

W #1 WINNERS Notepad

WINdows usERS October 2002

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Bits & Bytes & Xp

By Siles Bazerman

Microsoft “officially” released Windows Xp SP1 on September 9. The reason I said it that way is that on Aug 29, the second projected release date, a Microsoft site that was password protected mysteriously lost its password and opened to the world. This site held the complete RTM version of SP1. It remained password free until September 9. As expected it was overwhelmed by download requests and the 133 meg download was very slow.



News group for several weeks. As far as the rest of the statements were concerned, a bit-by-bit comparison showed the “unauthorized” and the released versions to be identical. The general feeling was that Microsoft was testing the capabilities of the servers.

As a matter of interest, the link of the full download network version is the same site.

There are three or four ways to obtain SP1. The quickest is an express install from the Windows Xp update site. This will install only the parts not previously downloaded, and if you have installed the previous critical updates runs around 30 megs. You can download the full network version of 133 megs. Or, you can order a CD from Microsoft for only a shipping and handling fee. If you are in no rush, CDs should be available attached to magazine covers in the next few months.

You do not have to be on a network to use or install the network version. You can burn it to a CD and use it to install on both Home and Pro versions. In fact you can use your original Windows Xp CD and the download to make a slipstream version with SP1 integrated into the program so a restore install will not wipe out SP1 and you would have to install it over again. Instructions can be found at

<http://www.windows-help.net/WindowsXP/winxp-sp1-booted.html>

among other sites. I have used this one and know it works.

To Build or Buy

A Computer Purchase Saga

By Steven Dela

My Pentium 233 computer was showing it's age. With only 64MB of memory, an 8GB hard drive, an outdated 6x CD-RW and no USB ports, it was unbearably slow compared to the other computers I have access to. Besides, you reach a point where putting more memory or larger drives just does not yield a corresponding performance increase.

It was time to decide on a new computer. For many years I've assembled my own computers from parts that I gathered at several sources based upon the best technology available. A computer case from here, a hard drive from there and finally I have the components to build an entire system. Well, if you've ever assembled a computer, then you know that all those features sometimes don't mesh together well. Now throw in the new Windows XP operating system, and you might be inviting disaster. Most of

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Also, as expected, the Microsoft employees on usenet decried downloading from there as piracy saying it was a private site that was not open to the public. A few MVP's and several “wannabe” MVPs insisted that this was a pirate version potentially full of bugs and virus. One “wannabe” even went so far as to aver that he was an official beta tester and knew that this was still an early beta and the final would not be released for “about 60 days.” All this despite Microsoft's declaration that build 1108 was final and released to manufacturing. All these activities did was to increase the downloading (not unexpectedly or unwantedly).

The “wannabe” spent all of September 9 and 10 explaining that about 60 days covered the two days that elapsed between his statement and the release. When that was not accepted, he disappeared from the

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Telephone Help Line

PROGRAM/SOFTWARE	NAME	PHONE	TIME
CompuServe	Cathy Grammer-Margolin	949-645-5950	6-10 p.m. & weekends
CorelDraw 5	George Margolin	949-645-5950	Most times
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 October 12 Orange Coast College 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon in Science Room #149

ADS TECHNOLOGIES

Pig Sig at Arnies Manhattan Deli, Costa Mesa

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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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FUTURE MEETING DATES

- ★ October 12
- ★ November 9
- ★ December 14
- ★ January 11

President's Message

September 2002

I hope everyone had a good Labor Day weekend. We always enjoy going to the City of Orange International Street Fair to sample the different foods. I feel good that I have weeded down my messages on AOL. Three weeks ago I had 626 message (both in and outbound mail), now I'm at 165. My drive down to the Southwest User Group Conference in San Diego was worth it. I was able to see some really interesting possibilities for presentations. It was well done as always. Some special offers I want to bring to your attention.

From the press releases I get and post to the WINNERS Press Releases web page I found a great place to look up or verify phone numbers and Zip Codes. You can run your Microsoft Outlook contact information through it (up to 250) to verify addresses and Zip Code+4 information. Get the Zip and phone area codes with in a city or county. You can also get county statistics in 27 categories. Check them out at

<http://www.MelissaData.com>

Casady & Green makes Spell Catcher and they have a new program out called iData Pro 1.0 for Windows. It's a simple-to-use "database" program to keep track of any kind of information that can be written down or entered into a computer. To get you started, it comes with a number of predefined data and sample databases. And for you Palm OS users, you can sync your data from iData directly into your handheld using the new and included iData Remote feature. System requirements are Windows XP, 2000, Me, NT, 98 and 95. All this in a product that retails for only \$29.95. And they have special user group member pricing. Go to

<http://ug.casadyg.com/win>

Aladdin is best known for StuffIt Deluxe used for creating compressed (Zip, and others types) files with conversion ability between Mac and Windows. Integration with Windows Scheduled Tasks lets you schedule and automate tasks such as backups and FTP uploads. The improved compression engine is now the best available, shrinking files smaller than WinZip or any other zip utility. Get StuffIt Deluxe 7.5 now for only \$29.99. (25% less than retail price) plus, free bonus software is included. Get KMT's Ultimate Financial Calculator FREE with your download of StuffIt Deluxe 7.5. iClean 1.0, for PCs, blocks pop-up ads and protects your online privacy with built-in cookie management. iClean puts you in charge by giving you the power to choose which web servers may leave their cookies on your computer, and which may not. Make your choices and iClean will handle it from there automatically, every time you go online. You can get it for \$19.99. (45% less than retail). Dragstrip 3.8, is a "must have" utility for

all Windows 95/98 and NT users. Say goodbye to cluttered desktops and digging through browser windows to find what you are looking for. Get Dragstrip now for only \$14.99. (25% less than retail price). To get more information on any Aladdin Systems, Inc. products, go to www.aladdinsys.com. Members can buy these products at these great prices at

<http://www.aladdinsys.com/support/usergroups/ugvalid.html>

How about getting *PC World Magazine* at a discount? Plus get and a free software CD-ROM. You'll receive 12 more issues (14 in all) for \$19.97. Go to

https://w1.buysub.com/servlet/OrdersGateway?cde_mag_code=PCW&cde_page_id=5341

You can also get *Smart Computing* and *CPU* (Computer Power User) magazines at a reduced cost.

<https://www.sandhills.com/secure/smartcomputing/membership.asp>

or call customer service at 800-733-3809 and give the representative your group's code numbers. Those numbers for WINNERS are *Smart Computing*: 11900 and *CPU*: 535.

You know Microsoft Word can do web pages but there is a web page that tells "An Academic's Guide to Quick Web Page Construction"

<http://www.archiva.net/mstutorial3web.htm>

The site is designed to help academic instructors place their syllabi on the Web without devoting tireless hours to transferring their manuscripts into HTML format. It provides a brief tutorial on how to successfully turn a manuscript or syllabus into a properly formatted, fully functional Web page in as little as ten minutes.

The Adobe® GoLive® 6.0.1 update, now available at

<http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/new.jsp>

It addresses several issues that were identified in GoLive 6.0. Enhanced in many functional areas, including FTP connectivity, Cascading Style Sheets, advanced code handling, dynamic content, SDK, QuickTime, Smart Objects, table handling, templates, and Web download.

Trade shows

Electronic House Expo, November 13-14, Long Beach Convention Center

<http://www.ehexpo.com/pages/registration.htm>

Comdex in Las Vegas is coming up November 18-22

<http://www.comdex.com>

By the way if you were to go to Google and happen to look for winners of last year's Comdex awards such as "comdex winners," you would see us as the third site listed. I noticed a spike in

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COMPUTER SAGA

Continued from page 1

my frustration has been with features built into motherboards. Getting all those features to work with the power supply, drives, and video just doesn't happen. Getting the power management features to work properly has been the most difficult feature to enable.

Knowing this, I went about doing my research on the newest products available. I added up the costs one by one and looked at the total. Hmmm? Just for fun, I decided to take a look at fully assembled systems from local and national companies. Besides, I had the list of features and components I wanted in my system, so I began to shop in some stores and online. With many of the local Built-to-Order (BTO) systems I found, there was a limited number of choices and the component manufacturers were not always disclosed. Since I favor certain manufacturers, mostly based on past experiences, I found that option somewhat limiting. They could not guarantee me the components I wanted in a system due to several factors. I patiently listened to the excuses.

I turned to the national companies,—in this case Dell and Gateway. I found systems offered with various components, feature, and price ranges. Knowing that the computer market was very competitive, I figured it might be good to look at configuring a system or taking one of the may specials they offered and see how closely it matched my wish list. I waded through the checklists and selected what I wanted. Going to the checkout cart, I encountered another shock. Both wanted a shipping fee that added up to over \$100. Pretty hefty charge I thought.

I decided to wait a few days and come back to see if system configurations or pricing changed. To my surprise, they did. I guess it's like pricing airline tickets. Consumers don't understand how it's done, but you should be prepared to make a choice when the times, terms and

prices are right. I happened to catch Gateway during a transition from the old putty colored cases to the newer silver/black cases and components. The old color systems were on closeout.

I found a new Pentium 4 2.0GHz system with 128MB of DDR 2100 memory, 40GB hard drive, 24x12x40 CD-RW, 32MB nVidia video card, optical mouse, keyboard, 6 USB 2.0 ports, a 15" LCD flat-panel monitor, Windows XP Home, plus an assortment of other installed software. All this for \$999 after a \$100 rebate. I called and talked to a sales representative when I placed my order and got them to cut the freight rate in half. The system came with a one-year onsite repair warranty too. My system arrived five days after I ordered it.

When I spoke with the sales representative, he gave a list of the manufacturers they use for their components. I was satisfied with the choices and examined the system when it arrived. Just as he said, they used top-notch components from the sources I wanted.

When I fired up my system, it went through initial configuration, needed some personal information, found the installed hardware and booted to the Windows XP desktop. As I mentioned before, one of features I wanted most was the power saving features of the hardware and operating system meshing together to put the system into Standby or Hibernate mode. When I tested these features, I found they worked perfectly.

Having been a firm believer of self-assembled systems in the past, this experience has changed my mind about ordering a complete system from an established computer retailer. In my final comparison, I found that I saved myself over \$150, got a one-year on-site warranty, and the power savings features that I always wanted in a fully configured computer system.

Keep this in mind when you're looking for your next computer. Good hunting!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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that page access and checked it out. I figured a number of people are looking up such information.

Elections are in October, and nominations start with our September meeting. Jonathan and Mary Means have decided not to run for re-election. I want to sincerely thank them for all the years of work they have put into the WINNERS group. This means we need more candidates for director. If you would be interested in running, let Max Lockie know. You just have to be a paid up member and be willing to come to the Board of Directors meeting on the Monday following the WINNERS meeting.

Terry

Happy Fall!!



Experiences with adding External Storage

Part B

by Rudy Wolf

For some reason I was not happy with the results that I obtained from my Firewire installation. Ever since Comdex 2000, I was waiting for USB 2.0. Last year (2001) USB 2.0 was a reality. Real products were on display—mostly just Host Adapters for PCI slots in computers. But with those available, I felt that items such as scanners, external CDs, DVDs etc. could not be far behind. Intel was exhibiting motherboards with USB outputs that were due for release the first quarter of 2002. In my eyes Nirvana could not be far behind. I could get rid of my SCSI scanner which is about 6 years old, my SCSI CD and CD-RW, upgrade to a Pentium IV 1 Gig plus, and have 1 Gig of RAM. The computer I am using is almost 3 years old, probably a year and a half longer than usual for me. What has held me back was a stock market that has decreased my savings quite a bit so I haven't been ready to upgrade until everything I wanted was available. Anyway I was looking through the Sunday papers and came across a Staples advertisement that showed an external 40 GB USB 2.0 Maxtor Hard Drive with a Free USB 2.0 card for \$149.99. Of course the card wasn't really Free. You had to purchase it for \$49.98, receive a \$10 instant rebate and a \$40 mail-in rebate, and the external drive had to be purchased at the same time. The external drive was \$179.99 with a \$30 rebate so, with tax, the real cost was about \$167.00. I rushed out and made the purchase. Then the fun began.

Prior to the installation of the card, I was concerned that I might have some IRQ conflicts so I called Maxtor Tech Support. They were very helpful. They told me to make the install without

worrying about conflicts because Windows would handle it. The installation of the four-port USB 2.0 card was straightforward. After the physical install, I rebooted the computer. The plug and play part of windows found the hardware and requested the driver disk. I did experience a problem here because the request was for a PCI serial driver, not the USB 2.0 driver that was indicated in the instructions, so I ended up looking in other places rather than the driver disk provided by Maxtor. The second time, I got it right and everything seemed to be okay.

Next was the connection of the Drive via the USB 2.0 cable. No problem here either. Power is supplied to the drive via a transformer in line to the drive, similar to the power supplies used by laptop and notebook computers. I like the 1394 Drive kit because the power supply is built into the case and I don't have that transformer hanging there. The drive is preformatted. So after the connection, I was ready to go. I started by copying the files that I mentioned in my first article. I left the computer and when I returned, I was faced with what I call "the Blue Screen of Death" and you all know what that is.

Back on the phone to Maxtor. After only three selections and a short wait, I was speaking with a tech. I told him the problem and he suggested trying to copy some other files, smaller, or maybe groups, to see if I ran into the same problem. Well, in addition to that problem, I ran into at least one other problem. If the drive was powered up during computer boot-up, it wouldn't boot up. It took 3 or 4 tries to make that determination. It seems that a .vxd file "Msgsrv32" was the culprit. I shut down the drive, was able to boot the computer, then turned the drive on and

tried copying smaller files, but a whole bunch at once because that is how I planned to use it. Same thing—the Blue screen. One bright spot: one time I was able to get back to Windows without shutting down completely.

Back on the phone to Maxtor. This time I hooked up with the tech that answered my first query about the IRQs. Well he had me run "FDISK" and we found out that the partition (single) size was different that the drive size, which apparently causes problems. So he stayed on the phone while I deleted the partition, recreated it and formatted it. While he was still on the line I was successful in copying one large file, so I thought my problems were solved. Of course they weren't. I tried copying some other large files created by Drive Image and once again the Blue Screen. I recreated the Drive Image files thinking that they may have been corrupted, but that didn't help either.

Once again on the phone to Maxtor—different tech. Told her everything that had occurred and her solution was to back up all my data and reinstall my Operating System over the old install. She had a logical explanation for this. I don't know if that would have worked but I didn't want to try it, so today I returned the drive and card to Staples.

Some other comments:

- I did not have to wait very long to speak with a technician at Maxtor and the person who helped me with the "FDISK" procedure was excellent. He also told me that they format about a 100 of these hard drives at a time and he believes that there is a problem somewhere

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because the partition size is different from the drive size. Apparently I wasn't the first one to call who had this problem. As tech support goes, a lot has to do with the person you are speaking to and whether it is the end of their shift or not.

- The drive that Maxtor makes does not allow "daisy chaining." I don't know if this is or will be true of all USB 2.0 devices. My own preference is that I like to have that capability because I have enough cables coming out the back of my computer.
- Because of the number of different computer configurations, I would not blame my problems on Maxtor. As I have stated in the past it is not surprising that some equipment doesn't work on some computers, it's amazing that it works on so many computers. This is especially true of home user computers where software is added/removed (maybe incorrectly), different hardware is attached, drives replaced, drives added and on and on.

Are there problems with both the install and running of SP1? Yes there are a number of issues. The most frequent one is that SP1 will not install on certain volume serial numbers and also on some MSDN serial numbers. This has proven to stop many more legitimate users than pirates. The bypass solution for this was known weeks before the release date. Apparently many systems sold at computer shows or fairs by garage builders contained pirate versions of the OS. The buyers who thought they had legal software were left without much in the way of recourse unless they could locate the builder and obtain a legal disk. The MSDN subscribers just had to call Microsoft and obtain a new number.

Another major problem with pre-built systems was with a high percentage of failures of Dell 8200 machines. There appears to be a problem with the Dell customization of the OS on these that will not let SP1 install without errors. You are liable to end up with an endless reboot loop. HP/Compact has issued warnings to owners of some desktop Presario models not to install SP1 from Microsoft but to wait for HP's own version due out "shortly." Again, problems with customization. If you have installed XP Antispy, SP1 will not install. Antispy deletes two files that are needed for installation. You must uninstall XP Antispy and repair Windows Xp prior to installing SP1.

Both Easy CD Creator and Nero will have to be updated with the latest

patches in order to work, in general. Some have reported that these patches do not work, but earlier versions do work. What causes these differences remains unknown at this time. I also had to reinstall Omnipage Pro after the install for it to work properly.

One common problem is the inability to switch identities in Outlook or Outlook Express. This is a known problem and there are work-arounds available. The problem is being worked on by Microsoft and a patch will be released as soon as it is solved. There are a number of other problems, but none of them are common enough to see a pattern. Third party customization or tweaks are involved in many of them. A plain vanilla Windows Xp with a legal product id that was a clean install seems to be trouble free as a rule. (Watch, one will pop up now that I made that statement.) Be sure to turn off any AV, firewall, and as many running applications as possible before installing SP1. It will install from safe mode also.

Over one million downloads of SP1 occurred within the first two weeks following its release. There are remarkably few problems, considering the level of the users out there, all the way from raw beginners with their first computer all the way to the experts. Microsoft haters are very fast to blame Microsoft for all problems, even the ones caused by hardware manufacturers refusal to update drivers for 10-year-old hardware.

Elections are held in October

Come to the meeting and vote!

Quick: Delete the jdbgmgr.exe file!!

By Gabe Kingsley
PIBMUG's San Francisco Special
Correspondent

I've received a few of these dumb alerts over the past week. You haven't received one? It's an e-mail hoax pretending to be a virus warning that tells people to delete their Java Debugger Manager file, called jdbgmgr.exe.

What really ticks me off is the open list of recipients, often 30 to 50 of them, that become fodder for all sorts of junk through the systems of others.

So I'm on a one-man crusade to get people to use Blind Ccs for all mail, unless there is a compelling reason (such as a work group, etc.) in which they need to know who else received the message. Heck, I even send out tutorials for most e-mail programs to eliminate any excuses they may have.

Here's what I tell people whenever they forward me an ALERT!! ALERT!! About any virus:

Hey, Klez?

The most recent e-mail virus you're asking about is the Klez, and it has powers not seen in earlier types.

Klez can select an e-mail address at random from a CC list in a message on your or someone else's computer and send itself to the recipients of other messages. It's not limited to those addresses in your address book. In addition, it can "spoof" the return address, so that even if you were not the sender of a message infected with the Klez virus, your name and address may appear as the originator.

This is bad stuff and we should expect a raft of "me too" versions to come along!

Another, less harmful but no less irritating offense is the warning running around the world, advising you to

delete a specific file from your system because it contains a virus. This is a hoax! The file, jdbgmgr.exe, is one that Windows put there and enables certain Java scripting capabilities. You need it!

You may receive either the Klez virus or the relatively innocuous hoax warning described above because your name and address were in someone's CC list.

One of the greatest potential dangers is in the e-mails that are forwarded, forwarded and forwarded again by unwitting people. I'm sure you get them every day, and may even pass them along. The result is list after list of available addresses the Klez virus can use to send itself to people you don't know, and for people you don't know to send it to you, possibly giving the impression it came from you.

When you forward a message, COPY ONLY THE TEXT into a new message and send it to your friends. DO NOT just forward the existing message, complete with the previous lists of recipients and their addresses. If you want to forward a message, take care to manually remove the list of previous recipients to preserve their safety. It's really easy.

Learn and Use Blind CC

When sending messages to a group of people, unless it is REQUIRED that each one see the names of all others who received the message, PLEASE USE A BLIND RECIPIENT list. I am not aware of an e-mail program that does not allow you to send messages to a list of "blind" recipients, in which each person who receives the messages sees only their own address, and not the entire list of recipients.

If you have AOL, it is the easiest thing to do: Simply bracket all recipients in a pair of parentheses (address1, address2) each separated by a comma.

If you use Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express, there is a special field for "Bcc" (Blind copies) just below the "To" and "Cc" rows. If you do not see it when you open the program, click on View and select "Bcc Field." Eudora and Netscape Navigator also have blind recipient capabilities.

Yahoo! And Hotmail users can find the "Bcc" field for entering addresses in the online address header. The Juno mail software works very just like AOL, in that you can enclose multiple addresses in parentheses to make them blind, and as with AOL, they must be separated by a comma. By doing this each recipient will see only their own address, and not anyone else's, just as with this message.

So far, because Macs represent such a small percentage of the computers in use, the people who create the worms and viruses do not make them work with Mac computers. However, anyone using a Mac who does not hide the recipients of their e-mails makes their recipients vulnerable to the possibility of being hit with a virus from someone else on their CC list!

Anyone who wants to protect their privacy and safety will appreciate your doing this. Few things about e-mail bother me more than when something I sent gets forwarded to a large list of people I don't know, and because my address is now in their message base, I am then vulnerable to receiving a virus or one of those hoax warnings from them ... or anyone to whom they forward that message.

Please try to use blind recipient lists. It will make us all safer from viruses, worms and hoaxes.

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reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass,
Pasadena IBM Users Group.

For Inveterate XP Tweakers Only

By Carl Siechert, Co-Author,
Microsoft Windows XP Inside Out

One of the fun things about Windows XP and Windows 2000 is that there is so much tweaking you can do if you want to. You don't *need* to do any of the things that I described at a recent Pasadena IBM User Group presentation, but if you like peeking under the hood and making a few adjustments so things run just the way you like, you can. Here's a little more information about some of the topics I discussed:

Group Policy

Group Policy lets you make all manner of settings—everything from configuring the desktop to hiding certain drives to preventing the creation of scheduled tasks. These settings (and hundreds more) are stored in the registry, which you can edit directly.

But Group Policy is much easier to use than a registry editor. A few notes before you dive in:

- To use Group Policy, you must have Windows XP Professional or Windows 2000; it's not available in Windows XP Home Edition.
- To use Group Policy, you must be logged on using an account that's a member of the Administrators group.
- If your computer is not a member of a Windows 2000 Server domain, any settings you make in Group Policy affect everyone who uses your computer. (There is a crude workaround that lets you set up two groups of users—those who are affected by Group Policy settings and those who are not. For details, check out pp. 1074-5 in *Microsoft Windows XP Inside Out*. [Caution: this is the first of several plugs for my books.]

Ready, Set Go...

Start Group Policy by choosing Start, Run and typing "gpedit.msc". (If you end up using Group Policy very much, you'll want to make a shortcut to gpedit.msc.) The next two folders and their subfolders house the most interesting policies, although you might want to check out the others as well.

Then, in the left pane, select a subfolder of Computer Configuration\Administrative Templates or User Configuration\Administrative Templates. Select a useful sounding policy in the right pane, and an explanation of the policy appears. Keep poking around until you find something that interests you. To make a setting, double-click the policy name and then choose an option in the dialog box that appears.

Pretty easy stuff, but you're exploring where few Windows users dare to tread. Unless you work hard to enable policies that, for example, prevent you from logging on, the settings under Administrative Templates are pretty safe. Nonetheless, you should read the explanation carefully before you make a policy setting.

Want more information? For a complete reference to Group Policy in Windows 2000, visit <http://www.microsoft.com/windows2000/techinfo/reksit/en-us/default.asp>

Look for Windows 2000 Group Policy Reference in the contents pane. Nearly all the information in this reference applies to Windows XP Professional as well, although it doesn't include the policies that are available only in Windows XP. Another good resource is the Group Policy Object Settings spreadsheet, which you can download from <http://www.microsoft.com/WindowsXP/pro/techinfo/productdoc/gpss.asp>

Although the spreadsheet doesn't explain the settings, it lists all Administrative Templates policies and

shows which ones apply to each operating system; it also provides a convenient way to record your own settings. You'll also find more information in *Microsoft Windows XP Inside Out* (Chapter 34) and in our new book, *Microsoft Windows Security Inside Out for Windows XP and Windows 2000* (Chapter 19). The latter book, which should be in stores in August, includes a number of specific recommendations about policies you can set to better secure your system.

It's At Your Service

I also mentioned the Services snap-in, which is included in the Computer Management console. To open Computer Management, right-click My Computer (on the Start menu or in an Explorer window) and choose Manage. In the left pane of Computer Management, select Computer Management (Local)\Services and Applications\Services. (Tip of the day: You can open the Services snap-in within its own console. You can find a shortcut to Services in the Administrative Tools folder, or you can simply choose Start, Run and type "services.msc".)

So which services should you turn off by changing their startup type to Manual or Disable? This Web site offers some good advice:

<http://www.blkviper.com/WinXP/servicecfg.htm>

And (time for another plug) *Microsoft Windows Security Inside Out for Windows XP and Windows 2000* provides a brief description of every service included with Windows XP and Windows 2000 and offers recommended settings.

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Hold on to Your Domain...Before it Slips Away

Domain names are precious commodities and they can be lost in a matter of days

By Matt Lake

How would you like to see the Web site you've been working on all year slip through your fingers? You may think it's unlikely, but despite the enormous bureaucracy surrounding the Internet domain name system, dotcom names are falling out of the hands of registrants all the time.

The consequences can be embarrassing, costly, and time consuming. When you lose your domain to someone else, you must reprint your stationery with new Web addresses, send out releases to your customers confessing your mistake, and lose untold email messages when your email vanishes into the ether (or worse, goes to the domain's new owner).

But in most cases, it's easy to avoid problems like these. So learn a few lessons from four organizations that recently lost their domains. Take heart that two of them have got their domains back again—but don't assume that you will have the same good fortune as they did. Prepare for the worst—and be happy when it doesn't happen to you.

Fumbling the ball

In May 2002, two popular nonprofit sites lost control of their domains when they expired and speculators snapped them up. Their stories have some similarities, but have two different endings—one happy for the original owner, the other, not.

CASE 1: MacSlash the Knifed

Damien Barrett had built a very popular Macintosh help site called

MacSlash at the obvious domain MacSlash.com. Suddenly in May, he found that instead of the forums, articles, and tips that belonged there, only an under construction page remained. The Future Home of macslash.com apparently now belonged to Vicente Peiro Crespo of Valencia, Spain, and any e-mail sent to Barrett's former addresses or that of the MacSlash administrator Ben Stanfield vaporized in cyberspace.

The domain had expired, "dropped" back into the public domain, and been snapped up by a speculator. The previous owners of the domain "fixed" the problem by registering the .net version of the domain and hosting their site there. The MacSlash community rallied round the cause and registered the .org and .info versions of the domain too. And word spread quickly about the new location of the site.

The MacSlash story has happy ending: The issue became a cause celebre in the Mac community and pretty soon, things got too hot for the new registrant, who returned macslash.com to its original owner.

But not everyone is so lucky.
CASE #2: User Group Gets Mugged

The Pasadena IBM User Group is a long-standing nonprofit organization, so it seemed natural for them to take the .org version of their domain name. There, they built a well trafficked site for their members.

But in May of 2002, the domain expired without notice from the registrar, and was subsequently re-registered by a portal company based in Hong Kong. Ultimate Search redirected the user group's former domain to a generic portal with links flashing online casino ads and links that generate revenues for the company on a pay-per-click basis.

As of this writing, the user group has not regained control of its domain. However, it continues to operate its site at pibmug.com.

Why Did the Notice go Unnoticed?

Registering domains is like leasing a car: You have the thing under contract for a specified length of time. Once the term of the lease is about to expire, you can extend it indefinitely. And unlike lease cars, a domain only gets more valuable the longer you have it. But the responsibility for renewing the lease is all up to you.

Naturally, domain registrars are all too keen to keep their customers—the competition among domain registrars is fierce. The governing body of the .com domain system, ICANN, has accredited more than 50 registrars, and hundreds more companies resell domain services. So most registrars send out not one but several reminders to their customers to re-register their domains early and often.

Both MacSlash and PIBMUG used the registrar Dotster, which sends out automatic reminders at T-minus 45 days, 30 days, and 15 days before the domain expires. In fact, Dotster is so vigilant, the company even sends out reminders to former clients who have transferred their domains to other registrars.

But MacSlash and PIBMUG did not get their reminders. The jury is still out as to what happened with PIBMUG, but MacSlash traced the problem to over-vigilant spam filtering. When the group registered macslash.com, they used Apple's iTools email service, which provides free email at the mac.com domain. Unfortunately, the service's spam filtering treated repeated requests to renew domains as

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unsolicited commercial messages, and threw them into the bit bucket.

The Domain Graveyard

Once a domain expires, it enters a no-man's land for an unspecified length of time. During this time, the domain is on hold—it does not resolve to the previous registrant's site, but it can't be reregistered. Sometimes, the on-hold period lasts for only hours, sometimes for weeks.

The .com registry, run by Verisign's Network Solutions division, holds on to all the expired domains until it's ready to "drop" them en masse back onto the market.

And once an expired domain drops, it's up for grabs by anyone with \$10 to \$35 to spare. And an entire aftermarket has sprung up around expired domains. Companies like DomainsBot, The Unclaimed, and Daily Expired Domains compile lists of on-hold domains for subscribers, and domain registrars including Network Solutions and Dotster maintain services for their subscribers to snap up domains as soon as they drop.

The aftermarket for expired domains creates a feeding frenzy among speculators, which is bad news for domain holders who let their domains expire. Once a domain is reregistered, the only recourse the original domain owner has is to go through ICANN's dispute resolution process (which is outlined at www.icann.org/udrp). During disputes, ICANN tends to favor copyright holders and people with legitimate claims on a domain—which would act in favor of PIBMUG's claim against Ultimate Search. But the process is a time consuming hassle, and ICANN doesn't give preferential treatment to previous owners of domains who let them expire.

Losing the Ball Completely

Not every organization has control over its own domain. Sometimes, a company without strong technical

resources will give the reins to an outsider who seems to have a better handle on the situation. This can have disastrous results—as a theater company and a housing authority found out earlier this year.

CASE #3: Taking a Domain by Barnstorm

The oldest continuously operating community theater in Pennsylvania, The Barnstormers Theater outside Philadelphia, bought a Web site package from a small hosting company two years ago. The company took control of everything—domain registration, Web site hosting, and updates. This was great for the small volunteer-run theater...until the hosting company went bust. The Web site disappeared, and any visitors to the group's domain name got an error message. The Barnstormers' contact at the now nonexistent host went AWOL, and left them high and dry.

The theater found free hosting for its Web site at GeoCities, and rigged up an ad-laden version of their site there. But nobody involved knew how to handle the domain issue, so they had to change their Web address at the various arts and theater portals, search engines, and periodicals that listed them.

When the domain finally expired, a fan of the group snapped it up and arranged for new hosting for barnstormerstheater.com at a local community site.

But unlike Barnstorm's good fortune, there are disasters.

CASE #4: Housing authority...without authority

A city housing authority in Delaware (which asked not to be named in this article) outsourced most of its technical services to a pretty reliable company throughout the 1990s. The support company developed and maintained the Authority's general infrastructure, including an intranet.

At the time, there were no plans for a public Web site, but last year, an office manager submitted plans and a project management timeline for a public site that she could develop and manage herself. When she came to register the Authority's domain name, she found that the .com, .net, and .org versions had all been registered years earlier. The registrant was their IT company, which used the names as a bargaining chip for taking control of the Web development project—a potentially lucrative contract.

Who Owns Your Name?

Possession is nine tenths of the law. If you register a generic sounding domain name or one that matches a business you own and run, you have a good case for keeping it. And if someone else does so on your behalf, you won't easily be able to wrest control of the domain back. If another Barnstormers theater had registered barnstormerstheater.com when it dropped, the original owner would have no recourse through ICANN or the law courts. The only other recourse would be to buy back the domain at whatever price the new owner wanted—and prices can run into the hundreds or even thousands.

Five Cardinal Rules for Domain Owners

If these horror stories have given you the fear, take heart. A few simple guidelines can keep you from suffering the same fate.

Rule #1: Control your own domain

Make sure your name and contact information appear in your domain's owner and administrative contact fields. Hop over to your registrar or to betterwhois.com and enter your domain name in the form. The site will return the domain's whois information (who is the owner, who is the technical contact, and so on). Your name, address, and current email address should be in the owner (or Registrant) and Admin Contact fields.

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If it's not, follow your registrar's instructions for updating them.

Rule #2: Keep contact information up to date

The most important information in any domain record is the admin contact. It's to this email address that domain registrars send their reminders. If you ever decide to switch to a different registrar, all the confirmation email messages go to this email address. If you've changed ISPs, or you've hired a new office manager, you'll need to update this email address immediately. Different registrars handle the update procedure in different ways—some registrars let you do this by logging in to administration Web pages, some require notarized written proof.

Check with your registrar for details.

Rule #3: Keep your own records

Don't rely on your registrar for domain renewal reminders—we've already read how two organizations come to grief over that. Check the whois information for all the domains you have registered. At the bottom of the whois record, you'll see details like these:

Record last updated on 1-May-2002.

Record expires on 12-Oct-2004.

Record created on 12-Oct-1999.

Plug that "record expires" date in big bold letters into your PIM, your diary, and your wall calendar. Tattoo it on your wrist if you need to, but make sure that a month before that date, you pay the registrar for another year or two of registration.

Keep a Lock on Your Domain

Some domain registrars provide a service called domain locking. If you're paranoid that someone may try to hijack your domain, check with your registrar about how to turn on the lock. This prevents anyone from transferring ownership of your domain (not an easy or likely thing for most domain holders, but possible for hackers targeting high-profile sites).

Of course, it also prevents "slamming" by unscrupulous registrars who send bogus domain renewal notices that actually transfer your domain to a new registrar. You don't lose control of your domain this way, but you often end up paying more or losing services like free hosting or e-mail forwarding. And even high-profile companies like Network Solutions seem to regard this as a legitimate marketing tool.

Keep a Backup

What's the first thing you do when you hit a Web site that's not what you were expecting? You check the Web

address for typos, right? If it looks right...you figure you copied it down wrong and replace the .com with .net, or .org, or even .info until you see what you're expecting.

Anticipate this behavior, just in case someone manages to get control of your main Web domain. If you have the .com, .net, and .org versions of your domain name in reserve, all redirected to your main site, you'll have an instant quick fix for any domain napping problems. Sure, this will set you back a few bucks—but it gives you more flexibility in the long run.

And it's pretty good for bragging rights too.

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General Meeting
October 12, 9:00 a.m.

ADS Technologies

ADS makes a number of products designed to make the computer user's life easier. From USB hubs and ports to letting you add an external hard drive to your system with Firewire with their Pyro 2.5 Drive Kit. USB InstantDVD is an easy-to-use product that lets you edit your home movies, then burn them to CD or DVD so you can share them with friends and create long-lasting archives.

Instant DVD is an external video capture/editing device that connects to WEindows-based purchase through a USB connection. This external device includes video encoder and decoder chips and hardware as well as MPEG2 codec to compress and decompress MPEG2 video. Other Firewire products include cards, drive kits, webcams and hubs. USB products include USB Instant Video, 2- and 4-port humbs, USB Port (PCI) USB to Ethernet Adapter, and Port (Cardbus).

October 12 – 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Orange Coast College

Science Building Room #149



Pig Sig: Arnie's Manhattan Deli, 2831 Bristol Street in Costa Mesa



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