



March 2014

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Ken Johnson, Newsletter Editor

CALENDAR

SIG = Special Interest Group

This Week's Schedule:

March 15 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM

[General Meeting](#) - Leader: Ray Carlson

Location: Prescott Public Library

First Half-Hour: Annual Meeting and Elections for the Board of Directors

The Prescott Computer Society will conduct its annual elections at this meeting. PCS members may vote either at that meeting or prior to it over the Internet. The Board of Directors is composed of nine officers whose terms are for two years. About half of these seats are up for election each year - four in one year and five in the next. There will be 4 two-year positions open at this election. There will also be an election for a one-year term to fill out a recent vacancy on the Board.

Second Half-Hour: Jeff Stillman will explain what Microsoft is doing - in other words, what it means that they are discontinuing support. Next, he will discuss what a person using XP or Office 2003 should do if they do not want to upgrade and how much they should worry about losing Microsoft support.

Third Half-Hour: Ray Carlson will review a couple of free software programs that can be used as alternatives to Microsoft Office.

Fourth Half-Hour: Phil Ball will talk about the technical things a person should consider before upgrading including demonstrating the Microsoft webpage where people can test whether they have the capacity to handle an upgrade.

In addition to the presentations, the following are typical events which take place at our General meetings:

1) We hold an informal Flea Market in which you are encouraged to bring in your excess computer equipment or software and make them available for others to enjoy at no charge. Please deposit give-away items on the table in the back marked "Free Stuff." Any items left here at the end of the meeting are subject to disposal.

2) If you have items that are just too good to give away, you may set up a separate table and hold your own sale.

3) We conduct a raffle of new computer items at the end of the meeting, so make sure to get a pair of tickets from whoever is in charge and place one on the item you'd like to win.

4) We will also accept your used ink and toner cartridges for recycling. They are turned in to Think4Inc for credits which PCS uses to purchase office supplies from them.

Future Meetings

March 22 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM

[Special Topics SIG](#) - Leader: JB Burke

Location: Prescott Public Library

This month, we will continue our discussion about upgrading from Windows XP.

First Hour: JB Burke will discuss the key differences between XP and Windows 7 and 8 and particularly between 7 and 8.

Second Hour: Joan Baum will outline the differences between Office 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2013.

*Note that these dates are correct at time of publication but are subject to change.
Up to date information can be found on our website, www.pcs4me.com*

*Unless otherwise noted, our meetings are usually held in the
Founder's Suite at the Prescott Public Library.*

Prescott Computer Society Officers & Board of Directors 2012-2013

Officers:

President	Ray Carlson
Vice Pres	Phil Ball
Secretary	JB Burke
Treasurer	Edi Taylor-Richards

General Directors:

Joan Baum	Murray Smolens
John Carter	
Joan Fullmore	
Rich Knapfel	

Preserving memories in a digital age

Mike Hancock, Advertising Manager, Golden Gate Computer Society, CA

July 2013 issue, GGCS Newsletter

www.ggcs.org

More than 30 years ago—in 1982—videotapes came to the market. By now, though, many are degenerating. Alan Kolsky, of Digital Video Dimensions, startled attendees of the June 24 GGCS General Meeting by enumerating the probable life spans of various media:

CDs 5 - 100 years

Newspapers 10 - 20

Data-grade VHS videotape 10 - 30

Digital linear tape 10 - 300

Other magnetic tape 10 - 30

Microfilm 10 - 500

Photographic slides 100

Archival grade acid-free paper 10 -

Egyptian stone tablet 2,000!

But people often want to digitize home movies, slides, videotapes, audio recordings, documents, and photos for storage and ease of presentation. Some authorities argue that because of rapid advances in technology enhanced media longevity is questionable.

Future trends that will affect archiving include higher resolution and solid-state storage. “4K” resolution video format (4,000 pixels in horizontal direction) is coming and is needed for the huge monitors, which tend to have much softer resolution than smaller monitors.

“Ultra HD” is on its way, too. 64GB thumb drives are readily available, and solid-state drives are being introduced to computers and will displace mechanical drives and players. DVDs are ubiquitous today, but Alan warned us that improper handling can rapidly degrade them. Hold DVDs at their edges, across their diameter; do not handle them on their recording

face, and do not handle them roughly. Also, avoid using paper stick on labels because they cause wobbling and thus poorer recording.

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These factors affect the life of any media:

Quality of the original media. Kodachrome slides from the '50s are still beautiful.

The number of times the media are accessed.

Storage temperature and humidity; store in a cool, dry place.

Cleanliness of the storage environment.

Quality of the device used to read/write the media.

To help keep your media in good condition:

Keep media in its storage case.

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Continued from pg 3:

Avoid flexing or twisting any media.

Do not touch exposed media.

Do not expose magnetic media such as videotapes to magnetic fields (speakers, for example).

Alan recommends making backup copies of all digital media—two backups minimum for optical discs and hard drives. And re-copy them every two years or so. “High-8” tapes, especially from Sony, have a 20% failure rate, therefore they should be copied digitally and archived.

Tips for digitizing media

Alan suggests if you are digitizing home movie films to remember that film deteriorates and becomes brittle, and old projectors can accelerate damage.

With slides, look for at least 2,400-dpi scanners with no glass between the scanner and the film, otherwise you may have distortion from Newton rings, an interference pattern created by the reflection of light between two surfaces.

Canon is the best scanner brand for prosumers, or try to find an old Microtek 1800F on eBay. A 4,000dpi scan is the best, with 7,200 dpi being overkill, Alan says.

Document scanners are affordable at \$500 to \$600. Alan’s advice for scanning photos is to scan at 600 dpi for photos 5x7 inches or smaller, and at 300 dpi for greater than 5x7 inches.

Scanning services usually charge by the hour: \$15 to \$25. Be careful about cheap scanning services; they work as fast as possible and not necessarily with consistent quality. Also, pick out only the best of your photos to scan to reduce cost.

With videotape, “repack” the tape before copying by using fast-forward and fast-rewind before playback and capture. It helps, too, if tapes sit in the machine for a couple of hours before repacking because the heat of

the machine makes them more flexible.

The best DVDs for general purposes are Verbatim and JVC at the Gold level. Ritek is another good general purpose DVD. Meritline.com and Rima.com are good online resources if you buy at least 50.

Go to eBay to obtain a Sony VHS Adaptor for the High-8 reader and capture the output of a VCR.

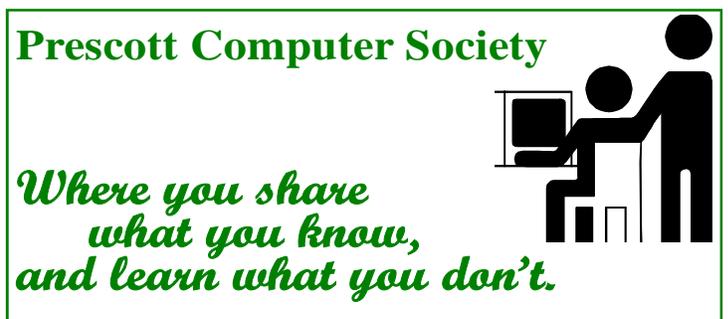
Alan showed us a couple of examples of advanced mixed media montages with voiceover, comprising slides, videos, and music. An external service would charge about \$6,000 for a 35-minute professional mixed media show.

Video editing software include Adobe Premiere Pro, Sony Vega, ProShow Gold, and Photodex. Be careful, though, of copyright laws when using, for example, Youtube video clips or music. Alan recommends paying for royalty-free music or looking for government newsreels.

If you wish to digitize tape, look for a Grass Valley Digital Converter that runs output to a computer (upward of \$250), or an outside service will do it for \$25/hour.

Clean dirty or greasy DVDs and CDs from the center out, radially, using a cleaner (Radio Shack has one).

Judging by the numerous questions and comments, a significant number of the audience had boxes of material that were candidates for digitizing!



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What to do if you think your email has been hacked

John King, Contributing Editor, Golden Gate Computer Society

July 2013 issue, GGCS Newsletter

www.ggcs.org

editor (at) ggcs.org

The first thing to do if you worry about email hacking is to change your email account

password to something more complex than 123456. For best security, use a password such as Q*93im#&qrR-57\$. You'll never remember it and won't have any more email problems [insert snicker].

My Hotmail account was hacked a while ago. A human hacker or automated bot was indeed sending spam from my account on Hotmail. My local computer wasn't involved. Everything was happening on the Hotmail computers.

Spammers like to use other people's email accounts to send spam because it's free and makes the spam harder to block. After I changed my weak Hotmail password to a stronger one, the spammer/bot couldn't access my account; and the problem ended.

Alternatively, a spammer may be simply spoofing the return address of the spam using your email address to make the message less likely to be blocked. There's nothing that you can do to stop that. You could stop using that email address, but the spammer can keep using it as the return address anyway.

Fortunately, spam with your spoofed return address usually stops in a few days or weeks at the most. The spammer probably found your address without hacking your account, for example, from the address book of a friend, an intercepted email, etc. Nonetheless, changing your email password is still a good idea.

If your email is a POP account, as opposed to a web mail account such as Hotmail or Gmail, the odds are higher that your computer has been hacked, which is a much larger problem. The best solution is to restore a backup system image made well before the hacking was

suspected. The chance that you have a backup image to restore is as likely as the intruder putting money into your bank account, but this instance is when

you want backups. Lacking a backup, you can thoroughly scan your system with several antimalware products in addition to your normal antivirus product.

Again, you should change the passwords for your Internet Service Provider, router, and email, and be sure that your Wi-Fi network is protected with the highest level of security possible. People often hate passwords on computers; but if any computer on the network was hacked, all computers on the network should have logon passwords. Fortunately, protecting the network is enough in most cases.

Personally, I'd suggest you change your email password, scan your computer with your up-to-date antivirus software, and wait to see what happens. If possible, do not do any online shopping or banking until some time has passed to confirm that only your email was hacked. Also watch for any suspicious activity on credit card and bank accounts.

Windows XP's Swan Song - Time is Running Out!

By Bill James, Editor & Webmaster, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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editor (at) ccokc.org

If you are still using Windows XP, please read on. Did you know that Microsoft introduced the Windows XP Operating System in October 2001 and it is arguably one of the most popular of all the Microsoft OS's? It is 13 years old and still represents a 37% share of all desktop operating systems worldwide as of June 2013. However, time is marching on and Microsoft has announced that starting April 8, 2014, there will be no more patches or updates – including security ones – issued for Windows XP. If you for instance do only email and web browsing you would think that this new policy would not affect you. Oh but it does because, over time without updates, Windows XP will not only become

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less secure, it also means that you will be facing support issues with finding anti-virus and other programs that work with XP. Your web browser, the tool that you use to access the Internet, will also be open to security problems because of the lack of security updates, locking you into obsolete and insecure browsers designed for XP.

The solution, as I see it, is not to wait until you have a catastrophic computer failure which will then force you to update your system. But consider that now is the time to start looking at your options.. With a working XP system you will be able to take your time and decide what you need to do. You will also have the ability to move all your data files, those emails you wish to keep, etc. to a new computer or updated operating system as well as find alternatives for those favorite programs that will work with your existing data. By thinking about updating or replacing your system, you will be able to logically and methodically determine what your needs are and choose a strategy that works best for you. The end result is not to be hurried or pressured in doing something immediately just to get your computer up and running again.

If you have already decided that Windows 8 is not for you, you will want to upgrade to Windows 7. You should be able find copies of Windows 7 through Tiger Direct or Amazon and some computer manufacturers such as Dell and HP are still offering Windows 7 as an option. You can also use Google and search for vendors that might carry the product. But, I would not wait too long because soon sources to that program will dry up. If your plan is to buy a new computer, I would wait until Windows 8.1 is released in the later part of October 2013 because there are significant changes in 8.1 that will negate what you may have already learned about the current version of Windows 8.

If you need help with learning to use your new OS, ask your user group to offer classes or workshops for the new OS. Moderating a SIG or Workshop is a wonderful way to learn about software. If you are in charge of programming, offer programs and workshops for your members. If you have not signed up for the APCUG/O'Reilly free books program, then you are missing a source of information that covers the newer OS. If you are unfamiliar with the program, look for information on the APCUG website or APCUG Reports.

Interesting Internet Finds

Steve Costello, President/Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida

August 2013 issue, Boca Bits

www.brccs.org

Steve Costello (<http://ctublog.sefcug.com/>)

Editor (at) brccs.org

In the course of going through the more than 200 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some items I found interesting during the month of July 2013.

Are You Being Fingerprinted Online?:http://askbobrankin.com/are_you_being_fingerprinted_online.html

5 Ways to Bypass Internet Censorship and Filtering: <http://www.howtogeek.com/167418/5-ways-to-bypass-internet-censorship-and-filtering/>

Find out if your Android is vulnerable to the MasterKey exploit: <http://www.ghacks.net/2013/07/10/find-out-if-your-android-is-vulnerable-to-the-masterkey-exploit/>

The Best Cloud Storage Services that Protect Your Privacy: <http://lifel hacker.com/the-best-cloud-storage-services-that-protect-your-privacy-729639300>

Twelve Things You Need to Know About Internet Privacy: <http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/twelve-things-you-need-know-about-internet-privacy.htm>

Introducing Instant RSS Search: <http://www.labnol.org/internet/rss-search/19238/>

5 Practices That Can Enhance Your Mobile Privacy: <http://www.maketecheasier.com/5-practices-enhance-mobile-privacy/2013/06/30>

Going Paperless: My Paperless Cloud

<http://www.jamierubin.net/2013/07/09/going-paperless-my-paperless-cloud/>