

W N N N E R S

Wotepad

WINdows usERS September 2005

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Southwest User Group Conference 2005

By Terry Currier



How Internet Predators Can Harm Your Computer

By Gene Barlow
User Group Relations
Copyrighted August 2005

This is the first of a two part article on Internet Security. This article will focus on the harm that predators can do to your computer while you are attached to the Internet. The second article addresses what you can do to protect your computer from these predators. You need to read both articles to get the whole story.

Introduction

The Internet was originally designed as a communication tool between users of a few mainframe computers located inside some Universities and Government offices. To access this early Internet, you had to use a terminal that was inside these secure locations and attached by cable to one of the mainframe
Continued on page 3

The Southwest User Group Conference this year was held at the Town and Country Resort & Convention Center. It is a much larger hotel with more rooms and bigger banquet facilities. In fact, last year there were 258 attendees, while this year there were 340 and we all fit very comfortably. As always, it was very well organized. This year, John Iasiuolo of the **Computer Outlook Radio Talk show**

<http://www.computeroutlook.com/>

broadcasted from the banquet room. It was fun seeing how it was set up and run. They even had me on for a



few minutes. He is on during the weekdays from 5-6 p.m.

Friday night's dinner was hosted by **Smart Computing**
<http://www.smartcomputing.com>

Sign up for one of their great magazines and you can go onto their website and view the articles in all of their publications. You can do a search on their articles all the way back to 1987. They host a Q&A board for users with problems to post and other techies to answer back how to solve them. Remember, when you go to sign up for a subscription to one of their magazines—*Smart Computing*, *PC Today*, *CE Lifestyles*, or *Computer Power User (CPU)*—be sure to mention our user group name so we get credit for the subscription. They are giving user group members three free month's subscription for *Smart Computing Magazine*. To take advantage of this great offer all we need to do is send in a list of those who want to sign up. We will not (emphasize not) send in any name without permission. If you want us to sign you up for this, you must tell us to do so. This is a one-time thing that we can do, so send me your okay with name, address, and email address you want
Continued on page 5

Telephone Help Line

PROGRAM/SOFTWARE	NAME	PHONE	TIME
CorelDraw & Ventura & PhotoPaint	Sunny Lockie	949-644-0103	6-10 p.m. weekdays 9 a.m.-10 p.m. weekends
Hardware	Jonathan Means	714-542-1653	6-9 p.m.
Internet	Cathy Grammer-Margolin	949-645-5950	6-10 p.m. & weekends
Novell, NT & Networking	Jonathan Means	714-542-1653	6-9 p.m.
Quicken & Quickbooks	Max Lockie	949-720-8170	6-10 p.m. & weekends
Windows 95,98,Me,Xp	Siles Bazerman	714-897-2868	9 a.m.-8 p.m.
Word for Windows	Cathy Grammar-Margolin	949-645-5950	6-10 p.m. & weekends
WordPerfect Windows	Sunny Lockie	949-644-0103	6-10 p.m. weekdays 9 a.m.-10 p.m. weekends

General Meeting September 10

Fountain Valley Library
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Ontrack

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PURPOSE

WINNERS, a computer association, is a volunteer organization providing a forum for sharing information and experiences related to Windows-based software, encouraging ethical use of computers and software, and offering service to our communities.

MEMBERSHIP

Annual membership is \$20.00 for individuals; \$5.00 each additional family member.

MEETINGS

WINNERS generally meets the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at Orange Coast College in the Science Building, Room #149, 2701 Fairview, Costa Mesa.

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Website: <http://windowsusers.org>

FUTURE MEETING DATES

- ★ September 10
- ★ October 8
- ★ November 12
- ★ December 10

computers involved. The outside world could not get access to this early Internet system. Because the original Internet was limited to a very secure environment, no security measures were designed into the Internet. Later, as the scope of the Internet was broadened and became available to almost anyone around the world, additional security features were not added to the Internet. The Internet was initially designed without security and security was never added to the Internet as it grew.

The Internet has become one of the most useful features of our computers. Almost all computers can be connected to the Internet through phone lines, wireless, or via many types of broadband connections. Today, we keep in touch with our families and friends via Internet email, chats, and Internet phones. We find enormous amounts of information on almost any topic by researching the Internet. We locate hard to find items on the Internet and can order them and have them delivered to our door. We access our bank and investments using the Internet to handle our financial affairs. The Internet has brought us tremendous benefits in the past few years.

That is the bright side of the Internet. Unfortunately, there is also a dark side to the Internet that many of us are not fully aware of. The simple fact is that while you are connected to the Internet and can access thousands of locations, thousands of predators on the Internet can access your computer at the same time. As our connection time to the Internet increases, the risk of having harm done to our computers is skyrocketing. Broadband Internet connections greatly speed up our use of the Internet, but these are always connected and so our computer is always available to these predators. The purpose of this article is to identify who these predators are and

how they use your computer for their own needs. The following article will show you what you can do to protect your computer from these predators.

Internet Predators

Who are the Internet predators that cause harm to your computer? They are called Hackers and they come in a variety of types. Taking a cliché from the old western movies, these hackers are often distinguished by the deeds they do. If you remember the old western movies, the cowboys that wore white hats were usually the good guys. The bad cowboys normally wore black hats. Likewise, you have the White Hat Hackers and the Black Hat Hackers. They both break into your computer, but the White Hat Hackers do no harm and only do it for the challenge. The Black Hat Hackers are not as kind and will do all sorts of damage to your computer once they break into it. Finally, you have the Script Kiddies who are young kids learning to become hackers.

Where do these hackers hang out? There are hundreds of hacker web sites around the world and the hackers use these sites to exchange ideas and things they have learned about hacking into certain computers. They also brag about their hacking accomplishments once they have broken into a special computer. This brings them the admiration of their fellow hackers. Young kids from 10-14 years old learn to become the future hackers of the world on these web sites. So these web sites are the training ground for new hackers to learn and develop.

Taking Over Your Computer

What do these Internet Predators do to your computer? The Black Hat Hackers go through a number of steps to break into and harm your computer. The first step is to scan for a target. They want to find a computer that has fast internet access, has enough empty space on their hard drive for storage of their hacker tools, and is a fast computer. While this is

the ideal target, they will take a less valuable target if they can access it easily. They have special computer programs that scan and test computers connected to the Internet. Did you know that your computer is tested on average of 17 times each day by hackers looking for a target? When will they stop at your computer and decide to use it for their purposes? One in four computers will be hacked this year, so your turn is not far off.

Once the hackers find a target, their next task is to break and enter into that computer. Unfortunately, this task is very easy to do, since most computers have no security protection at all to keep the hackers out. Some users will have a firewall set up to prevent hackers from entering their computers. These firewalls have doors in them called ports. A firewall may have 256,000 doors or ports in them with some of these doors wide open. When a hacker finds a firewall, all he needs to do is to scan these ports until he finds one that is open and available for him to enter into your computer. Finally, hackers know of weaknesses in your operating system and Internet browser. He can take advantage of these weaknesses in the software and break through any security you think you have in place. It may take him a bit of time, but eventually, a hacker will find a way to break into your computer without you even knowing that he is doing this.

Once inside your computer, the hacker goes about setting up shop in your system. He may first look around for anything of value that he can steal from you. It may be as dangerous as your social security number, credit card numbers, or other financial information that he can use in the theft of your identity. Identity Theft is the number one consumer problem today and the number of thefts is growing each year. If your identity is taken and used, it will cost over \$10,000 in goods and services to resolve the problems from this crime. The hacker may find your personal

digital photos saved on your computer and share them with others on the Internet. Finally, the hacker may help himself to copies of any software he finds on your computer.

Next the hacker will make changes to your computer to fit his needs. He will store his hacker tools on your hard drive so that it is available for him to use in a moments notice. These tools may include viruses and worms to send out from your computer, key loggers to watch the keys you press as you enter your password to get into your online banking, email monitors to read your email messages, and other devious tools he has available to use from your computer. Once he gets all of his tools loaded on your computer, he will make your computer secure from other hackers. He will close up all of the open ports and operating system weaknesses in your computer so that other hackers will not be able to break into it. He wants your computer for his own use and not to share it with other hackers. He will leave one very well hidden back door open so that he can get back in to your computer at any time he wants to. The hacker now has your computer all ready for his future use.

Using Your Computer

Having set up your computer for his needs, what things will a hacker do with your computer? First, he may set up your computer to send out viruses to other computers. He will start with your email address book and send out these viruses to all of your friends and family members. After all, he does not want to have his computer identified as the source of the virus. Junk mail is also sent out mostly from hacked computers. My computer was hacked a couple of years ago and thousands of SPAM messages were sent out late one night using my computer. The next morning my inbox was filled with bounced messages from email addresses that

were no longer valid. Just emptying these bounced messages from my inbox took hours to accomplish. Working with my ISP, we found the faulty code that let my system be hacked and fixed it. I quickly learned that these hackers are serious. Another favorite hacker use of your computer is to send out porn pictures. It would really embarrass me to learn that my computer had been used to distribute porn to others. I may even be held legally liable for permitting this porn to be distributed from my computer.

Some hackers pride themselves in bringing down main computers, like eBay, Yahoo, or AOL. Other hackers go after mainframe computers at banks, stock markets, and government offices. To do this, they need to use more than one computer. Hackers will break into and set up hundreds of computers which are called Zombie systems. The hacker can activate these Zombies to do what it wants in a few seconds. Your computer may be sitting as a Zombie computer waiting to be activated to attack some large government defense computer. When it is activated with hundreds of other Zombie computers, they all send messages at the same time to the large computer under attack. When the mainframe computer is hit at the same time by hundreds or thousands of Zombies, it can't handle the load and will shut down to protect itself. Just what the hacker wanted. The shutdown of a major computer may take hours to bring back up and can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost businesses to these companies. This is serious hacking and your computer might be involved without your knowing it.

Check Out Your Computer

So, how do you know if your system has been affected by a hacker? Hackers pride themselves in doing their mischief without anyone knowing that they have been hacked. So, finding out that you have been hacked is not easy to do.

There are a few excellent software tools that have been designed to find and remove hacking tools from computer systems. The second article of this series will identify all of the things you need to do to protect your computer from hackers and to remove their mischief if you have already been hacked. Watch for this article to be sent to you in a few days or you can find it on my web site

<http://www.usergroupstore.com>

in the Newsletters section after September 1, 2005. In the meantime, you can check to see if your computer has hacker tools on it by accessing my Invisus web site at <http://www.myinvisusdirect.com/usergroupstore>

Look for and click on the small red button that is titled, "Test Your PC Now." This will take you to a page where you can download a trial of the hacker tool removal program and see what hacker tools are located on your computer. You will probably be surprised at what you find.

I hope you have learned more about the harm that can happen to your computer on the Internet. If you have questions about this article or Invisus tools, please email them to gene@ugr.com and I will try to answer them for you. Watch for my following article on protecting your computer from Internet predators.

Gene Barlow is the president of User Group Relations, a consulting firm specializing in promoting computer products to the user group community. He has over 40 years of experience with computer systems. He worked for IBM for 34 years and managed IBM's user group support organization for 14 years. He helped hundreds of user groups get started and is sometimes called the Father of User Groups for his involvement. When he left IBM, he set up his own consulting firm and has represented many software vendors to the user group community the past 9 years. He is an outstanding speaker, writer, and helper of end users and loves working with user groups. You may contact him at atgene@ugr.com.

SOUTHWEST USER GROUP CONF
Continued from page 1

to give (for access to their board) by October 17. Even if you are already a subscriber they will still give you something for getting on the list.

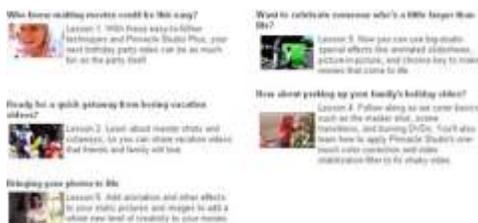
Family History

<http://www.familyhistoryondvd.com>

and Pinnacle Systems

<http://www.pinnacle.com>

co-hosted the Saturday breakfast. I was very impressed by the demonstration of what the Pinnacle Studio could do. In fact I bought Studio 9 when it went on sale. On their



website are some great tips for using Studio and making great videos. You'll also learn how to apply Studio's color correction and video stabilization filter to fix shaky video.

Intel hosted the luncheon. They actually have a user group link on their website <http://www.intel.com/>

They showed the second presentation (quickly) of how to build your own PC, and I have to tell you, it did make it look easy. They are getting ready a presentation on what they call the Digital Experience.

Corel

<http://www.corel.com>

hosted the breakfast for us on Sunday. The Painter program and Corel 12 were very impressive to see. But it was their Jasc Photo



Shop Pro 9.0 that really got to me. I've had it for months, not really bothering to put it on since I already had 8.0 installed. I installed it the next day. Check out the great pricing they give user groups at http://www.corel.com/promotions/cug_usd.html

WordPerfect Office 12 for \$149, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 12 for \$179, Corel Painter for \$229, Paint Shop Pro 9 for \$59, Paint Shop Studio for \$39, and Paint Shop Photo Album 5 for \$29.

Finally, **Microsoft** hosted the Sunday luncheon with a great presentation. I really liked the search capabilities of the new Microsoft



Vista operating system.

The Saturday vendor night was sponsored by **CompUSA**—you can go to their website and sign up for email notifications of sales before the ads appear in the newspapers.

Sunbelt Software

<http://www.sunbelt-software.com>

is the creator of Counter Spy. If you want to insure you are safe from spyware, get it. You can download a 15-day trial. The price of Counter Spy is \$19.95 for one year. After that, the renewal is \$9.95. Go to <http://www.ihatespyware.com>

and look for the PC User Group Conference button. Enter the code PCU2R and you get a second license for half price. They also gave us T-shirts.

Adobe

<http://www.adobe.com>

while not there, sponsored the newsletter and web page contest. The WINNERS website won second place, for which I got their GoLive CS2 software. It helps you build websites, intuitive visual tools such as prebuilt CSS objects that you can drag and drop to build sophisticated sites.

Book publishers that gave us the following discounts:

Addison Wesley

<http://www.awprofessional.com>

and Prentice Hall PTR

<http://www.phptr.com>

are each offering 35% off online purchases of their books. Enter coupon code SWUG. Expires October 1, 2005.

Apress - Go to

<http://www.apress.com/userGroups/ebookpromotion.html>

to obtain your 25% special user group member discount. There you will enter your user group name, your e-mail address, and this password: `apressug2563493`.

Microsoft Press - Microsoft's Mindshare is offering a special 20% discount on all titles of Microsoft Press Books. This discount is available for User Group members using discount code MCPC. Your friends may use discount code DCPC.

<http://mspress.microsoft.com>

New Riders - Provides a 20% discount off their prices. Log on to <http://www.newriders.com>

and complete your shopping. At checkout, enter coupon code is NRUZERZ. The coupon is not case-sensitive as nruzerz works too.

O'Reilly Press - 20% on all O'Reilly products and conferences <http://www.ug.oreilly.com/>

30% discount on O'Reilly, No Starch, Paraglyph, Pragmatic Bookshelf, SitePoint, and Syngress books. Just use code DSUG. They also had Bruce Fries there promoting his book on Digital Audio Essentials

Peachpit Press - Various Discounts <http://www.peachpit.com/>

and click on User Groups. Save 30% on all books every day at peachpit.com simply by becoming a Club Member. Answer a few, short questions in our ongoing, online survey. User group members should note that once you've become a member, you may use your user

group coupon code ON TOP of the permanent savings you earn as a member of the club. Just make sure you've logged onto the site before you make a purchase, then enter coupon code UE-23AA-PEUF (case-sensitive) at checkout.

On Vendor Night there were quite a number of table exhibitors besides the previously mentioned.

3D Album, which I brought from Dave Whittle

<http://www.webworkingservices.com>

when he came and presented at our group, creates a cool-looking way to



show off your digital images. Select the images you want and the way you want to show it, then burn it to a CD.

Answers.com –

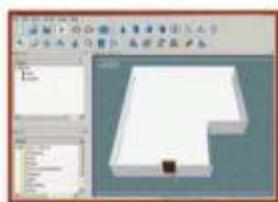
<http://www.answers.com>

is a new answers-based search engine. Their editors take the content from over 100 authoritative encyclopedias, dictionaries, glossaries and atlases.

Antics Technology -

<http://www.antics3d.com>

makes Pre-Vis, a great animation program. You can download a 30-day trial version. It is aimed at



for live action
& animated productions

designers, creators, directors and 3D professionals. Provides a flexible

and intuitive platform from which the non-3D professional can quickly create, direct and edit action scenes in 3D.

Blue Squirrel -

<http://www.bluesquirrel.com/usergroup>

with their great utilities including:

- BlueSync – Sync Podcasts to your card - for a daily audio newspaper
- ClickBook – lets you print customized day planner pages
- Click2PDF – create PDF files
- Grab-a-Site – downloads web pages and all their supporting files
- Spam Sleuth - Eliminates E-mail Spam Before It Reaches Your InBox
- WebWhacker – create an archive of Web information.
- WebSeeker – makes searching the Web simpler, and gives you optimum search results.

50% off at the above website

Creative Labs -

<http://www.us.creative.com>

was showing their professional soundcard system. Delivers 4X more effects processing from the Audigy chip, and 24-bit multi-channel playback. The USB Sound



Blaster Audigy 2 ZS Video Editor combines premier audio playback, accelerated video editing and a 4-port USB 2.0 hub in one easy-to-use solution. High-end audio system provides THX® certified sound and 24-bit ADVANCED HD™ quality in 5.1 or 7.1 surround. My son brought a Audigy sound card and loves it.

The Digital Photo Guy – put on another one of his great workshops.

You can learn a lot about how to take professional looking pictures by taking his classes.

<http://www.thedigitalphotoguy.com>

Diskeeper (used to be Executive Software)

<http://www.diskeeper.com>

When you don't have time to wait around for defragging, use their software. I probably use it 3 times a week after watching and deleting recorded TV shows on the PC.

Epson America

<http://www.epson.com>

Showed their great printers. BTW, they gave away a R200 printer. Of course, I've already had a R300 for over a year and half. Here is a tip: Don't tell your kids you can print on CDs. First they laugh, then they have you printing CDs for them. I was drooling over the 13-inch wide format R2400 printer.

ESET – Essential Security Against Evolving Threats

<http://www.eset.com>

has a great anti-virus program. It supports frequent incremental updates of the program. Small incremental update of the virus database minimizes network congestion and down times. AMON (Antivirus MONitor) also scans mapped network drives.

Ink Dot Lady– sells inkjet refilling kits, laser toner, tutorials, and paper. She also has a recycling program for ink cartridges.

<http://www.theinkdot.com>



Klassic Specialties – Don Baker did a workshop on inkjet printing. Check him out for great prices on paper (all kinds of paper,) and ink cartridges.

<http://www.klassicspecialties.com>

LapWorks -

<http://www.laptopdesk.net>

has products to save your legs from notebook burn. I bought one—it elevates the notebook off the legs and helps air flow.



Linspire -

<http://www.linspire.com>

is the Linux Windows look/work like operating system. It comes with an Email, Internet, and instant suite. There is also support for WiFi networking technology (802.11 B/G) and a complete office suite for word processing, spreadsheets, drawings and slide presentations. The programs are file-compatible with their Microsoft Office counterparts. Linspire instantly recognizes USB



and Firewire devices. Lphoto is a pre-installed photo management program that allows you to download, organize, edit, and share your entire photo collection. Included is Nvu, a web design program. They even give owners some “How-To” tutorials covering everything from simple desktop navigation, to setting up a wireless Internet connection.

muvee -

<http://www.muvee.com>

muvee autoProducer is a fast and easy way to transform your videos and pictures into slick productions. It

has DVD authoring with photo-handling and music effects. Its Artistic Intelligence automatically selects key scenes from your video (such as shots of people’s faces), and cuts these highlights to your music with cool effects and transitions synchronized to the beat.

Net Fulfillment Technologies -

<http://www.nfti.net>

makes WebBuild Express, a powerful, easy-to-use web editing program. You can arrange text and graphics on the page and control the



content and appearance of your pages. You do not have to know how to program or write HTML code to create sophisticated websites.

NewTech InfoSystem

<http://www.ntius.com>

They did a digital world session showing software for our digital way of life. They also showed their CD/DVD writing program including how to fit the long movies onto a single 4.7GB disc. Finally they showed their backup programs.

nik multimedia

<http://www.nikmultimedia.com>

showed Dfine® which targets noise and unwanted imperfections that may be a part of your image and allows you to control and redefine image details. Perform noise reduction, JPG artifact reduction, and enhance



color and light to create better photographic prints. I won a copy of it. Well, actually my wife won it, but I really did. You know what I mean.

Project Dogwaffle

<http://www.thebest3d.com/dogwaffle>

is an affordable paint software for the PC with built-in, user-defined, animated and fractal particle brushes. PC Software for Artists



who love to Draw, Sketch, Animate and Paint. You really should go to their website and see some of the amazing sketches posted there.

User Group Relations

<http://www.ugr.com>

Linda and Gene Barlow gave a workshop on how to have a trouble-free PC. They also gave one on Internet Security along with Dave Whittle.



Optimal Access – explained how to get organized with their program.

He was at the same table as the User Group Relations with the Barlows.

<http://www.optimalaccess.com>

In our welcome bags:

askSam

<http://www.asksam.com/usergroupspecial/>

Offered their SurfSaver 6 which places information from your browser into a searchable filing cabinet. Normally \$29.95 but you can get it for \$19.95. askSam 6 +

SurfSaver 6 are a flexible and powerful way to organize information and create searchable databases from Web pages, Email, PDF files, texts, and Word documents. Normally \$149.95 but you can get it for \$69.95. You can also download 30-day trial versions.

Cerious Software

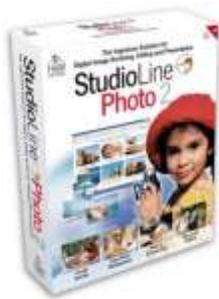
<http://www.cerious.com>

produces ThumbsPlus, a graphic file viewer, locator and organizer that simplifies the process of finding and maintaining graphics, clip-art files, fonts and animations. It displays an image (thumbnail view) of each file. You can use ThumbsPlus to browse, view, edit, crop, launch external editors, and copy images to the clipboard.

H&M Software

<http://www.hm-software.com>

produces StudioLine Photo 2 which makes managing and editing photo



collections a snap. It does organizing, filing, editing, improving, exporting, printing, emailing, web-galleries, slide shows

every function needed for digital images.

Iolo technologies -

<http://www.iolo.com>

offers up to a 50% discount on all products through 12/31/05. Call Iolo at 877.239.4656 to order product. To order online, use coupon code SWUG. You can download 30-day trial versions, with the offer good till December 31, 2005. System Mechanic \$25, System Mechanic Professional \$35, Macro Magic \$20, Search and Recover is \$20.

Laplink -

<http://www.laplink.com>

Laplink Everywhere 4 is their great remote computer control and access program. An annual 3-PC

license normally sells for \$129.95. Use coupon code LLE4THRTY at checkout and get it for \$30. Their PCmover program, for moving all of your applications, settings and data files from your old PC to your new PC while keeping all the new software intact, is normally \$39.95. Use coupon code PCMVRTEN and get it for \$10.

Photodex Corporation

<http://www.photodex.com>

makes a great image viewer - CompuPic Pro. You can easily view, crop, remove red eye, change format, resize an image, and more. They also make ProShow Gold which allows users to easily create quality multimedia slide show presentations to share with friends and family. Slide motion effects, captions effects, over 280 quality transitions.

RoboForm is a Password Manager and web form filler for storing online passwords and automates password and for entering. Download a complimentary version at <http://www.roboform.com/corts>

If you want to upgrade to the PRO version before September 30, 2005, use coupon code CORTS and get 10% off.

Techsmith

<http://www.techsmith.com/store/order/bundle.asp>

Use promotion code PRESBN05 and you can get SnagIt (screen capture program) and Camtasia Studio (Quickly record, edit and publish multimedia demos and presentations) Bundle for \$269, a \$50 savings. I use SnagIt all the time, including getting some of the screen captures for this article.

TriVista

<http://www.trivista.com>

makes software to display and share photos. The TriVista™ Paper Photocube™ software makes it easy to create picture cubes from your favorite digital photos. 3D ImageCube 2.0 makes it easy for you to create electronic picture cubes from your favorite digital photos. The Ultimate

Online Photo Gallery 3.0 software creates effective photo galleries in minutes. Go to

<http://www.trivista.com/swug>

and purchase their suite which contains six of their products for \$22.50 (half off regular price).

Ulead

<http://www.ulead.com>

VideoStudio™ 9 is easy-to-use software that turns home videos into fun-to-watch movies. The two-step DV-to-DVD Wizard creates complete movies in a flash. With more than 1000 customizable transitions, titles and special effects, beginners and seasoned veterans alike can easily achieve unique results.

Vox Proxy

<http://www.voxproxy.com>

Vox Proxy is a powerful script-writing program which allows you to use 3-D talking animated characters in PowerPoint slide shows. VP interfaces to PowerPoint through an add-in, so it runs directly



from PowerPoint's menu. I'm going to review this in the future.

All of the presenters did a really good job of showing their products and impressing the audience. A big thank you to all of the vendors who helped sponsor and make the conference such a success. If you have a chance to go next year you really should go.

NTI Backup Now! 4 Deluxe Suite

By Terry Currier

The NTI 4 Backup Now! 4 Deluxe Suite from Newtech Infosystems is actually two programs: DriveBackup! and Backup Now!.

DriveBackup! bypasses the file system and copies all data directly from the hard drive. It creates an image of your drive. Since it essentially takes a snapshot of the drive, you cannot choose which files to backup or restore. It is an all-or-nothing backup/restore program. You can use their Image Explorer utility to be selective in what to restore from an backup image. However, in the five backups I made of my C primary drive, DriveBackup said the backups were successful and it could read them for restoring. In fact, the files were even verified during the backup. Yet, Image Explorer always would say it was an "Invalid Drive Image backup file." It worked fine for the backup of my other drives. There are always some errors for the primary drive since some files are always in use and cannot be backed up. This happens in other backup programs also. For those that only have a C drive, they should do both an image and file backup or they will not be able to recover individual files.

DriveBackup is what you need for disaster recovery when your hard

drive crashes and you have to restore everything. You can also use it to copy all of your files from an old hard drive to a new one. For a new PC you are better off installing Windows to it rather than transferring. Then restore the data with Backup Now.

Backing up can be to CD-R/RW, DVD-R/-RW/-RAM, DVD+R/+RW, internal/external/network hard drives, FTP servers, MO, Zip, Jaz, and USB pen drives. It will also let you backup to two CD/DVD drives if you want to. That way you would not have to sit there waiting for it to fill and change disc right away. I used an external USB connected hard drive, a network drive, and DVD drive. I had no problems using the external drive or DVD drive.

NTI says it works with a network drive. However, I could not, at first, get it to work. Looking in their manual and help files was...no help. There is no reference to network drives (other than you can do it,

huh?). By going to their website and looking at the FAQs, I found I had to map the drive first to make that option work. After doing that, I had no problems.

If one drive becomes full, you can span it across to another drive. If you want to secure the

backup, you can password protect it. I used compression for the backup and it took the 16.1GB and compressed it to 11.4GB.

Backup Now! is the file level part of the suite. You can back up selected files and folders from local and mapped drives. It has a Windows Explorer-like interface, so it is easy to navigate and choose files to backup. Under Options you can include (or exclude) certain files you want or not, such as .doc files. Start out with DriveBackup but continue



(at least weekly) with Backup Now. You can backup All, or New and changed files only. The new and changed files backup breakdown into:

- Differential - new or changed files since the last backup of all selected files
- Incremental - new and changed since the last backup.

I set up Backup Now to backup my important data files. Total of a little about 1.3GB, which took about 16 minutes to backup and verify. After that, I set up a scheduled Incremental backup. This backs up only new or changed files each night and it only takes a few minutes.

Doing a restore was no problem. Backup Now gave me the choice of:



Plextor ConvertX PVR

By Terry Courier

- Never replace a file with its backup copy
- Replace a file only if its backup copy has newer file date and time
- Always replace a file with its backup copy

That way you make sure you don't overwrite files you need. I could also restore the files to the original location or an alternative one (just in case).

If there ever is an interruption while backing up, the Intra Backup Restart feature automatically restarts the backup process. I proved that when my electrical power grid cut the power off right in the middle of a backup. I have only one computer on a UPS and I think I'm going to buy another one for my second computer.

Backup Now also helps you to create a bootable CD or DVD disc to recover your primary drive or partition with a backup copy. With both modules you can verify the files. Just be aware that it will more than double the amount of time for the job. Under the Tools option, you can click to check if there are any updates for the program.

Summary:

The NTI 4 Backup Now! 4 Deluxe Suite is easy to use with step-by-step guides to walk you through backup and restore tasks. I do wish the documentation was more detailed. The Scheduler makes it easy to keep your backups up to date. I personally would like to see them combined into one program. The price is good. Remember: it is not "if" your hard drive will crash, it's "when."

Cost \$70 from NTI

<http://www.ntius.com/>

The Plextor ConvertX PVR model PX-TV402U is an external Personal Video Recorder (PVR.) There are connectors for cable, S-Video, and RCA jacks. The S-Video, and analog audio/video (RCA jacks) let you hook up your video camera, DVD, or VCR to it. Connection to the computer is through the USB 2.0 port. Digital Video Recorders are very popular but cost a lot of money. PVRs for the computer cost half as much as the units you hook up to the TV, and you don't have to pay a monthly fee.

I put this unit to the test by hooking it up to my computer that already had the AVerMedia 1500 MCE card in it. This is where I love the USB connectivity. I did not have to open the computer, and it just blends in with the other peripherals. Each had a separate cable connection and each worked perfectly.



I try not to watch TV on the TV much anymore. The beauty of using a PVR is that I can quickly fast forward through commercials. I find



I can save 15 minutes from a normal 60-minute show by skipping commercials. Time shifting while watching live TV lets you go back to see something you missed and speed through to catch back up to the live part. This is

ideal for those times when you're watching TV and some guy on the TV says something, but you could not understand what. Just go back to that part and replay it, then catch up to the live part.

The ConvertX is a slim (7.24 in x 1.28 in x 6.10 in), plastic-encased unit that comes with a high-quality TV tuner. It also is DivX certified so if you happen to choose that for recording quality it won't take up much space. I've recorded a two-hour show onto an ordinary CD with space to spare.

Plextor includes InterVideo's WinDVR 5.0 and WinDVD Creator 2.0 software. With that combination I can record in DivX®, MPEG-4, MPEG-2 and MPEG-1. I can also choose the level of quality. Choosing a lower quality will save disk space. It can also really make the picture look terrible if you make it too low while still trying for a large window. The WinDVD Creator software allows me to go through and take out parts (commercials) I don't want before burning to a disc. Plextor's website says that for a limited time Plextor is including Ulead's VideoStudio 8 SE DVD video editing and DVD creation software.

The WinDVR worked well for watching TV and scheduling what I wanted to record. I did find it odd, though, that once it was done recording, the scheduled entries for recording it did not do a self delete. I had to delete them myself. 120Kb of RAM were required to run. You can link to TitanTV.com, a free internet-based program guide that allows convenient scheduling of unattended recording. TitanTV also gives good, TV Guide-like descriptions of each show. If you just want to see what is on TV, use the surf function—it shows you 12 screens rotating through available channels.

I hooked up my VCR through the analog audio/video RCA jacks and imported a VHS tape for my daughter's work and converted it to DVD. I used the WinDVD Creator software to import and edit the recording. Editing with it is okay, but I did find it easier to do with CyberLink PowerDirector. On the other hand, with the Creator software I was able to make a DVD that went right into the movie without stopping for a menu. I could not do that with PowerDirector. For Mac and Linux users there is separate software. One other thing to mention: With

recording, and then deleting, the viewed shows, it fragments the hard drive quite a lot. So be sure to defrag your drive regularly. Diskeeper Software's helps me save time with this function.

Summary

Great unit, easy to install, and half the cost of the bigger digital video recorders. Cost is \$150-\$209 on <http://PriceGrabber.com>.

It comes with a one-year full warranty (parts, labor or replacement).

<http://www.plextor.com/english/products/TV402U.htm>

Minimum System Requirements

- CPU: Pentium® 4 1.8 GHz (Recommended)
- Pentium® 4 2.4 GHz (Using WinDVR 5 in MPEG-4 mode)
- HDD: 10GB of free space recommended
- Monitor Resolution: 1024 x 768, 24-bit color
- Graphics Card: Video card with 24-bit resolution capability and DirectX® support
- Sound card that supports 48KHz playback
- DVD+/- RW to burn DVDs and CDs
- OS Support: Windows® 2000/XP™



Crabby makes your life simpler with task panes

Applies to: Access, Outlook, PowerPoint, Word, Excel, FrontPage, Publisher, OneNote

By *The Crabby Office Lady*

Task panes, those little helper windows in Office programs, were introduced with Office XP. We've extended their uses even further in Microsoft Office System 2003 to help you get your work done with style and grace.

Before we jump right into traffic, let's make sure that everyone is on the bus: do you know what a task pane is? Because if you don't, you are:

1. About to be pleasantly surprised, because you do know what it is; you just don't know that you know.
2. Missing out on a handy little tool that follows you around from program to program like a wee helper elf.

Task panes, reveal yourselves!

First things first: let's sort out what a task pane is and then we'll take a look at a few of them.

OK, what is a task pane? (I'm so glad you asked!) Task panes are those handy helper windows that open automatically on the right or left side of your window when you perform certain tasks such as starting a new document, asking a Help question, or inserting clip art.

Note If you move your task pane around so that it's on the top, bottom, left, right, or even right

smack in the middle of your window (hey, I'm all for different strokes for different folks), it will appear right where you left it the next time you open your program. (It's nice to have something to rely on, isn't it?)

You can even open up a particular type of task pane when you just feel like it. And yes, you can close a task pane when you want to, as well. Just click the little x in the top right corner of the task pane. (Crabby understands; sometimes it's nice to just be alone with your thoughts.)

Note Task pane not showing? You poor dear. On the View menu, click Task Pane. It pops right up on the left or right side of your window (or top or bottom; wherever you left it last time). Microsoft Outlook® is a little different; in order to open the task pane, you need to either press F1 to open the Outlook Help task pane or type a question in the Type a question for help box.

Now, there are several different types of task panes (depending on the program you're in and what you're wanting to accomplish — we'll get to that later) but here are a few of the more common ones:

Getting Started task pane

The Getting Started task pane is available in most programs. (See the table at the end of this column to get an idea of which program has which task pane.) The Getting Started task pane is appropriately named; it's a great place to, well, start. It offers three basic ways to get you up and running:

1. Each day, when you open a particular program that has the Getting Started task pane, you'll see three



specially chosen links to help you get started. These links may be assistance articles, templates, Marketplace listings, and whatever else is available to you on Office Online. (If you're not connected to the Internet, you'll see the links shown in the image below, appropriate to the program you're in).

Note In order to be able to get those fancy changing links you need to turn Microsoft Office Online featured links on or off.

- a. On the Help menu, click Microsoft <Program Name> Help to display the <Program Name> Help task pane (task pane: A window within an Office application that provides commonly used commands. Its location and small size allow you to use these commands while still working on your files.).
 - b. Under See also in the task pane, click Online Content Settings.
 - c. In the Service Options dialog box, select or clear the Show Microsoft Office Online featured links check box.
2. The Show content and links from Microsoft Office Online check box must be selected before you can select the Show Microsoft Office Online featured links check box.

2. It has a Search for box where you can type a question and get help.

3. It displays a list of the files that you were working on before you closed the program. Just click the name of one and it opens like magic.



- Drag the handle to move the task pane.
 - To select another task pane, click the little arrow (which is a drop-down list) next to the name of the task pane you're in ("Getting Started" for those of you just joining us), and then click the task pane you want.
 - To navigate forward or back through the panes you have been working with, click the forward and back arrows.
 - If your Office program has a Getting Started task pane, click Home to open it. (If your particular program doesn't have a Getting Started task pane, the Home icon won't be there, and in those cases Thomas Wolfe was correct: you can never go home again.)
5. To close the task pane, click the X. To open the task pane again, click Task Pane on the View menu.

Search Results and Help task panes

The Search Results task pane and the Help task pane are closely related. You can automatically open the Help task pane by pressing F1 in any Office program.

Or, rather than opening the task pane itself, you can type your question in the Type a question for help box which looks like this:



After the program searches for an answer, the Search Results task pane opens and you can pick from a list of answers. If you don't see a suitable answer, you can try your search again.



When you search for help from within a program, lots of little icons appear next to your search results that may leave you scratching your head in wonder. So how do you know whether you're clicking a template, an assistance article, or a training course? (Hint: using your mouse, hover over each little picture and it will reveal itself to you):

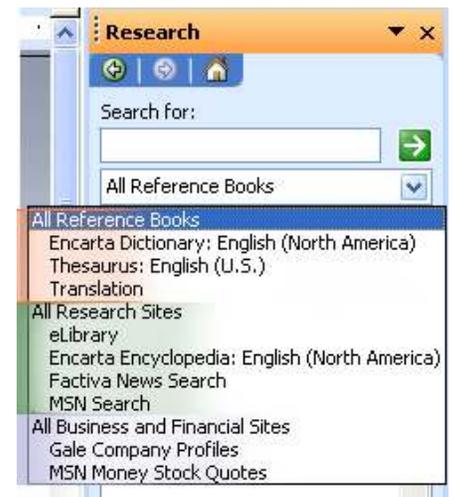
-  Help topic
-  Web article
-  Training course
-  Office Marketplace listing
-  Word template

For a complete list go to

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/assistance/HP010433191033.aspx>

Research task pane

With the handy Research task pane, you can use the Dictionary or Thesaurus, search the Web, or even get translation services without leaving your program (or your seat). You can search for definitions, stock quotes, and other related references and insert them directly into your document or e-mail message.



You can also read foreign-language e-mail more easily by using a single-click translation of a word, phrase, or the entire e-mail message.

The Research task pane also puts you in easy reach of research services that supply business and financial data. For example, you may want to learn more about a company's revenue or stock price history.

Clip Art task pane



- In the **Search for** box, type in a word related to the sort of clip you're looking for.
- In the **Search in** box, choose which collections you want to look through.
- In the **Results should be** box, specify whether you want to see clip art, photographs, animations, sounds, or all media file types.
- Animations (even of fussy cats, apparently) are indicated by a

small star icon on the lower right of the clip art preview.

5. Audio clips are represented by this icon.
6. Clips that are available from the Clip Art and Media site are shown by a small globe icon on the lower left of the clip art preview.

Note If you are connected to the Internet, you don't need to go to the site; you can access every Web clip right from your program. Talk about luxury....

Who's got what

Programs/Task panes	Getting started	Search Results	Research	Clip Art
Access	X	X	—	—
Excel	X	X	X	X
FrontPage	X	X	—	X
InfoPath	—	X	—	X
OneNote	—	X	X	—
Outlook	—	X	X	—
PowerPoint	X	X	X	X
Project	X	X	—	—
Publisher	X	X	X	X
Visio	X	X	X	X
Word	X	X	X	X

Not every program has every task pane, but the task panes I've listed above appear in several programs.

Of course, each program that has a task pane usually has one or more that are specific to that program's particular line of work. Some examples are:

- **Publisher:** Graphics Manager task pane. Keep track of all the graphics in your image-rich publication.
- **Word:** Styles and Formatting task pane. In this task pane, Word keeps track of, or saves, formatting information. You can easily apply formatting to other text by selecting it and then clicking on the formatting description in the task pane.
- **OneNote:** Note Flags task pane. See a complete list of all the notes you flagged on a particular project.
- **PowerPoint:** Slide Design and Slide Layout task panes. Select a design template or layout for your entire presentation or individual slides.

- **InfoPath:** Controls and Data Source task panes. The Controls task pane provides access to all of the controls that Office InfoPath 2003 supports. The Data Source task pane allows you to view the structure of your form's data, show and hide details for each of the fields and groups, and modify their associations.

Now remember, if you want to know what task panes are available in your particular program, you can click the little arrow next to the name of the one you're in to display a full list. Like this:



Hello? What are you waiting for?

STILL not convinced task panes are your friends? What if I told you that if you started using task panes, you could:

1. Find the options you need without all that hunting and pecking through menus.
2. Cut and paste and paste and cut and do it all from one spot.
3. Find all the information and tools—such as templates, Help, clip art, and more—from the Office Online Web site. No need to switch to your browser. (Who needs all that exercise anyway?)

“Old age is ready to undertake tasks that youth shirked because they would take too long.”

— W. Somerset Maugham

About the author

Annik Stahl, the Crabby Office Lady columnist, uses Office all day long. She gets her column ideas from your wild suggestions and demands, so if you're feeling demanding or just want to toss a comment her way, leave Crabby some feedback. If you have an Office tip you'd like to submit, send that to her personal mailbox at crabby@microsoft.com. (While she does read all of your e-mails, she can't offer personal assistance, so don't be offended by her curt auto-reply...)

WinDVD 7 Platinum

From InterVideo

By Terry Currier

I had WinDVD 5 on my old computer. I have to admit that I didn't like it. The new WinDVD 7, while not perfect, I think I will start using it. It has a couple of things that are cool to play with. WinDVD 7 will play Real Player files, Quick Time files, Windows Media files, DivX 5.2 Pro, HD Audio, MPEG-4 AVC H.264 Main Profile, 3GPP/3GPP2, & WMV-HD files. It will also play WAV and MP3 music files.

Features

InterVideo included the usual things such as Zoom and Pan. Click on the magnifying symbol and then hold the left mouse button down and mark the area you want to zoom in on. There is also a bookmark ability. If you find a particular place you want to come back to in a movie click and mark it as a bookmark. The side opens up and you click on the plus symbol to add the bookmark. A thumbnail picture is put in along with what chapter and time it is at. Just click on a bookmark to go back to that spot. Capture uses the same method only just captures the image on the screen. The images can then be saved as jpg, put as wallpaper, or emailed. Their fast forward and reverse is the best. If you click on the button one time, it will fast forward/reverse in 1x speed. If you click it two times, or more times, it will fast forward in 2x, 4x, 8x, 20x, and 60x speed, respectively. Clicking the fast forward/reverse button a seventh time will start the cycle over at 1x. Alt-P gives the viewer a selection of playing speeds. Besides the above mentioned speeds, you can go forward/reverse .2x, .4x, and .8x. You can quickly turn subtitles on or off by pressing the s key (I would have preferred an icon for it, but still good).

If you want to repeat a certain part of a movie, use the A/B repeat feature. Mark the A (start) then B (end.) Then have it repeat as many times as you want.. It will keep repeating until you stop it. If the user runs WinDVD on a laptop with Centrino processor they can take advantage of they Mobile Power Scheme. You can control the amount of system memory used.

Audio Center

Broken down into Audio Technology and Audio Effect. For Technology you have a choice of source being two speakers or headphones. Technology also lets you choose Stereo, Dolby, SRS, or Spatializer. Under Effect, you can set the acoustics for theater or concert hall. It did make it have a large hall sound. There is also a equalizer to make



it sound even better. You can play music with WinDVD. Open source and add files to the playlist. I did not like that I had to choose each file individually—not by folder. Be aware the controls will not make cheap/bad speakers sound good.

Video Center

Here you can control the display to be normal, always on top or video desktop. The video desktop works like Windows wallpaper, which is okay, but icons get in the



viewer's way. I really would love a transparent mode where I can still watch the movie and do work underneath. Under Color, you can change the Brightness, Contrast, Hue, Color, and GAMMA. With TimeStretch, you can control the speed the movie is played. Each click on slow or fast slows or speeds up the movie by .05. On a two-hour movie, each click on the fast side dropped the play time by six minutes. When playing it at that speed, I could still clearly understand what the actors were saying and be done just a little bit quicker. You can also set a finish time. Say you have to leave in one hour and 45 minutes, but the movie is two hours long. You can click on Finished time or Total movie time and input the time you want it to finish. WinDVD will play it at the appropriate speed to finish at that time. Their TrimensionDNM Advanced is suppose to allow for a smoother display to a

PC monitor. Actually, I found it displayed better with it turned off. I tried this on my test computer—a 2.67GHz Celeron with 768MB of RAM. I then noticed that for the TrimensionDNM function a Pentium 4 2.8GHz is recommended. So, to be fair, I transferred it to my main computer—a Pentium 4 3.0GHz with 1GB of RAM. Know what? Same result.

One feature I thought was really unique was being able to capture a section of video into an animated GIF format. They call it Quick Clip. Click on the Quick Clip icon on the toolbar. The Quick Clip browser comes out. Click the recording button to start recording. Click the stop button to stop recording, or it will stop recording after 30 seconds. To capture additional clips, just do it again. Each clip is shown by a thumbnail in the browser. Quick Clip only captures the video; no audio is captured. Yes, I realize I won't use it too often, but it just a fun little thing.



In the help, they mention that you can create a comic book by capturing images from your DVD or a media file and combining them. Do this by clicking on the comic icon—but there is no such icon. They do have a Movie Encyclopedia

feature which allows you to look up information about the stars, the director, and other movies they've been in. I did not use it.

One thing I did not like about WinDVD 7 was the box look. I did not like the toolbar on top and the other controls on the bottom. I just did not like the closed-in look. The tool section on the upper right side is



detachable. But then it just becomes a floating toolbar on the screen, so I fail to see the value of that. The bottom control can detach but is still on the screen unless you go full screen. Viewers will usually look at the screen center or top down, not bottom up. In other words, I want to be able to hide the top part, or better yet, have all the controls on the bottom. The next thing I did not like was the way it always opens on a small screen (about 25% of the display area). Then you have to go to full screen or drag the corners to the size you want it. I should be able to put it to the size I want it and have it stay that size



until I change it. Okay, I'll get off my soap box now.

Summary

If you have a DVD drive, then you probably have a program that can view a DVD movie. So for you to spend the extra money you had better get extras. You will definitely get extra functions with WinDVD 7. I think InterVideo did the right marketing move by lowering the price. Unless you are going to watch HD, go with the Gold.

WinDVD® 7 Gold, \$ 39.95, Platinum \$ 49.95— price from InterVideo website

<http://www.intervideo.com>

System Recommendations

- Intel Pentium 4 1.0G processor - using TrimensionDNM a 2.8GHz is recommended. For HD ability the requirements go up.
- RAM 256 MB RAM is recommended (note: that should be the start for Windows anyway). Again for HD 512 MB RAM is recommended.
- Operating System Windows 98SE, ME, 2000, XP
- Windows compatible sound card and stereo speakers.
- Video card with 24-bit resolution capability and DirectX support.
- Hard Drive 75 MB of hard-disk space for program installation.
- DirectX DirectX 9.

PowerDirector 4

By Terry Currier

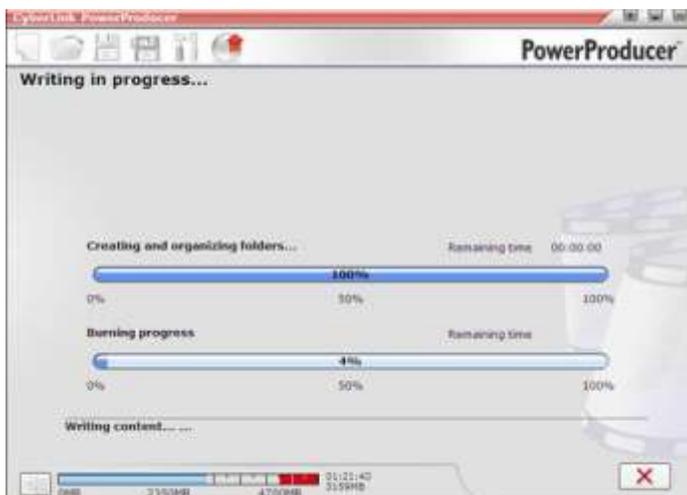
PowerDirector from CyberLink is actually two packages. The PowerDirector side takes in the movies and lets you do all the wondrous things. The PowerProducer side takes the worked-up version and helps to create a disc or file. This updated version fixed one of the things I did not like in PowerDirector 3. After working in PowerDirector 3, I would click to produce the movie which then took you to PowerProducer. Yet, I had to actually tell it what file to load even though I was just working on a project. Now it loads that movie right up.

I liked working with PowerDirector, but where I found weakness in the PowerDirector 4 suite is on the PowerProducer side.

When taking a movie into PowerProducer Step 1 is a choice of:

- Make a Disc – including VCD, DVD, and SVCD
- Create a File – formats including AVI, MPEG-1 and 2
- Create a Streaming File (for the Internet) – RealVideo, QuickTime, or Windows Media Video
- Write Back to DV Tape

Choosing to make a disc Step 2 takes you to choosing the format - VCD, DVD, and SVCD. Here it tells you that HQ (High Quality) profile DVD is equal to 60 minutes of video. Click on the button to change it to SP (Standard Play) for 120 minutes. If you happen to have more than 60 minutes and you don't choose the SP at the start, PowerProducer will continue right along like it will work. You can go on making choices for menu and chapters only



to find out when you go to burn the disc it will not fit. That also happened to me for an SP disc when I inserted too many chapters for a 118-minute movie. It added too much

overhead to fit, but did not tell me. There is a slider bar showing how much space it was using. But it is too easy to “assume” you have room when you know you are within the time limits or, at the start, lets you go on.

The default title on the opening is “My Videos.” Of course, I change it to whatever title I want. I found after adding chapters and buttons, going into preview mode, and then back to author mode, it again said “My Videos.” Changing it back makes it stay, but why did it change to begin with?

What if you want to put it onto a 8.5GB double layered disc, or use DiVX? You have to click the back arrow to select the type of disc. That choice really should be at the start of Step 2. DiVX is a MPEG-4 format allowing it to fit on a smaller disc. Once done, I was able to get my 118 minute movie to fit onto a CD, which totaled 650MB. CyberLink includes a DiVX player. It would not play in



either of my home DVD players. There are home and portable units that will play it. Windows Media Player 10 will also play MPEG-4.

It comes with 10 different background choices for setting up the menu. You can use a picture or screen capture of your own. I noticed that for some reason when I did that, I could not get as many buttons (to click on for the chapters) as when I took one of their backgrounds. Also, when I used my own background, and it went more than one page, it did not put my background in for each page. I was supposed to notice that and click on making it the default for each page. Okay—duh to me—but it should put the same background on each page to begin with.

You can also take your movie directly into PowerProducer and edit it there, but it is so much easier in PowerDirector. I think PowerProducer would benefit from a wizard to help people step through the different

processes. Advanced users could turn it off if they did not want it.

PowerDirector has some nice new features in this version. Magic Clean uses CyberLink Eagle Vision™ 2 technology to enhance the colors and brightness of the video. You can also use it to enhance photos and automatically remove red eyes. It can also be used to remove audio noise in video. At the risk of nit picking,

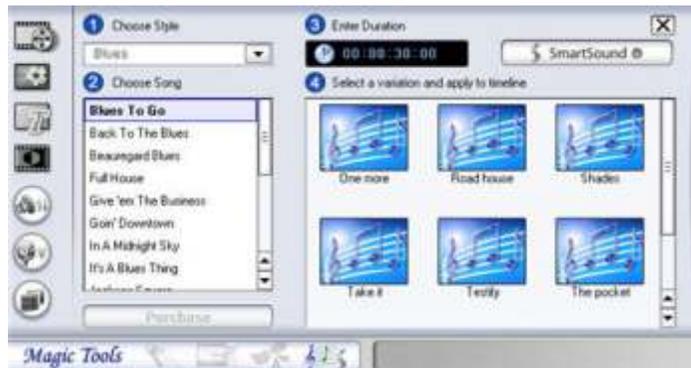


according to their help file they list the choices Magic Clean has with audio files as: to reduce audio recorded outdoors and filter out wind noise. Actually the choices are to reduce machine and wind noise. It works, but it cannot do miracles.

I have a really, really bad tape where you can actually hear the tape turning in the camera. Compounding that the maker lowered the quality—putting six hours of video on it. After importing and playing it, the start of the tape sounds like locusts are coming. Magic Clean could not fix that. However, you can do other things with PowerDirector. I imported some music, and brought up the Audio Mixing Room. I turned down the loud winding sound and had the music playing instead. In the Audio Mixing Room I can control the sound for the Video, Voice or Music.

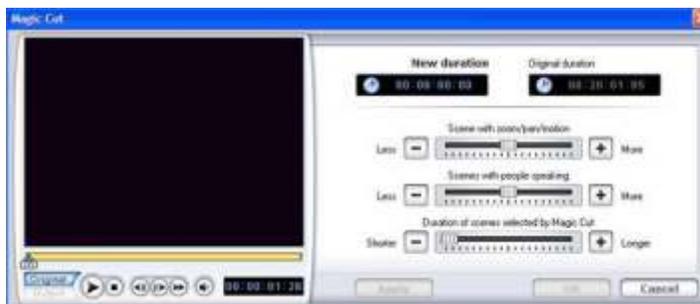
Inserting Chapters on the timeline provides a quick way for users to create video chapters in their movies. I really like and use this feature. You can have it set chapters evenly according to the full length of their video, at the beginning of each clip, or according to a set duration. I imported some TV shows, and edited out the commercials. I then had it set the chapters at the start of each cut. I can also go through and create more, or delete the set chapters. This information is transferred into Produce mode, making the DVD authoring process faster.

Magic Music helps you to create soundtracks that fit perfectly within the length of a video clip or photo slideshow. Included is a royalty-free soundtrack library arranged by genre. It will automatically adjust the playback of the music clips it contains to fit any length



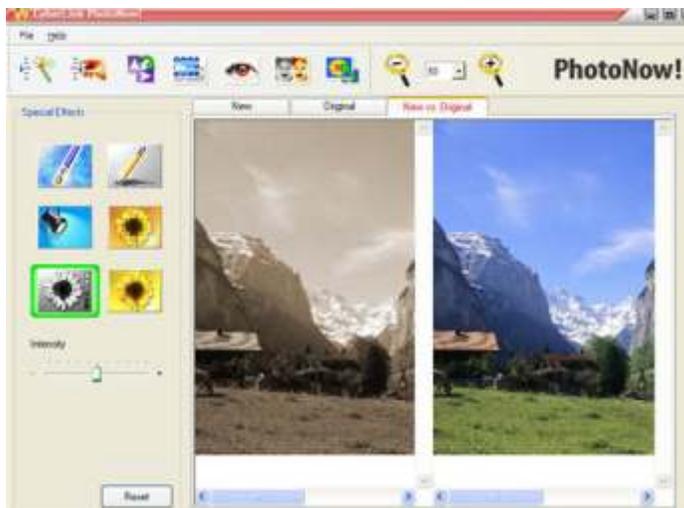
from 5 seconds to 2 hours, and fine-tunes the audio for a smooth cut-off.

Magic Cut helps you fit a video clip to a specific time by automatically cutting out unnecessary portions and keeping only the best moments. The Magic Cut feature uses video technology to locate and keep the most interesting moments, while discarding sections of lesser



importance. Great for the times when you have to get that 70 minutes of video down to 60. I did try it and thought it worked pretty well. You still want to check to make sure everything you need is in it..

PhotoNow will let you edit images (stills). You can resize, crop, rotate, remove red eye, adjust color, brightness and more. They show you the original and new image side by side so you can decide how it compares.



Multi Trim offers a handy way to manually edit a clip by inserting multiple in-and-out points along a timeline.

You can choose where to put the points, or you can have it detect scene changes. Once the points have been set, users can delete unwanted video with one click.

Magic Motion I thought was really cool. With your pictures in a slideshow you can pan and zoom in during playback. PowerDirector analyzes each image for its main



subject or subjects and then applies motion based on this key focus. You can apply the Magic Motion effect to all neighboring photos in the timeline.

In the Title Designer, you can move the title to any part of the screen, change font, change the color, blur it, make it transparent (percentage), I also can change the gradient



direction. I still would like to have a blank or black background choice besides just the title letters on the picture. I can trick it to do that by inserting such a picture.

One of the new features in PowerDirector 4 is locking the timeline tracks. That helps to protect changes by preventing the deletion or changing of elements.

It is really fun working with PowerDirector 4, especially the PiP (Picture in Picture). You may never use it, but when the option comes up, it makes it makes for a really cool video. You can modify the degree of transparency of the overlapping clip, as well as its position, motion, and other properties.

The Voice-Over Recording Room contains controls for recording a narration from a microphone while watching the video clip the voice-over is destined to accompany. You can control the position and volume of the recording.

Memory management with PowerDirector is pretty good. With nothing loaded, it took 8,648KB, AND with a two-hour 1.2GB MPG loaded, it still only took up 18,432KB of RAM. After doing a number of things, it went up to 123,000KB. When I switched to PowerProducer, it dropped to 60,804, while PowerProducer used 76,084KB.

For ease of use and all the features, I think PowerDirector 4 is the best program for editing and authoring movies. Even with its minor shortcomings this is a really good program that can make movie editing and authoring fun and easy.

PowerDirector \$90 from CyberLink
<http://www.gocyberlink.com>

For \$120 you can get a TV tuner card included. Download a trial version to see for yourself, the size is 107MB.



September 10 - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fountain Valley Library Fountain Valley

Bill Hersey from Ontrack

Ontrack Data Recovery has launched a new version of its EasyRecovery™ family of “do-it-yourself” data recovery and file repair software. Ontrack® EasyRecovery version 6.10 enhances support to include the latest file types and improves functionality for newer hardware configurations, helping users find the recovery solution most suitable for their specific needs. This includes the ability to recover files from digital camera media. Ever wonder if people can recover files from hard drives or floppys just thrown away? Come find out.

Note: For the September and October meetings we will be at the Fountain Valley Library. The Fountain Valley Branch Library is located at 17635 Los Alamos, Fountain Valley. Main cross streets are Brookhurst and Slater Ave. Very close to the 405 (San Diego) Freeway.

WINNERS
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