she is today.



Bridget started working at Oakton Community College part time in 1984, and worked her way up the ranks to become a full time professor. She helped form the foundation for what is now the Computer Networking Systems Department at Oakton, and eventually became the chair for CNS in 2006.

Bridget is full of ambition and has been a personal role model for me and many others. I had the pleasure of attending my first OCC-CCS meeting because of her, and with her help and guidance I am now the President for OCC-CCS at Oakton.

For More

The Top 25 Web Hoaxes

By Steve Bass

*PC World Columnist and Author
Stevebass@earthlink.net*



These online spoofs and shams have made the rounds on Web sites and through e-mail. Perhaps you even believed one or two of them yourself.

Though some of these deceptions originated years ago, the originals—and dozens of variants—continue to make the rounds. If you keep a patient vigil over your e-mail, you too may eventually spot a message urging you to FORWARD THIS TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW!!! And if you haven't had enough when you finish reading this article, take a hoax test at the **Museum of Hoaxes**, and then hop over to **Snopes**, the premier myth-dispelling site for coverage of zillions of other falsifications.

Hoaxes 1 Through 5

From the supposed last photo taken at the top of the World Trade Center to the endlessly revised request for assistance from a Nigerian functionary, here are our top five Web and e-mail hoaxes.

1. The Accidental Tourist (2001)

Quite possibly the most famous hoax picture ever, this gruesome idea of a joke traveled around the Web and made a grand tour of e-mail inboxes everywhere soon after the tragedy of September 11. It depicts a tourist standing on the observation deck of one of the World Trade Center towers, unknowingly posing for a picture as an American Airlines plane approaches in the background.

For More

ONE OF A SERIES

The New, the Best, and the Worst April, 2007

Collected by Pim Borman,
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.
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swipcug@sigecom.net



Online Mania.

Millions of people of all ages, worldwide, spend a large part of their lives in the make-believe online world of the Internet. **MySpace.com** is representative of several virtual social gathering places where participants, young and old, meet to chat and make virtual friends. So far, so good. But for many it has become a measure of someone's popularity how many "friends" they have and how cool they are. According to ZDNet (3/20/07), "Barack Obama is en route to a landslide victory over Hillary Clinton in the MySpace friends contest: Obama 55,674 friends versus Clinton 26,702 friends... John Edwards calls his MySpace friends Pals. He has 12,319 of them... Republican candidates are trailing the Democrats overall at MySpace, big time: Rudy Giuliani 928 friends, John McCain 340 friends, Mitt Romney, 308 friends."

Lesser mortals are also competing for friends in the popularity contest. It's not only the number of friends that counts, but they have to be cool and glamorous. Enter Brant Walker who noticed, while browsing MySpace pages, that "some people would have a lot of good-looking friends, and others didn't." He came up with the idea "to turn cyberlosers into social-networkland

For More

File Extensions

by **Fran Damratowski**

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Have you ever wondered what the three alphanumeric extension at the end of a file name mean. (MS-DOS required filename to be limited to eight characters for the base or root name and three characters for the extension. Windows 95 and above no longer have that limitation.) The three or more letters or numbers are a way for the computer user, software, and operating system to differentiate between and identify the program used to create a file (document, spreadsheet, database, etc.). We are all familiar with .exe for an executable file, .txt for a text document, and .pdf for a PDF file. There are many other file extensions. The same file extension may be used for more than one program. There is no standard or organization for creating file extensions.

Here is a sampling of the B list of some of the extensions and the file types they represent.

- .b!k:** Flight Simulator scenery file
- .b&w:** Atari Black and White Graphics, Atari Black and White Graphics
- .b1s:** BookSmith
- .b3d:** BDE Multipath Movie Digital Viewer, 3D builder
- .b8:** Piclab raw graphic file
- .bad:** Unknown Apple II file, Oracle BAD file.
- bag:** AOL 6 Organizer,
<http://filext.com/detailist.php?extdetail=BAG>

For More

Finding Ghosts In Your Computer

by **Mike Morris**

*Editor, Front Range PC Users Group,
<http://www.frpcug.org>
[twriterext\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:twriterext(at)gmail.com)*

You think I am kidding? The Microsoft Knowledgebase article on this subject refers to "...ghosted" devices..." and "Phantom devices...."

Before we get started with an explanation, four facts need to be identified:

1. I owe a thank you to fellow Front Range PC Users Group member Howard Norlin for suggesting this article.
2. This article is based on the Microsoft Knowledgebase Article ID 315539 for Windows XP Home and Professional. Connect to <http://support.microsoft.com/search/> to locate the article. Enter the article number, 315539, into the search field and GO. The article has the long title of: "Device Manager does not display devices that are not connected to the Windows XP-based computer."
3. Under the "STATUS" heading of this article, you will find this statement: "This behavior is by design." [Ed. Note: that means that "(t)his behavior..." is a feature, not a bug].
4. Yes, I am aware of the famous movie about finding and destroying ghosts. Even I am aware of that movie and I haven't been to a movie in a theater in decades. I decided not to use the movie title in this article in order to avoid any potential copyright conflict.

For More

BOOK REVIEWS

Excel 2007 For Starters, The Missing Manual

BY BEATA KERNAN
CCS Treasurer



Excel 2007 For Starters

by **Matthew MacDonald**

Pogue Press/O'Reilly

Paperback, 332 pages, Jan. '07; \$19.99

[CCS members receive a discount if you follow the link in members only area on CCS website]

Excel has a new face and the centerpiece is the ribbon toolbar. The ribbon uses tabs which bring a collection of buttons; such as, under Page Layout you will find: margins, orientation, themes, print area, etc. You can trigger ribbon commands with the keyboard. You can also collapse the ribbon if you prefer to see more of the worksheet.

Chapters 1 through 6 cover worksheet basics; starting a new workbook, adding data, saving, and printing. They show how to move data around the worksheet, inserting columns and rows, all the basic steps. Chapters 7 through 9 cover worksheet power. Here you will find how to build basic formulas; copy formulas; create, format, and edit a table (in previous versions of Excel, the tables feature was called lists); and create charts.

This book not only explains what is new in Excel 2007 but shows you step-by-step how to work in Excel. There are a lot of examples and pictures to go along with the explanations of how to work in a spreadsheet. It is very easy to follow.

For More

A Slightly Faster and Safer Internet, FREE!

A small step for your PC, a giant leap
for you

by **Carey Holzman**, Co-host talk radio show

<www.computeramerica.com>

Author: *The Healthy PC* (McGraw/Hill);
Smart Computing magazine

www.careyholzman.com

Carey@ComputerAmerica.com

You may have never heard of a DNS before, but if you use the Internet, you use DNS all the time. DNS is short for Domain Name Server and I'm going to teach you what it does and why you should care. To understand what DNS is, let's start with something similar you are probably already familiar with – cellular phones.



If you're like most people, you own a cellular phone. You probably have your friends and family programmed into your phone so all you have to do is find their names in your phones contact list, or if you have a fancy phone, just speak the name and the phone will dial for you. In my phone, for example, I have Mom in my contact list. When I want to call Mom, I just search for her name in my phone and my phone knows to dial the number associated with that name. This is just like what a DNS does.

When you type a web address into your Internet browser, such as **Microsoft's Internet Explorer** or **Mozilla's Firefox**, the DNS looks up the number associated with that name and then 'calls' it. That number is

For More

Digital Sig

by Bob Cross

Just a short message to let everyone know that our outdoor event at Millennium Park last Wednesday was very successful. There are many things to photograph in and around the park. The crowd attending the Grant Park Symphony and the Decemberists was huge. I think that I read in the newspaper that approximately 15,000 people attended the concert.

We met at the Cloud Gate sculpture at 6:00 PM as planned. The following 11 members participated: Sanford Kolinek, Alvin Riesbeck, Jerry Sass, Tony McClary, Clyde Forrester, Diane Hammernik, Tom Soltis, Norm Carlson, John Meyer, Irene Ganas and me, Bob Cross.

Basically, we wandered around the park and took pictures. We ran into two problems—the area around the bandshell was too crowded to get all the shots that we might have wanted; and the BP Bridge was closed for crowd control. But the rest of the park was open for us.

Seven people attended my dinner at the Park Grill: Diane, John, Tom, Irene and her husband, Don, and me and my wife, Julie.

Darkness forced us to end our picture taking a little after 8:00 PM. Lucky for us, because the rains really came down a after 8:30 PM. But we had disbanded before it started to rain hard.

Hopefully, all participants will put a few of their best shots on a CD or DVD and show them to the rest of the group at our next regular meeting at RBK in August.

Bob Cross
Flossmoor





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