The Bug Report

Going To The Birds For Computers?   *by Sharon Grant*

This is no birdbrain idea. Researchers are turning to other resources to develop and environmentally friendly computer components: the farm.

Chemical engineer Professor Richard Wool of the University of Delaware, hopes to replace petroleum-based components with keratin-based composites such as discarded chicken feathers in order to manufacture circuit boards. Researchers envision that chicken feathers have many other applications other than just circuit boards.
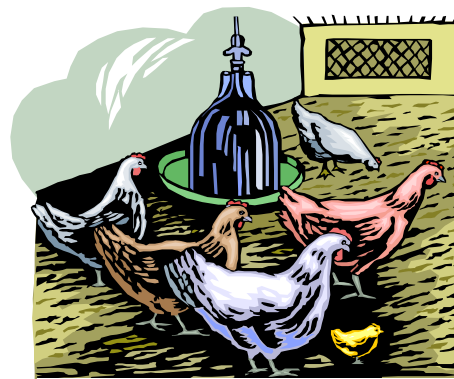
Intel is contributing to the expertise of this project, says Wool. He recently sent in a proposal to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for $500,000 to extend for over four years. And if his project is funded, the research will start this fall.

"*The basic goal is to introduce new green materials that will have a positive effect on the environment, reduce waste materials, provide a better bang for the farmers' buck and improve the current properties of petroleum-based printed circuit boards, which are not sustainable,*" Wool said.

"*It's the kind of the thing the USDA should be funding,*" he said. "*It's their chickens and their soybeans.*"

Wool said the circuit boards are typically made of an epoxy-fiberglass composite which is then printed with wires and circuits. He envisions using another environmental friendly material, soybean oil to replace the epoxy and the chicken feathers to replace the fiberglass, which would create a healthier combination for the environment.

In the US, 5 billion pounds of chicken feathers are generated every year.

Hardware Sig News   *by Bob Hudak.*

We have been very busy this passed month. Lot of little things to do like install new CMOS batteries, CD ROM drives and hard drives. That is pretty straight forward. What takes the time is when the operation system is not working right or a program is acting up. It is hard to separate hardware and software. They work together or you have a problem. Some of these problems take several Tuesdays to fix. It is a good thing that we have some great helpers that are experts in different areas. That's what makes it work. So come down to get help or to help out.

Inside this issue:

Special points of interest:

Tip-Of-The-Month

Greg Neumann brought us this tip for Windows XP users. If you are pluging in a Thumb Drive into your USB port, make sure it is safe to unplug it when you are thru working with it. You can set Windows XP for two different ways to do this. One choice is to optimize for quick removal and the second choice is to optimize for performance. To get to the screen where you can make this choice seems to be different with various additions of XP. So see if you can follow this. Start by inserting your Thumb Drive into a USB port. Then go to Device Manager and click on Storage Volumes. A screen with all your drives comes up. Select the Thump Drive and click on properties at the bottom of box. If things worked out you will have a box with several tabs on top. The one you want is POLICIES. From there you are given the two choices. Select one and call it a day. You can go to My Computer and select your Thumb Drive and go from there. As long as you work your way to the Policies tab. Good luck.

Library News

I ran across this little program that sounded good so I put a copy into the Library. It is a Adobe Reader speed up program that works under Windows XP, 2000, and ME. It was created in an effort to automate the process of speeding up Adobe Reader's launch time by disabling the majority of plugins that are, quite frankly, completely useless for most users. It works with Adobe Reader 3 to 6 and might work with version 7. The newer Adobe Reader programs are much bigger in size and take longer to load. All you want to do is read a PDF file so all the extra plugins are not necessary. But if you do need them they are still available to you. If you want you can convert back to the old slow way of loading the Adobe Reader program. Pick up a copy and give it a try. There is a Read Me text file that gives you all the how to information.

In one of the Bob (The Cheapskate) Click articles there was a website that caught my eye. www.savvysenior.org. What sounded worth checking out was that it had everything for seniors including 3000 FREE goodies. I checked it out and found a lot of interesting items but could not find the 3000 Free goodies. My slow dial up modem made me give up but if you have a high speed connection you might be able to check it out more closely and find these treasures. If you do, pass on the compete URL to me.

I loaded TaxAct 2004 without a hitch and it works great. Using this program to do what I though was a easy to do return using 1040EZ, let me know in short order that I could not use 1040EZ but had to use either 1040 or 1040A. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out why not. TaxAct was right. Using TaxAct saves you time and money in the long run because it does your return right and keeps the IRS from calling you about some errors you made. Order by phone: 1-800-5573-4287 The Deluxe version is $12.95 and it includes one free electronic filing. The Standard version is free for one return only. Have it in the Library if you want a copy. You can call and get a code that will unlock it for $12.95. Saves you the download time or shipping wait and cost.

Find out more and "Go to www.savvysenior.org it has everything for seniors including 3,000 free goodies."

By Bob Hudak
RSH532@aol.com

Software Library

Greetings From Frank Chao

Welcome to 79th "Internet Talk" article for "The Bug Report", a publication of the Greater South Bay PC Users Group (GSBUG). Liz and I hope that you are making good use of your computer and it's Internet connection.

Sugar-Free Cookies

Sugar-free cookies are available at Whole Foods Markets and various local drugstores. To find more about them or to order them via the Internet, you can go to:

http://www.josephslitecookies.com/
http://www.nutrilicious.com/
http://www.murraysugarfree.com/
msf_products.shtm
http://www.kelloggs.com/keebler/products/

murray.html
http://www.diabeticfriendly.com/
http://shop.store.yahoo.com/drsoda/
pefasufrco.html
http://www.voortman.com/sugarfree.html
http://www.curiouscookie.com/cookies/
sugarfree.asp?promo=10000

Enjoy !

Updates on Microsoft's Antispyware

Keep intruders out with antispyware!

Microsoft has updated it's "Beta 1" of "Antispyware" software. The new version number of this excellent software program is 1.1.09. The version that was available previously was 1.1.01

The improvements in the new version are described in:

http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=60401754

If the old version 1.1.01 is loaded into your computer, you cannot upgrade by running File / Check for Updates. At least I was not able to.

Here is want you need to do instead: 1) Go to the Windows "Control Panel". 2) Go to "Add or Remove Programs". 3) Locate "Microsoft Antispyware" to highlight it. 4) Click on "Remove". 5) Go to: http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.mspx 6) Download "Microsoft Antispyware". 7) Double-click on: "MicrosoftAntiSpywareInstall.exe" to re-install it into your computer.

During the middle of February, Bill Gates announced that their "Antispyware" program will remain free to users of the Windows operating system.

Internet Talk

Ways to Contact Me:

If you have any questions or problems, I can be contacted by the following methods:

1. Send me e-mail at: fchao@pacbell.net

2. Leave me a voice message at: (310) 768-3896.

3. Send "snail" U.S. Postal Service mail addressed to me:

4001 Inglewood Ave., Ste. 101
PMB 305
Redondo Beach, CA 90278

Or sell your computer and take up golf instead !!

by Frank Chao
fchao@pacbell.net

Joining AVI Files Together

To join *.avi video files together using free "VirtualDub" software (and without obtaining fancy video editing software):

See: http://www.divx-digest.com/articles/joinavi.html

And: http://www.virtualdub.org/

Joining AVI Files Together

To join *.mpg or *.mpeg files together (without obtaining fancy video editing software), using the "command prompt" in Windows, see: http://lists.evolt.org/archive/Week-of-Mon-20020204/067609.html . **If you *want to combine all of them to create one lengthy MPEG, "*if there aren't too many, just open a dos prompt, and issue the following command: copy /B 01.mpg + 02.mpg + 03.mpg final.mpg" says Dan.**

Last Resort For Virus / Spyware Infestations

If you are unable to remove a virus, spyware, adware, or malware infestation from your computer, your last resort is to wipe out your hard disk drive (s) and reload Windows and all application software from scratch. There are various ways to do this. You can:

OPTION 1: "Restore" from the restore CDs or DVDs that the came with your computer, if the manufacturer of your computer has provided them. Brand name computers tend to come with restore CDs and DVDs. "Clone" or "mom-and-pop shop" computers usually do not come with them. After running the restore CDs or DVDs, you will still have to load in any software that you obtained after the initial acquisition of your computer.
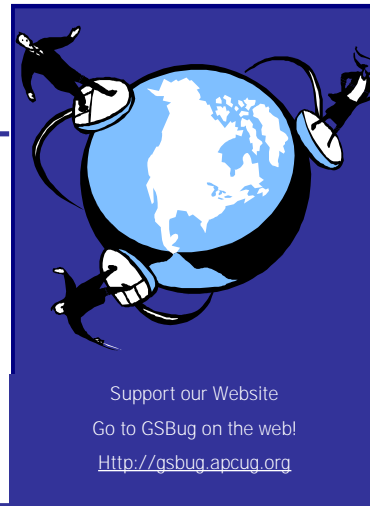
OPTION 2: Perform a step-by-step load of Windows and application software:

a) Install / re-install Windows from it's re-installation CD-ROM.

Don't let that PC virus get you down!

b) Install drivers from CD-ROMs or other portable media. and

c) Install application software from CD-ROMs or other portable media

OPTION 3: Run "Restore" from Symantec's "Norton Ghost" or Acronis' "True Image".

For information on "Norton Ghost", see http://www.symantec.com/sabu/ghost/ghost_personal/

For information on "True Image", see http://www.acronis.com/homecomputing/products/trueimage/

For a comparison of these two fine software applications, see http://cnet.nytimes.com/4520-3513_7-5658888-1.html

In order to use "Norton Ghost" or "True Image" when your computer gets infected with viruses or spyware, you need to have made a "backup image" onto portable media such as CDs or DVDs,

Internet Talk

Attention!

For every person you encourage to join the GSBUG, you will receive four months of free membership!

Last Resort For Virus / Spyware Infestations (continued)

prior to the incidence of the problem. So quit procrastinating and make that "backup image" today !

COMPARISION OF THE ABOVE OPTIONS:

"Option 3" is the least amount of work for you but the most expensive option since you have to buy either Symantec "Norton Ghost" or Acronis "True Image".

"Option 2" is the most amount of work because locating and loading drivers, (after a clean installation of Windows) is usually a difficult task, even for professional computer technicians.

"Option 1" is the most commonly-used method for restoring a Windows computer. It will take you a significantly longer time to use "Option 1" than "Option 3".

Free Antivirus Software

"PC World" magazine has finally acknowledged that free antivirus software is a viable way to protect your computer from computer viruses:

See:

http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid, 113462,00.asp

This article mentions four free antivirus software applications:

Grisoft's "AVG Free Edition" is available at:

http://free.grisoft.com/freeweb.php/doc/2/

Alwil's "Avast ! 4 Home Edition" is available at :

http://www.asw.cz/eng/avast_4_home.html

"Bitdefender" is available at:

http://www.bitdefender.com/bd/site/products php?p_id=24

"Bitdefender" also has a free, web-based, online anti-virus application which can be accessed at:

http://www.bitdefender.com/scan/license.php

H+BEDV Datentechnik's "Antivir Personal Edition" is available at:

http://www.free-av.com/index.htm

You can load all or more than one of these antivirus software applications into the same computer. However, see the next section for some words of advice:

MEMORY-RESIDENT GUIDELINES

At any single instant of time:

Do not run more than one anti-virus software application in the background as "memory resident", "background", "always on", "terminate and stay resident", "TSR", "real time", or "agent" at any given time.

Do not run more than one anti-spyware / anti-adware / anti-malware software application in the background as "memory resident", "background", "always on", "terminate and stay resident", "TSR", "real time", or "agent" at any given time.

At any given point in time, you can run one anti-virus software application in the background and one anti-spyware software application in the background at the same time.

Occasionally, there will be conflicts between the anti-spyware software that you run in the background and the antivirus software that you run the background in the same computer. This "gotcha" will be discussed in the next article.

All Members

Seagate Barracuda 7200.8 Hard Drive

by Carmen Carmack, Smart Computing

Designed for the high-end PC and entry-level server markets, Seagate's new line of Barracuda 7200.8 hard drives feature high capacities in both the ATA (Advanced Technology Attachment)/100 and SATA (Serial ATA) interfaces. The drives' capacities range from 200GB to a whopping 400GB on a new three-platter platform. The new platform supplies a higher data density using fewer discs and heads. According to Seagate, this results in faster performance and greater reliability.

Additional performance enhancements for the SATA drives come from NCQ (Native Command Queuing) technology. NCQ causes the drives to operate more efficiently and reduces mechanical wear and tear. When used with HT (Hyper-Threading) technology, which lets multiple applications send input/output requests simultaneously, NCQ also improves performance. Seagate recommends the SATA drives for gaming systems, PC-based home media servers, and small workgroup servers.

Specifications for the new Barracuda 7200.8 hard drives include a transfer rate of 80MBps

(megabytes per second), a standard cache of 8MB with an option for 16MB, an average seek time of 8ms, and a spindle speed of 7,200rpm. The drives also feature an areal density of 108Gb per square inch, a Seagate SoftSonic motor for quiet operation, and as much as 133GB of storage per disc. This amount of storage per disc lets the highest-capacity 400GB drives operate with three discs and six heads.

Both the SATA and ATA/100 drives come in a standard 3.5-inch drive form factor. The SATA drives use a 7-pin interface, and the ATA/100 drives use a 40-pin IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics) connector. The drives are compatible with Windows 98 Second Edition/NT/2000/Me/XP and may be used with Linux, Macintosh, and Netware OSes.

Barracuda 7200.8 Hard Drive
$200 to $400
Seagate
(877) 271-3285
(831) 438-6550
www.seagate.com

For the retail market, Seagate packages the drives with cables, a utility CD, mounting screws, and documentation. You also get a five-year parts and labor warranty and free technical support that continues even after the warranty expires. ■

HP Media Center m1270n Photosmart PC

The new HP Media Center m1270n Photosmart PC is a complete system for multimedia enthusiasts. Its design complements digital audio, video, and photography, and you can use its PVR (personal video recorder) features to watch, record, and browse television.

A 3GHz Intel Pentium 4 Processor 530J with HT (Hyper-Threading) technology powers the m1270n. It runs Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 and includes a 250GB SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment) hard drive, 1GB of memory (expandable to 4GB), an ATI

Radeon X300 SE PCI Express graphics card with 128MB of video memory and TV-out port, and Intel High Definition Audio with 7.1 surround sound.

Two optical drives are included: a 48X CD-ROM drive and a double-layer 16X DVD±R/RW drive with Light-

HP Media Center m1270n Photosmart PC

Scribe technology. LightScribe is a DVD/CD-labeling feature (which HP designed) that laser-etches images and text directly on special media. HP sells the monitor and speakers separately.

The m1270n comes with a built-in 9-in-1 media card reader. For ports and connections, HP supplies the computer with two front and four back USB (Universal Serial Bus) 2.0 ports, one front and one back FireWire port, and a microphone/headphone jack. The system also in-

Media Center m1270n Photosmart PC
$1,179 • HP
(800) 752-0900
www.hp.com

cludes inputs for composite video, S-Video (Super-Video), and audio in addition to a 10/100 Ethernet port and a 56Kbps (kilobits per second) m o d e m . The m1270n ships with an HP optical mouse, a media center keyboard, remote control, software on CD, and documentation. HP's standard warranty is one year for hardware and 90 days for software, with toll-free 24/7 phone support. Extended service plans are available. ◼

Smart Computing

Microsoft Wireless IntelliMouse Explorer
by Kylee Dickey

Wireless IntelliMouse Explorer
$54.95
(800) 426-9400
(425) 882-8080
www.microsoft.com/mouse

Microsoft's latest Wireless Intelli-Mouse Explorer seems to beg for attention. It not only features new scroll technology, but it also comes in eight colors and patterns: Black Leather, Cobalt Basin, Crimson Fire, Grey Metallic, Immersion, Metallic Blue, Night Vision (with a "Matrix"-like green pattern), and Platinum.

The Wireless IntelliMouse Explorer features a relatively new feature in Microsoft's Tilt Wheel. This new scroll wheel not only spins to control vertical scrolling onscreen, it also rocks from side to side, letting you control horizontal scrolling. I even found I

could scroll vertically and tilt the wheel just a bit to the side and scroll diagonally. More importantly, though, the Tilt Wheel has a shallow learning curve and is very natural to use. Additionally, it provides just the right amount of tension to prevent accidental horizontal scrolling.

The mouse has five programmable buttons: left, right, Tilt Wheel, and thumb-operated forward and back buttons. The mouse fit comfortably in my smallish hand. Colleagues with larger hands said the mouse was an equally comfortable fit for them. This mouse isn't a perfect fit for everyone, however, because it was designed for right-handed users.

The mouse incorporates 27MHz RF wireless technology and can communicate with its bundled USB receiver at distances of up

to 6 feet. The Wireless Intelli-Mouse Explorer's optical technology competes very well against similarly-priced optical mice, functioning properly on all but very reflective surfaces for me. However, Microsoft's mouse couldn't operate on some of the more reflective surfaces that Logitech's MX1000 laser mouse could.

Overall, Microsoft did a great job designing this mouse. It fits comfortably in the hand, communicates well with its cordless receiver, and tracks motion accurately on nearly all surfaces. Most impressive, though, is the Tilt Wheel, which should be a welcome addition for most users.

Mr. Modem's Desktop: Doing The Firefox Trot

One question that frequently arises from readers who have followed my recommendation to try the life-altering Mozilla Firefox (http://www.mozilla.org) browser is, "Now that I've tried it and I'm going to continue to use Firefox, should I uninstall Internet Explorer?"

I wouldn't do that for several reasons, not the least of which is that IE is tightly integrated with Windows; if you attempt to delete it, the headaches gained will not offset the minimal benefits derived.

Also, because Firefox doesn't support ActiveX, there may be occasions when you'll want to use IE to view a site that won't display correctly in Firefox. To avoid the arduous task of launching IE manually, download Mozilla's free IE View extension at https://addons.update.mozilla.org//extensions/moreinfo.php?id=35&os=nt&application=firefox&version=1.0.1&go=Go

With IE View, right-click anywhere on a Web page and select View This Page In IE.

Lastly, if you're thinking of making the spiritually enhancing switch to Firefox, purchase the Firefox Guidebook for $11.95 from Mozilla http://www.mozillastore.com/products/software/firefoxguidebook Like a relic from a previous era—not unlike Mr. Modem, I might add—the Guidebook is an all-too-rare hard-copy manual, with an actual index and real pages capable of inflicting real paper cuts. Entering this no-scroll zone will flatten your learning curve and reveal features you never knew existed in Firefox.

Mr. Modem Mini Rant: Permission-Based Email

If you haven't bumped into permission-based email as an antispam "strategy," and I use the term loosely, it's only a matter of time. Conceptually, you can insulate yourself from spam by accepting email only from individuals to whom you grant permission. Pulleeeze!

I can't think of anything more annoying than receiving a question by email, responding to it promptly, only to get an auto-generated "state-your-reason-for-contacting-me" form within which I'm supposed to request permission to email the person who contacted me in the first place! Hello? Memo to permission-based mail users: If you initiate email contact with anybody, it is YOUR responsibility to clear the way for a response. 'Nuf said?

Drivers' License Records Online

And finally, at the National Drivers' License Records Bureau Web site http://www.license.shorturl.com/, you can search an online database of more than 220 million U.S. drivers' licenses, including numbers, license-related information, and unflattering drivers' license photos. I knew I should have smiled. It gave me the heebie-jeebies when I first learned about this Web site, but stop by, look yourself up, and then let me know what you think: Should this information be available to anybody with Internet access? E-me at MrModem@smartcomputing.com . ■

Mr. Modem

Hotlinks

- www.ingenious.com—Ingenious is a new website that brings together images and viewpoints to create insights into science and culture. It weaves unusual and thought-provoking connections between people, innovations and ideas. Drawing on the resources of NMSI, the site contains over 30,000 images which are used to illustrate over 30 different subjects, topics and debates .

- www.ehow.com—is the world's largest collection of information on how to do things. With 14 categories featuring 120 subcategories, and tens of thousands of topics, eHow offers staff-written, reviewed and edited step-by-step solutions. Every eHow was written to be clear, concise, and accurate.

- www.nationalarchives.gov—The National Archives of England, Wales and the United Kingdom has one of the largest archival collections in the world, spanning 1000 years of British history, from Domesday Book of 1086 to government papers recently released to the public. Note: if you subscribe to their newsletter you can be privy to the latest finds such as: Ex-files; newly released documents from the government, competitions, quizzes and more, new online services for history, family history and learning.

- www.woot.com—Sells one product on their website once a day. The product is way below price. Today, when I went on the website they had a HP Scanjet 5550C Flatbed Scanner with ADF for $149.99 & shipping $5.00. Auto paper tray, 2400 x 2400 DPI. Suggested retail: $299.00

A Bit More

General Meeting Notice

Please mark your calendars for the General Meeting is to be held on the 1st Monday of each month at the Salvation Army Facility.

Address: Time:

4223 Emerald Street   7:30 P.M.

Torrance, CA

GS-BUG INC.

P.O. Box 6950

Torrance, CA 90504-6950

Phone: (310) 373-3989

GS-BUG On The Net

Web: http://gsbug.apcup.org

Event	Location	SIG Leader
Board Meeting 1st Wednesday after the 1st Monday of the month.	Levy School - 229th Place & Madison, Torrance, Rm 7	Gary Sexton, President UAGS@aol.com
General Meeting 1st Monday	Salvation Army, 4223 Emerald St. Torrance	First Monday of the Month
Daytime Hardware SIG Every Tuesday	Torrance Scout Ctr, 2365 Plaza Del Amo 1pm to 4pm	Bob Hudak - rsh532@aol.com rsh532@aol.com
Windows 98/XP SIG 4th Friday	Levy School - 229th Place & Madison, Torrance, Rm 7 6:30 pm	John Sullivan 549-2063
Windows 95/98/ME 3rd Thursday	Levy School - 229th Place & Madison, Torrance, Rm 7 7:00 pm	Virginia Pfiffner 374-2410 vpfiffne@.elcamino.edu
DIG SIG (Digital Imaging) Every Tuesday	Torrance Scout Ctr, 2365 Plaza Del Amo 9:00 to 12:00 pm	Fred Vogel 375-9336