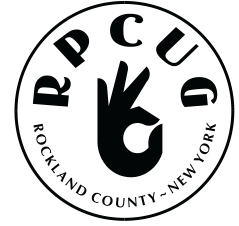


COMPUTER Connection

Published by
The Rockland County
PC USERS GROUP
June 2001



PLEASE COME OUT AND JOIN US AT THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING to be held on Tuesday, June 12th, 2001, at 7:15 PM. We meet in the Raso Community Room, fourth floor, Palisades Center Mall, West Nyack, NY.

Our guest speaker will be Ira McSweeney of Cablevision Systems, Inc.



He will be discussing **OPTIMUM ONLINE**. Find out about cable modem service and if it is right for you. Enjoy the high speed Internet access you've always dreamed of!

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

PROJECT PC RENEW

Give someone the tools to be computer literate today.

Give your old computer new life. Donate it to **Project PC ReNew!**

We will repair and upgrade your donated machine and give it to an individual or organization who cannot afford one: a student, senior citizen or organization in the Rockland County area.

You receive a letter of donation to use for a charitable tax donation; you also receive the satisfaction of knowing your donation will be put to good use, not just thrown in the trash. Your old computer will be given new life and help to bring someone into the 21st century. It will help them live for today and prepare for tomorrow.

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO DONATE YOUR TIME
AND/OR USED EQUIPMENT?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER AND LEARN
ABOUT COMPUTER REPAIR?**

- GO TO:
<http://fs7.formsite.com/rpcug/rpcugDonateTime/index.html> and fill out the form
- SEND EMAIL TO: pc_renew@totalpromotions.net
- CALL Hank Feinberg at: 845-352-3925



MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

WEB SITES editor's picks:

GEEK HOROSCOPES

<http://bbspot.com/Features/2001/06/horoscope20010601.html>

WELCOME TO MUTOPIA... a place where (sheet) music is free for everyone! Download it, print it out, and share it with your friends
www.mutopiaproject.org/

BAD COOKIE -

Web Chinese Fortune Cookies
www.colonize.com/c.php3?i=cs,02191,o3&e=7855786

HOW TO set up a wireless network:
www.zdnet.com/anchordesk/stories/story/0,10738,2685384,00.html

SUCH VARIETY!

Got a favorite? email the editor!
mcbaade@aol.com



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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Marian Baade, ~ mcbaade@aol.com

The Purpose of the Group:

To exchange computer-related ideas and information among its members; to engage in computer-related activities for the benefit of the membership and the community at large; to increase understanding and utilization of the personal computer; to provide an opportunity for the formation of special interest groups (SIGs), to provide a medium for the exchange and propagation of public domain software, freeware, and shareware.

—(From the RPCUG Constitution & Bylaws)

MEETING SCHEDULE

GENERAL MEETING

7:15 PM

MULTIMEDIA WORKSHOP

6:00 PM

Tuesday, June 12, 2001

The Palisades Center Community Room
Palisades Center Mall, West Nyack, NY

Multi-Media Workshop meets on the second Tuesday of the month, prior to the general meeting at 6:00 PM in the Raso Room in the Palisades Mall, West Nyack

Windows 98/ME SIG meets on the third Tuesday of the month in the Pearl River Room at the Pearl River Library, 7-8:45 PM.

The **Investment Workshop (SIG)** meetings will vary for the present; please consult the web site for details

The **Executive Board** meets last Thursday of the month
West Nyack Library, 7:00 PM

The Rockland PC Users Group, a tax-exempt educational organization, meets monthly, usually on the second Tuesday. Meetings begin at 7:15 PM. The latest information about meeting programs and dates is available on the Internet at
<http://www.rpcug.org>



"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

message from
The President

JUNE = Weddings + Proms + Graduations
+ of course, our **Annual Election of Officers**. I know that everyone hides when they see the nominating committee starting to look in their direction. Don't feel bad, that is a natural reaction. Most of us learned when we were young not to volunteer for anything...(I must have been out of the room when they taught that...)

Actually, I have enjoyed being your President for the past year. I always figured...if you are going to do something, you should try to give it your best shot. If you fail, at least you know that you tried.

If you ever thought about getting more active in the Group, now is the time to stand up and "Join the Fun." You don't have to be President or even on the board, but if you have an idea that you feel would improve the Group, lets hear it. Get involved; it is the only way that belonging to a user group makes any sense.

We have made really great progress this year. Between our SIG's and the new PC-Renew project, it looks like RPCUG is beginning to take on a personality of its own.

GRAPHICS / MULTI-MEDIA SIG: Eugene Frank has done a fantastic job; the member turnout has really increased in the past year. I am sure that everyone has been enjoying the SIG and better yet, they have been learning how to use their graphics programs. I have been told that PhotoShop 6 is next on the agenda. Even I am looking forward to this one!

FINANCIAL SIG: Hank Feinberg has been doing this for sometime. He has been a *rock* through all the crazy times that the Stock Market has been going through. I understand they haven't lost a dime.

WINDOWS 98/ME SIG: I felt that we needed to reactivate this SIG. We had our first meeting in May. The meeting has been scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month in the Pearl River Room in the Pearl River Library. Keep an eye on the website calendar for the correct dates.

PC-RENEW: This has been Hank Feinberg's project from the beginning. This program should change the meaning of volunteering for many years to come. This project is a very large undertaking and will require many man/woman hours to handle the work involved. It looks like it is going to be a great learning experience for all of us, not to mention the feeling you will have by being involved in contributing to the computer literacy of a child or a senior. I can't say enough about this project, just THANKS!

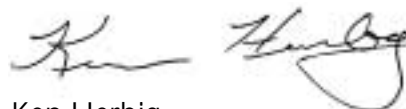
Check out the website and sign-up to help Hank help others.

This month's program will be a representative from CableVision. If you have questions about a cable connection to the Internet, this will be your perfect opportunity to ask.

Our summer meetings will be held jointly with Westchester PC Users Group. July will feature Kimberly Elko from Wacom Technology Co. They are the leading manufacturer of graphics drawing tablets for both amateurs and professionals.

I hope you all have enjoyed the door prizes that have been given out at the General Meetings. We have many new programs that we will be giving away in the months to come. I hope you can come out and join us at the General Meetings.

In closing, I want to thank everyone for their help and support in the past year. I have made many new friends and I look forward to making many more. Remember...A Group is only as good as its members!



Ken Herbig
RPCUG President

PAINT SHOP PRO 7

by Jasc Software

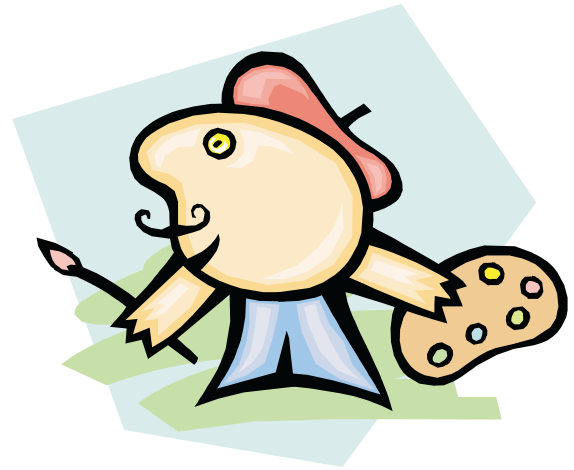
reviewed by Eugene Frank

When I first get a new program, I ask myself these questions; "What are the strongest parts of this program? How will I use it? Why this program instead of another? **Paint Shop Pro 7** is excellent, well-rounded, economical software that offers superb features.

Installation was a joy. Sometimes while installing programs I've run into all kinds of glitches; some require multiple attempts while others need special configurations and involve various hang-ups. I was able to install **Paint Shop Pro 7** in a few minutes, without a single question in my mind as to whether or not I was doing it correctly. I've used the software extensively in order to review it, and in all that time not a single hang-up occurred. There were no freezes, problems or error messages; it ran extremely well on my system and showed excellent color and color rendition. (I use 16 bit color because my eyes cannot tell the difference between 16 and 32 bit and because some of my programs need 16 bit to operate properly.)

I love the Browser feature. If one goes into a folder with a different assortment of graphics and extensions, **Paint Shop Pro 7** will open most of them and show them as thumbnails. I counted 44 different graphics formats, not counting different file extensions for some formats. Probably all graphics programs can save to some format readable by **Paint Shop Pro 7**. It can also save *to* these formats, which is a big convenience.

I will use this program mostly with digital photography, acquired by digital camera or scanner. The *enhance photo* features in the program are among the best I've ever used, both in the automatic enhancer and in the manual adjustments. This program has the ability to adjust the monitor to match the colors in the program, an excellent application. The *enhance* features are intuitive and, for me, had no learning curve. One can fix lighting, redevy,



saturation, cropping, balancing, or whatever else one wishes (not to mention the great number of sharpen, geometric, illumination, reflection and texture twists one can add to a photo.

Another great feature is the *Print Multiple Images* Command under "File." Open a number of images and then use this command; your images will show up as thumbnails on the left side of the screen. Then, just drag the image onto a preview page. You can move it around and adjust size, and what you see is what you get. I even like to use the above feature for printing single images because I can immediately tell exactly what the program will print.

I was so pleased by the feature that allowed me to adjust monitor color balance, that I immediately began looking for a feature that would automatically adjust the printer. This feature was missing and would make an excellent addition for a future version. *My Printer* has a color printer balance feature, but it doesn't work well. In order to get a good print, I have to manually reduce the red by 40%. This prints a great image but the image left on the screen is off color. Wouldn't it be great if **Paint Shop Pro 7** could print a test page of 9 thumbnails of differing color balance? One would pick the best image, and then print another 9 thumbnails and pick the best picture. **Paint Shop Pro** would then be perfectly balanced to the printer.

Paint Shop Pro 7 is really a number or programs in one. It is a graphics viewer, and

can batch-convert one graphics format to another. Let's say that you have a number of graphics in the format used by Word but wish to use them in Word Perfect. You can simply batch convert the Word format to a Word Perfect format in a few minutes.

Paint Shop Pro 7 also enhances, balances, adjusts, and gives a myriad of special effects to work with any photograph. Of particular note is the excellent picture framing provided by this program. It is powerful and very easy to use.

Paint Shop Pro 7 is a full drawing program. And it even has *Vector Drawing* and *Vector Text*. Have you ever tried to draw on the screen with your mouse? The results are usually jagged and unpleasant. *Vector Graphics* smooths out all the jags and produces a pleasing drawing. With a little practice one can even learn to sign one's name. The text features provide many possibilities for striking text. One can easily place text on any graphic, even photographs.

Many of the features of this program are easy to use; other advanced features require some learning and trial and error. There are nice tools for preparing graphics for the Internet, including animation shop, and different choices for gif, png and jpeg manipulation, with optimization aimed at the Internet and web pages.

The books and help menus are complete and helpful. While **Paint Shop Pro 7** may not prove to be the program of choice for a graphic artist who wishes to create original graphics and paintings, the *draw* features are nice additions, and will more than meet the needs of the average user.

I have not covered all of this program's many features in this review. For me, the strongest points were the superb graphics browser, the ability to improve photographs, and the superb print function when using the *print multiple images* feature. **Paint Shop Pro 7** is an excellent computer application and lives up to Jasc Software's excellent reputation.

PAINT SHOP PRO 7, by Jasc Software

(www.jasc.com)

List price: \$ 109.00

(*editor's note: This software can be downloaded from the Jasc site for \$99. There is also a 30-day evaluation copy here:*

<ftp://ftp2.jasc.com/pub/psp702ev.exe>)

System requirements (recommended):

Pentium 500 or better

windows 95/98/NT/2000

128 MB RAM

Display: 32 bit, 1024 x 768 resolution

SOFTWARE available for REVIEW

Pick one, write down what you think about it, and it's yours to keep!

Email Ken at hobbikat@hobbikats.com

- ✓ **Camtasia**, \$149.95
www.techsmith.com
- ✓ **Dubit**, \$19.95
www.techsmith.com
- ✓ **Hang 3000**, \$25.00
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime
- ✓ **Incredible E-mailer**, \$59.95
www.toolfactory.com
- ✓ **Jigsaws Galore 4.0**
D/L \$25.00 / Mail \$39.00
www.dgray.com
- ✓ **Oligo 2.0**, \$29.95
www.inklineglobal.com/
- ✓ **Presidents 3000**, \$20.00
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime
- ✓ **States 3000**, \$20.00
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime
- ✓ **Typing Master 2002**, \$29.90
www.TypingMaster.com
- ✓ **Visual Day Planner**, \$29.95
www.inklineglobal.com/
- ✓ **Web Media Publisher**, \$50.00
www.wbmedia.com/publisher/

YOUR DELETE KEY

Thank you for using the **Delete Key**. The **Delete Key** is an amazingly powerful technology available to all computer users. It is simple, effective, and very user-friendly. If this is your first time using the **Delete Key**, we urge you to read the entire contents of this manual. Please do not delete this manual! Deleting this manual may lead to your using the delete key in a reckless or insufficient manner.



INTRODUCTION

The **Delete Key** provides a keyboard-based, fully manual method for the removal of information. Furthermore, use of the **Delete Key** in conjunction with the small amount of brain matter you have left may induce a tingling sensation of pleasure.

Failure to use the **Delete Key** may result in aggravation, humiliation, knee-jerk reactionism, and possibly a full hard drive. This manual will help you define and implement a full **Delete Key** pressing methodology to ensure your peace of mind remains unaltered.

LOCATING THE DELETE KEY

1. Lift your hands off the key board.
2. Scan the keys for a key labeled "Delete."
3. Make note of this location as it will come in handy later.

USING THE DELETE KEY

1. Locate something on your computer you wish to delete. Files, text, e-mail messages, and vital operating system components are all "delete-enabled" items.
2. Select the item using your mouse or other selection device.
3. Lift your hands off the keyboard and using one of your fingers, depress the key labeled "Delete."
4. The offending material has now been removed from your sight.

WARNING! Some systems may require confirmation of your Delete-based system. If this is the case, make sure to agree to the

deletion. Otherwise you may remain burdened with the offensive or unwanted material.

ONCE I DELETE STUFF, CAN I GET IT BACK?

Now, why would you want to do that?

WHAT SHOULD I DELETE?

Anything that might bring you unhappiness. In this New-Economy, semi-lucid hyper-cyber-superhighway world, you need the unending power of a **Delete Key**. Not only is it easy to implement, it offers tremendous Return On Investment (R.I.). Consider this scenario:

Helga Gumpwetter has three text files. In the first file are instructions for making a nuclear bomb. The other two contain funny jokes about pumpkins. Because Helga deleted the nuclear bomb message and read the pumpkin jokes, she lacked the ability to nuke her ex-boyfriend, thus saving all of King County, Washington. Talk about some serious R.I.!

This classic techie humor is from Chris Pirillo. Chris is better known to some of you as the Lockergnome - he does a useful and amusing daily e-newsletter with interesting stuff about your computer, tips and tricks, free fonts and other shareware to download, and information about Chris's life in Des Moines, Iowa with his wife Gretchen.

Visit Chris at: www.lockergnome.com



"There are better ways to log off."

Top Ten Signs You're about to get ripped off

by Fred Showker

THE PROBLEM WITH EMAIL THESE DAYS

It's becoming increasingly difficult to tell the difference between legitimate "offers" and a scam rip-off. The old Madison Avenue adage "If it doesn't sell, they don't keep advertising" is always true — so it's obvious that unsolicited email (aka: UCE, Spam) must be working or they'd no longer be doing it. So, all you folks out there who actually respond to spam, **please don't**. Here are ten key rules to think about before you click the reply button:

1 — If there are more than two slashes in the domain... trash it

Look at the domain. If you can count more than ONE slash after the dot-com, beware. All of the following said they would send me 25,000,000 email addresses on CD for just \$299.00. Here's a flash: you can't get that many email addresses on a CD... SCAM. All four, and many others like them lead to dead ends, only wanting your money :

<http://homex.coolconnect.com/member3/justhits/>
<http://www.megspace.com/internet/justhits/>
<http://www.stas.net/3/justhits/>
<http://www.freehost.nu/members/justhits/>
(These are also freebie hosting sites, see below.)

2 — If the domain is numeric ... it's out to lunch

Any self-respecting and on-the-level business, with an honest offer will NOT use an IP number instead of a URL address. Instead, they use these to avoid detection, and to rip you off...

<http://207.173.123.243:524> spells trouble.

3 — If they say use this or that ... use neither

Con artists these days know they'll be shut down — it's only a matter of time. So in order to sucker in more people they'll list several domains, hoping you'll move to the second one if the first one already got shut down. Many even say "If one doesn't work, use the other!" That's your queue to use neither.

4 — Who sent it is not who gets it ... don't let them get you.

Look carefully at the address of the sender. Now go through the piece and look at any email addresses in the post, including headers. If they're not the same — beware! They should at least be from the same domain. (That's the part after the "@".)

5 — No real name means no real person

dhckj@msn.com, i27452@compuserve.com?

eyzjygeynf@yahoo.com ... who are they trying to kid? These addresses are generated by spam robots who open accounts at the freebie web sites, send mass mailings, change the name, send more, then cancel the account before they're detected. They should be outlawed.

6 — If they tell you to talk to a robot ... tell 'em no!

Many get-rich schemers and rip-off artists today tell you to call their toll free number, leave your name, address and phone number so they can call you back. They prey on the very poor, and the elderly. Their yarn is convincing — but don't expect them to call back... in reality all they want is to SELL your address to other marketers.

7 — If there's no address... you don't want to go there!

Check the spammers web site for a physical address. If you don't find one, there's a reason why: they don't want to be tracked down by anyone who they've done wrong... most especially the FBI. If there's a phone number, call it. Ask for their address. A recent spam from "Vortal Toner Supplies" absolutely refused to give an address — another said they didn't give out the address to anyone no matter what. They turned out to be an illegal, off-shore gambling operation owned by a company in LA. Never reply or buy.

8 — If it's off-shore money ... don't touch it!

If it has to do with money but they're from another country other than your own — get away quickly. Email has exploded with insurance quotes, bogus stock tips, shady refinancing debt services or home mortgages from the likes of Great-Loan-Rates@6aaa.fsnet.co.uk, whpost10986@avtechk.com.cn. These people cannot fulfill their promises... they're ripping you off.

9 — If they're using a freebie account... you can't afford it

If you think about it for a moment, it's rather obvious that you wouldn't want to do business with anyone using a freebie email account. If they've got nothing to lose, then they've got nothing for you! Several of those below admit openly that their clientele is 88% spammers. All of the following freebie sites are responsible for the majority of spam:

...continued on page 9

PhotoSuite 4 Platinum

by MGI Software Corp

reviewed by Ken Herbig

PhotoSuite4 is a new program for me; I was not familiar with their previous version.

The installation of the program was flawless in both Windows 98 & ME operating systems. When loading, it asked me what file extensions I wanted to associate with it. I liked this feature, as I find that most programs have a tendency to just take over, as if they were the only program in the computer—applause to the programmers!

The program has a very user friendly appearance from the first time you turn it on. It opens to a graphical interface menu. All of your options are also given in a Tool Bar at the top of the screen. When you click on “get,” a source list comes up. You have the options of getting a file from your computer, digital camera, scanner and even online at Kodak Photonet. Using the Computer button opens you up to a screen that is the same as MS Explorer. You find your photo and click on it and up it comes.

The program automatically changes to the “Prepare” screen. From here you can adjust and alter your photo anyway that you would like. You can rotate the photo if it is not in the desired position. A nice feature is that if you scan a picture and it is not perfectly straight, you can straighten it with just two clicks of the mouse. You click on one side of the photo and then on the other side to create a reference line. The line should show the degree that the photo is out of line. If possible, you can use a vertical or horizontal object to use as your line. Cropping has never been so easy. It works the same as resizing a Windows screen. Click on the resize handles and drag the cropping rectangle to what you want. It makes cropping easy, as you can see how it is going to look before you crop it.

Touchup is the next area that is located in Prepare. This area gives you many options and tools that can be used to correct or enhance

your photo. It has an automatic enhance feature. This really worked quite well on a sunrise photo that I was practicing with.



This area also has *Removal of Red Eye*. I am sure that you have taken a photo of someone or an animal that had “red eye” from the flash unit of the camera. With **PhotoSuite** it has never been easier to correct. All you do is zoom in on the eye that you want to correct and adjust the brush size and click over the eye—that is all there is to it! By the way, all this is done through user-friendly menus, so it is almost impossible to make a mistake. Want to look younger? While in the *touchup* menu, you can remove wrinkles, blemishes and even do a touchup on those roots.

I like using the cloning tool; I find it easier to touch up a photo with this tool than with brushes. The program comes with so many filters that it is impossible to describe them all. You can get some really nice effects by experimenting with them. Using them is a lot of fun.

I especially liked the “Interactive Warps” in the Special Effects menu. What can be done with a photo is amazing, actually quite humorous. **PhotoSuite** has been known for its ability to stitch photos together; you can take a series of regular photos and make them into a panoramic view. You need to use a tripod if you really want to use this feature correctly, making sure that you overlap when you are taking the photos (the program uses objects that are in the photos to place them on each other.) The more that you give in the overlap, the better the stitching will be.

Photo Tapestry is something that I had never seen. Using small images, it actually makes your photos look like a real tapestry. It actually matches the tone of the picture, so that after it is complete you can still have your photo image in the finished product.

With the *Compose* feature you can be as creative as you would like. The program is loaded with templates such as calendars, cards, frames for your photos. Business cards, name tags even stationery. You name it... You got it.

Organizing your photos has been simplified to a point of just putting them into albums. You can make your own albums and name them what you want. When you want a photo from a specific album you just click on it and it will show you the photos in the project area on the right of the screen.

The *Share* button gives you many options. You can save your work, send email, create web items (Web Page – Interactive Panorama – Animated GIF Files.) Also, (my favorite,) you can make a slide show of all your favorite photos and show it full-screen. What a great idea for a party! As the guests are coming in, you can be showing photos of your vacation on your computer screen. That ought to start some conversations!

In summary, I enjoyed working with the program. I found it easy to use with a low learning curve. I would highly recommend it for the novice. If you have a scanner or a digital camera you will be impressing your friends in no time. It is not a program that will replace PhotoShop, but it is not advertised to be.

The program can be purchased from all the major computer stores. Look around and get your best deal.

System Requirements:

Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000

Internet Explorer 5.0 (included)

P/166 MMX minimum

(P/II-266 MMX (recommended)

32 MB of Ram (recommended)

SVGA video card

800x600 screen area


24 bit true color (2 MB video ram)

200 MB HD space + 65 MB for IE & DirectX

Mouse

CD ROM Drive

Internet access (recommended)

Color printer (recommended) 

Ten Top Signs...continued

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| angelfire.com | another.com | arabia.com |
| bangkok.com | building.com | china.com |
| consultant.com | email-prom.net | email.com |
| excite.com | golfmail.com | hotmail.com |
| iway2000.com | loudpages.com | tycos.co.uk |
| lycos.com | mail.com | megspace.com |
| metahoo.com | mundomail.net | netcolony.com |
| netdest.com | netnet.oom.sg | newmail.net |
| oceanfree.net | postmastercom | prontomail.com |
| telsurf.net | turbomail.net | usa.com |
| ve6zon.net | vehzonmail.com | virtualacbve.com |
| bigfoot.com | webmail.co.za | wickedspeed.net |
| yahoo.com | India.com | freehosting.com |

10 — If it's too good to be true... it is!

The other day a UCE told me I could look like Cindy Crawford in two weeks. (Picture that!) Another said I no longer had to worry about the IRS... yet another said it could get me out of financial trouble... dozens of them each day want to sell me millions of email addresses. All of these are blatant lies, and most certainly a rip off. Most spam today wants only to get your email address validated. So never, ever reply. Never. They want to sell the names to other spammers, or poor suckers who actually think they can get rich sending unsolicited email.

These ten warning signs are the main things to watch out for. There are others which I'll explore in a future issue. Just keep them in mind, and laugh at them as you drag them to the trash... where the email, and their senders belong.

Note: for you disbelievers out there, I challenge you to attempt to track down all the spam you get in a month. You'll discover very quickly how many scammers there are out to get you.

I have received 4,223 spams since January 1, 2001

Here is [the first part of] a list of the most frequent spammers...as you can see, the top spammers are the 'freebie' sites.

286 (Yahoo.com), 276 (hotmail.com), 156 (china.com), 112 (aol.com), 106 (msn.com), 61 (usa.net), 55 (lycos.com) 42 (netscape.com).

Fred Showker is a designer, consultant, writer and speaker. He has published 60-Second Window and DT&G Magazine online since 1990, and is director of The Graphic Design Network which includes The Design & Publishing Center at www.Graphic-Design.com. (1994) He was a co-founder of both The User Group Forum on America Online (1987), The User Group Network at www.User-Groups.net, (1994) and the Designers' Bookshelf (1996) He originally founded Showker Graphic Arts & Design in 1972, has been an avid computer activist and supporter since 1984.

The free Net is dying!

Here's how you can save it.

David Coursey, Executive Editor, AnchorDesk

An e-mail I recently received from my radio colleague David Lawrence brought up a topic near to my heart: why people who filter out Internet advertising by using ad blocking software may be too clever for their—and our—own good. Lawrence, who hosts the “Online Tonight” program on (7 to 10 p.m. PT week nights) was mentioning this in the context of a column he recently wrote for a broadcasting trade mag, in which he essentially told his fellow radio people who supported ad blocking that they were cutting their own throats.

I THINK IT IS EVEN SIMPLER: Blocking ads kills free Internet content. And it also subjects readers to companies willing to sell their integrity—and your privacy—for a few bucks.

Up front, let me first remind you of the obvious: Both Lawrence and I derive our incomes from advertising revenue collected by our companies. So I am talking from self-interest here. People who use ad blocking software—and there is a lot of it out there—reduce the number of impressions ad-supported Web sites have to sell, thus reducing our revenue. And it's not like this industry is doing exceedingly well and won't notice even a small revenue hit. Rather, we look at the number of page views we get every day and fret, sometimes excessively, when they go down.

YES, ADVERTISING CAN BE OBNOXIOUS. I find even some of the ads we run to be a tad grating, although I also recently found a really useful piece of software as a free download from one of our banner advertisers. And, yes, when blockers first arrived on the scene I had a lot of fun freaking out the advertising salespeople by showing them pages sans their clients' messages.

And if I were a truly evil person, I might use ad blocking against all our competitors' sites (or, worse, suggest that you should). But the truth is that there is a much easier and less dangerous way of dealing with obnoxious ads: Ignore them and they will go away. But they will be less likely to take your favorite free content with them than if you block all ads indiscriminately.

If, perhaps, you'd like to actually support what we do, then give the ads a chance and click the ones that interest you. You might even buy something. These companies aren't paying for your online content fix because they like you; they are doing it to drive sales.

THE ALTERNATIVE TO ADVERTISING SUPPORT is less free content and more sites demanding membership fees. Some sites are already offering “ad free” versions to people willing to pay a subscription fee. I see this as a growing trend.

As a passing comment: Have you looked at what a daily newspaper costs these days? The New York Times charges me over \$10 a week for home delivery—and I still get all the ads. (Of course, I like the ads.) And a metro daily isn't that much cheaper. By comparison, what readers get online for free, thanks to ad support, is quite a deal and worth protecting, I'd say.

I mentioned before that a loss of advertising revenue could lead some companies to earn money in “devious” ways. CNET Networks (parent of ZDNet) is a highly ethical media company—minor or even potential transgressions are taken quite seriously—but there are always companies willing to sell editorial coverage in exchange for advertising purchases. Or to sell their mailing lists. Or, well, you get the idea.

So if you want to block ads, go ahead; I can't stop you. But if you do, know that the amount and quality of the free content you enjoy will go down accordingly. It's your choice.

To read this article and some reactions to it, go to:
www.zdnet.com/anchordesk/stories/story/

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HOW TO INSTALL SOFTWARE: A 12-Step Program

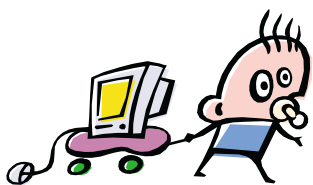
Examine the software packaging until you find a little printed box that explains what kind of computer system you need to run the software. It should look something like this:

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS 2386 PROCESSOR
OR HIGHER 628.8 MEGAHERTZ MODEM
719.7 MB FREE DISK SPACE 3546 MB RAM
432323 MB ROM 05948737 MB RPM ANTI
LOCK BRAKING SYSTEM 2 TURTLE DOVES
NOTE: This software will not work on your
computer.

Open the software packaging and remove the manual. This will contain detailed instructions on installing, operating, and trouble-shooting the software. Throw it away.

Find the actual software, which should be in the form of either a 3.5-inch floppy diskette or a CD-ROM, located inside a sealed envelope that says: LICENSING AGREEMENT: By breaking this seal, the user hereinafter agrees to abide by all the terms and conditions of the following agreement that nobody ever reads, as well as the Geneva Convention and the U.N. Charter and the Secret Membership Oath of the Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks and such other terms and conditions, real and imaginary, as the Software Company shall deem necessary and appropriate, including the right to come to the user's home and examine the user's hard drive, as well as the user's underwear drawer if we feel like it, take it or leave it, until death do us part, one nation, indivisible, you've been a great crowd, and don't forget to tip your servers.

Hand the software to a child aged 3 through 12 and say, "(Name of child), please install this on my computer."



If you have no child age 3 through 12, insert the software in the appropriate drive, type "SETUP" and press the Enter key.

Turn the computer on, you idiot. Once again type "SETUP" and press the Enter key.

You will hear grinding and whirring noises for a while, after which the following message should appear on your screen:

The Installation Program will now examine your system to see what would be the best way to render it inoperable. Is it OK with you? (Choose one, and be honest)

After you make your selection, you will hear grinding and whirring for a very long time while the installation program does who-knows-what in there. Some installation programs can actually alter molecular structures, so that when they're done, your computer has been transformed into an entirely new device, such as a food processor. At the very least, the installation program will create many new directories, sub-directories, sub-sub-directories, on your hard drive and fill them with thousands of mysterious files with names like "puree.exe," "fester.dat," and "doo.wha." When the installation program is finished, your screen should display the following message:

CONGRATULATIONS! The installation program cannot think of anything else to do to your computer and has grown bored. You may now attempt to run your software.

At this point your computer system should become less functional than the federal government, refusing to respond even when struck with furniture.

Call the toll-free Technical Support Hotline number listed on the package and wait on the line for a representative, who will explain to you, in a clear, step-by-step manner, how to adopt a child aged 3 through 12.

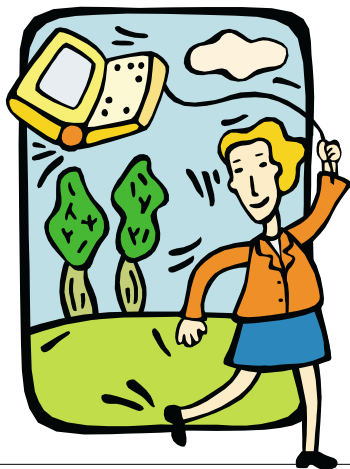
And so that's the easy way to install software...

(courtesy of itsfunoverhere.com)



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F I R S T C L A S S



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RPCUG at 169 South Main Street, Suite 384, New City, NY 10956-3358. (PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)

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Address _____

Spouse's Name (if joint membership) _____

Day Phone: _____

Spouse's E-mail address _____

Evening Phone: _____

Children's Names (for Family Membership)

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