

W WINNERS

Wotepad

WINDOWS USERS DECEMBER 2002

In This Issue

Bits & Bytes & Xp.	1
Ants in my Hub	1
Review - Easy Recovery . . .	4
APCUG NOOZ	6
Buying a DVD	7
General Meeting.	8

Bits & Bytes & Xp

By Siles Bazerman



Since this column is printed in several different newsletters I never know in what month you read it. So, I want to wish all my readers a very happy holiday season and the very best of wishes for the New Year. For some of you it will be early, while others will read this after the fact.

There have been a number of critical updates issued by Microsoft for all flavors of Windows during the month of November. There were even some (7) post Windows Xp SP1. Many, most(?), are to close vulnerabilities that you have never seen. This does not mean that they did not exist, only that no one was able to take advantage of them to invade your computer.

According to the latest report from the Aberdeen Group, over half of the security advisories issued by CERT in the time frame of January through October 2002 were for Linux and other open source software.

“Open-source software, commonly used in many versions of Linux, UNIX, and network routing equipment, is now the major source of elevated security vulnerabilities for IT buyers,” the report reads. “Security advisories for open-source and Linux software accounted for 16 out of the 29 security advisories—about one of every two advisories—published for the first 10 months of 2002. During this

same time, vulnerabilities affecting Microsoft products numbered seven, or about one in four of all advisories.”

It does not sound as though “Open Source” is as secure as advocates claim, and it sounds like Microsoft operating systems are more secure than the headline-seeking newspaper analysts imply. Why write stories about systems that most consumers don’t care about, even if they know they exist? Remember getting headlines ups a writers pay.

Reports still keep coming in indicating the widespread use of illegal copies of Windows Xp in pre-built systems. It seems that many more than expected small system builders went this route and are now trying to evade the consequences. Many people are finding that their bargain PC was not such a bargain after all. However, the non-installation of SP1 has not blocked the ability to install subsequent or previous patches. All that, so far, are blocked are the specific updates contained in only SP1, and not on the update site. How long this will last, and what will be the effect on the installation of SP2 are still unknown.

There is nothing much new on the software front, as most companies are concentrating on distribution for Christmas rather than introducing new products this close to the holidays. Also, many are waiting for the Consumer Electronics Show for the introductions.

See you all next time.

Ants in my Hub

By Paul Lujan
by way of an e-mail forward

So, last night, I come home after a 4-1/2 hour drive back from LA (note to law enforcement officials: that’s a “6” there, really), and sit down in front of the computer to check my mail. My connection is, for lack of a better word, sss-slow. I go to look at the hub to see if everyone else is having this problem.

Nope, Mike and David’s activity lights are busily flickering; it’s only me who has been screwed. I reach down to fiddle with the connection, and notice that the hub is covered with ants (as well as my hand, after the fiddling). “That’s odd,” I think to myself, “what would ants want with our hub?” But I’m way too tired to deal with it at the time, so instead I go to sleep.

I wake up this morning, and decide to investigate further. Yep, the hub is definitely swarming with ants. And it doesn’t look like the ants are just going over it to somewhere else (especially since there aren’t any tasty ant treats anywhere nearby); they’re clearly going into and out of the hub. Some of

Continued on page 3

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 December 14 Orange Coast College 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon in Science Room #149

Prolific Publishing showing the Marine Aquarium screen saver

WINNERS Notepad is published monthly by WINNERS, PO Box 9274, Newport Beach, CA, 92658. A subscription is included with all paid memberships in WINNERS. Other non-profit user groups may reprint *WINNERS Notepad* articles without prior permission, provided proper author, title and publication credits are given.

WINNERS, contributors and editors of *Notepad* do not assume liability for damages arising from the publication or non-publication of any advertisement, article, editorial, or other item in this newsletter. All opinions expressed are those of the individual authors only and do not necessarily represent the opinions of WINNERS, its Board of Directors, the *WINNERS Notepad*, or its editors.

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Terry Currier 714-774-2018
tcurrier@aol.com

Vice President

George Margolin 949-645-5950
inventor@pobox.com

Secretary

Ken Kamber 714-637-4496
kkamber@bigfoot.com

Treasurer

Rudy Wolf 714-528-3715
rudywolf@pobox.com

Membership

Louise McCain 714-964-8031
swpghlmom@aol.com

Publicity

Steve Dela 714-775-8373
stevede@aol.com

Programs

Terry Currier 714-774-2018
tcurrier@aol.com

By-Laws

Max Lockie 949-644-0103
mlockie@pobox.com

Editor/Publisher

Sunny Lockie 949-644-0103
sundesigns@pobox.com

Board Members

Cathy Grammer-Margolin 645-5950
inventor00@pobox.com
Ray Howard 714-966-1468
candr321@bigfoot.com
Ed Koran 562-427-2560
Edk246@aol.com
Charles Schreiber 714-378-1253
cschreib@csulb.edu

Info/Message Line 949-644-0295
Website: <http://windowsusers.org>

FUTURE MEETING DATES

- ★ December 14
- ★ January 11
- ★ February 8
- ★ March 8

the ants going in are even carrying little white pellets. "Is that food?" I wonder. "Where is it coming from?"

I unplug the hub and pick it up, and then kill all of the ants that come out of it. And kill some more ants. And kill some more ants. This goes on for a while. I begin to think that the little white pellets look an awful lot like eggs. I shake the hub, and it sounds like someone has poured a handful of coarse sand into it. "That's odd," I think to myself, "I could have sworn this hub didn't come with the sand option." I initially thought that there were just some ants here, but it's pretty clear I've got more on my hands now.

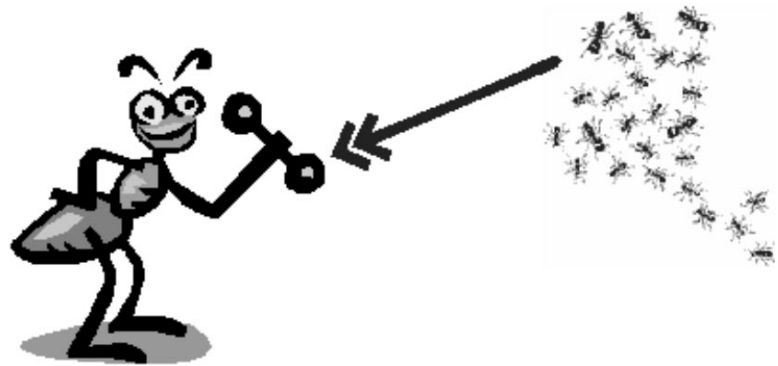
So, I decide to take a closer look at the hub. Unfortunately, the hub boasts a screwless construction, but I know that my screwdrivers can be used for more than merely removing screws, so I start prying. As I do so, a bunch of ants and eggs, as well as what look like larvae (basically, they look like slightly-smaller-than-normal ants, but a very pale brown instead of black) continue to fall out (into the sink, since I've become clever enough to do this over the sink).

I finally get the thing open, and see a bunch of eggs lying on the circuit board, but less than I would have expected if there's really a colony set up here. So, I figure that they're probably under the circuit board, and set to work unscrewing the circuit board to take it out of the box.

Jackpot! (That is, if my goal were to win an ant colony, which it really wasn't.) The entire bottom of the box is coated with eggs, and I see a large ant which I can only assume is the queen. I terminate the queen with extreme prejudice, and then wash out the box (it's made of metal, so I figure it'll be okay.)

The circuit board, on the other hand, I can't just wash off (since I hold hopes of saving the hub, not really wanting to have to drop \$30 on a new one), and there are lots of eggs wedged in small places, like between the link lights or between the chips connected to the

ports, where they'll be really hard to get out of. So, I set the circuit board aside for the moment to take a shower.



ENLARGEMENT OF ANT CARRYING AWAY DATA PACKETS

When I come back, I notice that the ants have actually done me a favor! (Suckers!) In their futile attempts to save the colony, they've picked up the eggs themselves to scurry around like maniacs, solving my problem. I pick off the ants, and then vigorously shake the board to try to dislodge anything still stuck in the ports, and much to my surprise another queen falls out. (I've read that Argentine ants can have more than one queen per colony, but this is still a surprise, especially since I thought I had already gotten almost everything.) I dispose of her, too, clean up the remaining ants, and figure I might as well try putting the hub back together. Not that I can completely undo my prying, but hey, that's cosmetic anyway.

Much to my surprise, it actually works! And my performance is back from miserable to normal.

Ants 0, Me 1...

Man, I hate ants. If I could choose one genus to completely wipe off the Earth, assuming that it wouldn't, like, destroy the ecosystem (but really, what depends on ants? Anteaters? Well, they're not doing a very good job, are they?!), it would be them. Well, okay, I suppose I should probably choose something like mosquitoes, since even though they're less personally annoying to me, they still have the whole large-scale disease-spreading thing. But I'd expect some serious compensation from the WHO for not choosing ants!

Paul Lujan. Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group.§

EasyRecovery Professional

By Terry Carrier

EasyRecovery Professional is marketed by Ontrack, who have been recovering data from failed hard drives for years. First off, it is not a utility to bring a hard drive back from death. It is for the recovery or repair of files from faulty hard drives. It will help you retrieve deleted files, or even a file on a disk that was formatted.

monitors its health during normal operation and logs SMART thresholds. If any of the drive's SMART thresholds have been exceeded, a SMART alert will be reported in this test. 2) The Short SMART Test will issue a short self-test command to your drive designed to quickly identify major internal failures with your drive. 3) The Extended SMART Test will issue a comprehensive self-test command to

have time to backup your valuable information.

Also in this section is SizeManager which shows you graphically the size, and or space each folder is taking from the hard drive. JumperViewer merely takes you to a web site where you can look up the jumpers settings for any hard drive.

For those not familiar with the design of the File Allocation Table (FAT) – a deleted file is not really deleted. When you delete a file the operating system merely marks the space that was taken up by the file as now open for reuse. Recovery programs look at the FAT to see where the file was and attempts to bring them back. Even if you have deleted it and emptied out your recycle bin, the space where the file was is still there, and therefore the file is also. That is until the space is reused. That is why if you find you did error in deleting a file, you seek to recover it right away. The more you add more files, or especially if you defrag your computer which moves everything up, the less chance you have for a complete recovery.



Before you have problems (hopefully) you can run diagnostics of your hard drive. You can do a quick test which takes 90 seconds and they say with a 90 percent certainty it can determine whether your hard disk has a physical problem. The full diagnostic test will check/read the entire hard drive looking for physical problems such as unreadable sectors.

You can also run the SMART test. SMART is an acronym for Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology. SMART tests help prevent data loss by predicting possible drive failures using special algorithms built into the firmware of your hard drive. Most new IDE and SCSI hard drives support the SMART technology. It has three separate diagnostic tests: 1) SMART Status check returns the current SMART status of the hard drive. Your drive

your hard disk. Designed to find minor internal problems or inconsistencies with your drive.

The PartitionTests tool is designed to analyze on-disk file system structures. The tool will do an extensive scan of the file systems structure generating a report of the condition of your file data. It verifies the data integrity of FAT and NTFS partitions.

For future use you can create a Data Advisor™ disk. This is an emergency boot disk which includes diagnostic tools for assessing the condition of your computer system. It assesses the health of your hard disk drive, file structures, and computer memory by identifying problems that could cause data loss. If not too late problems are identified, and you will

The Data Recovery will get back those files from the brink of extinction. Unless working with a formatted disk the first thing to try is the DeletedRecovery. This will scan your drive and report to you files it found deleted and the condition (chance) of recovery. You can look for everything or filter the response by telling it to look for a specific type of file such as (.DOC) Microsoft Word file. It presents your drive with all the folders on the left, and the deleted files on the right. It shows the file name, date, size, and its condition. Even better is the ability to view the deleted file to verify if it is what you want. This also allows to gauge if you can get the file back okay. If you can view it you can definitely get it back.

AdvancedRecovery depending on the size of your hard drive will take

hours. For my drive which is 40Gb it took about six hours. They say to use this options when you feel the information is incorrect for a partition listed in the Device Tree, or you are unable to recover data with the default options. File System Scan Tab - Allows you to customize a search for a missing or unidentified partition. Partition Settings Tab - Allows you to ignore existing partition information, forcing the tool to search for previous file data. This option allows you to recover data after a reinstall or repartition of your partition. Recovery Options Tab - Allows you to ignore files found during a scan that have invalid attributes or have been deleted.

The RawRecovery tool allows you to scan severely corrupted partitions for files using a file signature search algorithm. This tool will help you recover files from a partition with damaged directory structures. It will read all sectors on the disk sequentially (sector-by-sector) looking for specific file header signatures. It will typically recover small files that are stored in one cluster or larger files stored in consecutive clusters on the disk.

FormatRecovery helps you recover files from a hard drive that was formatted. This type of recovery will ignore the existing file system structures and search for structures associated with the previous file system. It can look at the file data on the formatted partition and recovered them.

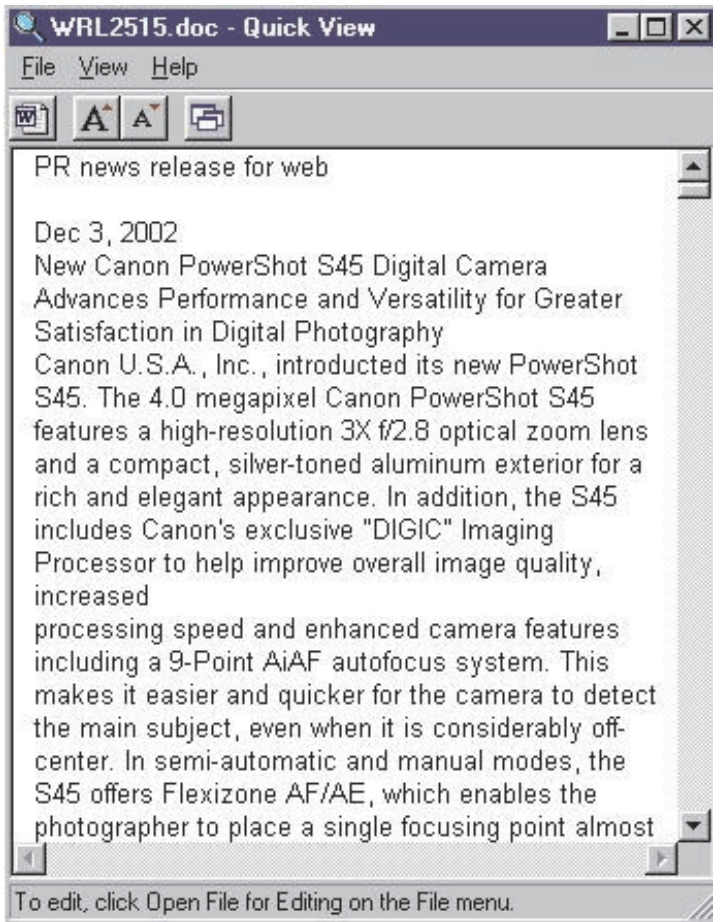
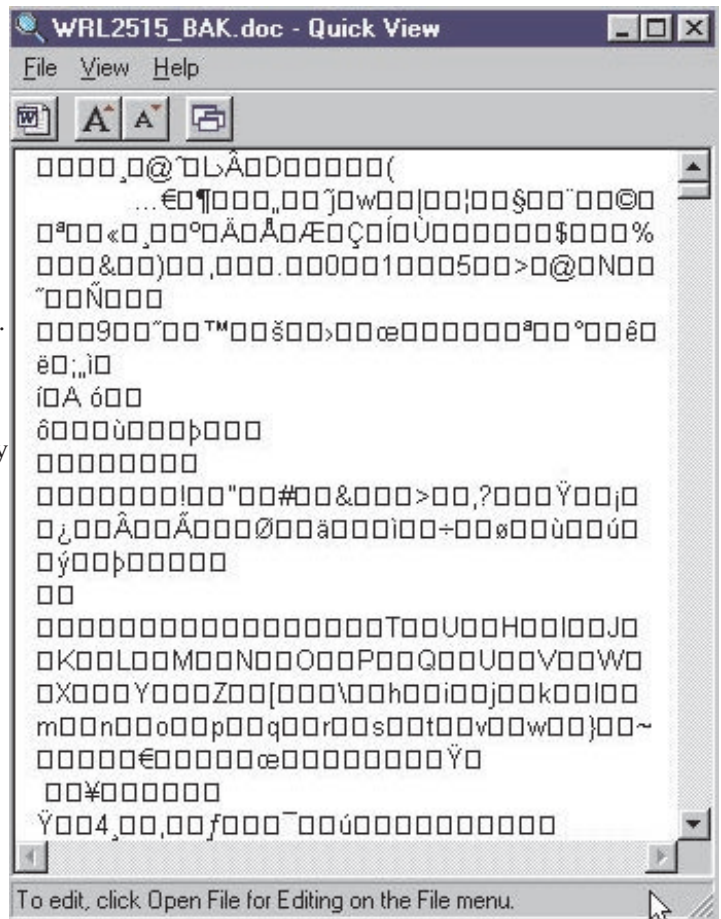
Putting it to the test, I searched for files I had deleted directly from Explorer and emptying out the recycle bin. It had no problems recovering those 100% of the time. But, hey—I could do that with my Ontrack SystemSuite. To really put it to a test, I deleted some files, and then defragged the drive. It had the worst problems with PDF files. Neither of the two it tried to bring back were a success. On some of the jpg and gif files it worked half of the time. On one of the gif files I was even able to fully view it before recovery. Trying it on a Word file, the viewer showed garbage. However, after recovering it, I ran it through the WordRecovery, and it was perfect. This type of recovery will depend where on the drive the file was when deleted and

how much was moved forward (chance of overwriting it.)

I actually used both the DeletedRecovery and RawRecovery on a CompactFlash card to recover files. I put the card into a holder which than goes into the PCMCIA slot on my notebook. Then the system looks at it like another drive. I was able to recover deleted files using the DeletedRecovery. I then formatted the card (in the camera of course) and was able to again get pictures using the RawRecovery.

The FileRepair section will repair Microsoft Access, Excel, PowerPoint, Word, and Zip files. Before working on the selected file, a backup is made and works with it. EasyRecovery Professional can also attempt to repair corrupt Microsoft Outlook files.

The greatest test came from someone at work who brought me a notebook with a system that would not boot up, and asked me to look at it. How bad was it? If you have ever heard a bicycle with a loose chain, that is what the drive sounded like. After trying to boot up the computer



would go into Scandisk and not get past 8%. It could not get past that, nor even get to safe mode. I created an emergency boot disk and used that to get on to the computer. I was able to tag some data files and copy them to a floppy disk. After that the drive was toast. I fdisked the drive and tried to format it several times. Each time the format failed and the restage could not be completed. I took it back and told him it was no use.

The EasyRecovery Professional is for single computer use only. There is an EasyRecovery Professional Commercial License per technician for commercial and consulting use to recover, repair, and restore data. The EasyRecovery Professional Enterprise License is licensed for business and corporate use to internally support up to a designated number of users of an organization.

EasyRecovery Professional is sold directly at the Ontrack web site.

<http://www.ontrack.com>

The price is \$499, and is 31.4Mb. Expensive yes, but like the dues paid to the Automobile Club when you need it, it is worth every penny.



DECEMBER 2002 APCUG NOOZ

News of COMDEX

APCUG Fall Conference Round Tables

Couldn't make it to Las Vegas last month? Well, you missed the Face-to-Face contact, but you needn't have missed a lot of the wisdom that User Group leaders shared at the round tables. As Moderators send in copies of their presentations they'll be posted at

<http://www.apcug.org/events/comdex/fall2002/rtsched.htm>

And thanks to all those who spent countless hours and energy organizing and preparing worth-while sessions for us all to enjoy!

Best Newsletter/Web Site Contest Winner Results

Winners were announced at the Fall Conference. The overall winner of the Best Newsletter Contest was the Greater Victoria PC Users Association, British Columbia, Canada; Grant Fuller, editor. The overall winner of the Best Web Site Contest was the Melbourne PC User Group, Melbourne Australia; Stan Johnstone, Webmaster. Winners in other categories and bios of the Judges are posted at

http://www.apcug.org/events/awards02/web_news_winners02.htm

Thanks to Ron Feiertag and the Contests Committee for organizing the contests.

Jerry Awards 2002 Winners

The winners of the Jerry Awards, which recognize Community Service projects by User Groups, were announced at the APCUG Fall Conference. The Overall Winner for 2002 was the Dayton Microcomputer Association (DMA). Winners in other categories are posted at

http://www.apcug.org/events/awards02/jerry_award-02.htm

Thanks to charter sponsors Adobe Systems and Microsoft Corporation for their continued generosity, and thanks to longtime partner and repeat sponsor National Cristina Foundation for their support.

Early Apcug Membership Renewal Prize Winners

Did you renew your User Group's APCUG membership in time for the drawing at the Fall Conference? The lucky winners were Loudon County PCUG, Loudon, TN; Coral Lakes Computer Club, Boynton Beach, FL; and Sun City Anthem Computer Club, Henderson, Nevada. Thanks to Corel and Adobe for the prizes! If you haven't renewed yet, don't despair. There's another drawing for a prize in January 2003 if your renewal check is received by APCUG on or before December 31, 2002.

I'm here to serve and support your needs and look forward to our continued mutual relations. APCUG and the User Groups together enable us all to grow, help each other, provide services to communities, support each other, share our knowledge, experiences and have fun. It is great working with all members associated with your User Groups and being your APCUG Advisor. To repeat, let me know if I can help you as we are here to serve. Thanks for your support. Wishing all Happy Holidays and a great New Year in 2003.

Ed Van Meter

APCUG Region 11 Advisor Representative

for Southern California Computer User Groups

Buying a DVD Recorder

By Bob Elgines
elginesz@rraz.net

Well the prices are coming down—now under \$300 and as low as \$220, for a DVD recorder. The blank disks are now under \$2.50 each in lots of ten or more. But beware. The great decision as to which format is still under debate—DVD-R or DVD+R! If you just wish to make videos, either one should work in most DVD players made after the year 2000, but not all. Cheaper DVDR disks and players *will not* work.

Support out there is very weak to almost NONE! Much time is needed to be invested—like four to ten hours to make a two-hour video DVD, and there are several programs require you to sit in front of your computer.

Most of the software is over priced and does not work without many problems and no support like "Video Studio 6" by Cyber. The best so far has been "MyDVD" by Sonic. Some of the suggestions listed below came from them.

The best input devices are: "USB Instant DVD" by ADS (\$160), "Bungee DVD" by Pinnacle (\$150), "DCS 100" (\$170) and "DCS 200" by Dazzle (\$230). They all come with software that have individual problems, and advertise "Fast, Easy & Fun." Boy is that a huge JOKE! It's Slow, Hard, & Will drive you nuts.

If you cannot provide all of the suggestions (really necessary evils) below then don't get involved. I became one of their guinea pigs and I am about to throw it all in the circle file and call it lost.

My ASUS computer is an Intel P3 @ 866MHz, 256MB RAM @ 133MHz, 60GB Hard Drive @ 7200rpm ATA100, ATI Radeon 32MB video card, with the "USB Instant DVD" input device (I tried out the DAZZLE equipment, but it had big noise problems and they had NO support at all), VIVASTAR (LF311) DVD-R recorder. I have tried two

operating systems—Win 98SE and Win ME and saw no difference. I went back to Win 98SE.

For Windows 98 & XP users start off with these suggestions on getting ready to record a DVD:

- Install at least 256 MB of RAM
- Disable the Screen Saver
- Disable the Turn off Hard Disks option
- Disable the Hibernation option
- Disable the Network Time Server (WinXP)
- Disable Text to Speech (WinXP)
- Disable any scheduled tasks (for example, virus scan)
- Do not increase Virtual Memory beyond Windows' recommended setting
- Close any other running applications
- Do not copy any large files while capturing
- Do not allow any remote activities, such as PC Anywhere or Timbuktu connections
- Your hard drives are formatted to NTFS (which has no file-size limitations - WinXP)
- You have at least 21 gigs available on a single drive
- You have the latest drivers for the following: DVD Rom, burner, CD-ROM and burner.
- Your hard drives have been defragmented.
- In particular, while capturing video, do not use your PC for any other activity. Video capture requires all your PC's processing power, and any action such as inserting a disc or receiving e-mail may cause errors in the captured video files.
- Your monitor resolution must be set to 1024x768, 16- or 32-bit color

- You are running ASPI driver 4.6. No higher, no lower. If you are unsure, you can go here to find out and/or download the appropriate driver:

<http://aspi.radified.com>

- You are not running your machine/session on a network/RAID configuration
- Make sure you have the latest version DirectX (a must), WMP (a must)
- If your "Input digital device" is on USB, then remove all other USB external equipment.
- You may also find it beneficial to enable DMA for all your drives.

There are DVD-RAM and DVD+RAM which allows you to save up to 9.6GB of Data, but hard drives are much cheaper, like 20GB for \$69.00 or lower. It is just not FAST and EASY as they have stated in their advertising!

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

SONY



Pioneer DVR-105



December 14 – 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Orange Coast College

Science Building Room #149

Our December 14 meeting will have Prolific Publishing showing the Marine Aquarium screen saver. This fantastic screen saver is beautiful and fun. You can choose the type of fish, lighting and more.

They also have a couple more products — View Gadget and FTP Gadget. They will be selling them at a discount at the meeting.



WINNERS
WINdows usERS

P. O. Box 9274
Newport Beach, CA 92658

