

Published by  
The  
Rockland  
County  
PC  
USERS  
GROUP

September  
2001

## Digital Video Presentation

**“Bridging the Digital Divide –  
looking back and going forward”**

**P**lease join us for the next GENERAL MEETING of the Rockland PC Users Group on Tuesday, October 9th, 2001, at 7:15 PM, in the RASO Community Room, fourth floor, Palisades Center Mall, West Nyack, NY.

FOCUS Enhancements is a leading designer of world-class solutions in advanced, proprietary video scan conversion ASICs, and affordable, high quality, digital-video conversion and video production equipment.

The presentation will chart a brief history of Video, from analog to the latest Digital Video techniques. The presenter will highlight some of the product solutions that FOCUS Enhancements offers in the marketplace.

The company's products and technologies are sold to the broadcast, education, cable, business, industrial, presentation, internet, gaming, home video production and home theater markets.

This month's Multimedia SIG (Special Interest Group) will be held on October 9th, at 6:00 PM in the Raso Room, prior to the General Meeting.

## What is Sweat Equity?

**W**e are proud to report that we have built over 15 computers to donate to the community. Our cost per unit is just \$5. What a bargain! The cost we cannot calculate is “Sweat Equity.”

That's the many man hours that our volunteers spent at the *Hazardous Waste Drop Off* in Pomona, twice a month. Add in the transportation of the components picked up. Add in the physical labor of bringing in the computers and parts to **PC ReNew's** warehouse. Add in the time taken by all the volunteers who take apart, test and rebuild the computers we are giving away.

(see *PCRenew*, page 7)

**PROJECT RENEW** is not about computers and software. It is about people; people who are in need of the technology that could change and enrich their lives: the welfare mother, needy student, shut-in, senior citizen living on a limited budget or veteran in a hospital.

It is also about the people like you and me who have the ability to give some time and talent to make this program work. Everybody wins. We all become a little richer. Get involved with **Project PC Renew** today and help enrich someone else's life.

**MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC** with newcomers especially welcome. For directions and up-to-date meeting information, visit RPCUG's Website at [www.rpcug.org](http://www.rpcug.org)

# WEB SITES editor's picks:

## NO MORE AOL Cds:

<http://nomoreaolcads.com/>

**LOTS OF GOODIES HERE,**  
including the FREE StarOffice  
software:

[www.techtv.com/callforhelp](http://www.techtv.com/callforhelp)

## ADOPT A VIRTUAL DOG:

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

## GO HERE TO TICKLE ELMO:

<http://aol.sesameworkshop.org/sesamestreet/tickle/0,1295,4236,00.html>

## ELIMINATE THE DREADED BLUE SCREEN OF DEATH FOREVER:

Change the color!

<http://pla-netx.com/lineba ckn/news/bsod.html>

## GOT A FAVORITE?

email the editor!

[mcbaade@aol.com](mailto:mcbaade@aol.com)



# THE ROCKLAND PC USERS GROUP

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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, October 9, 2001

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

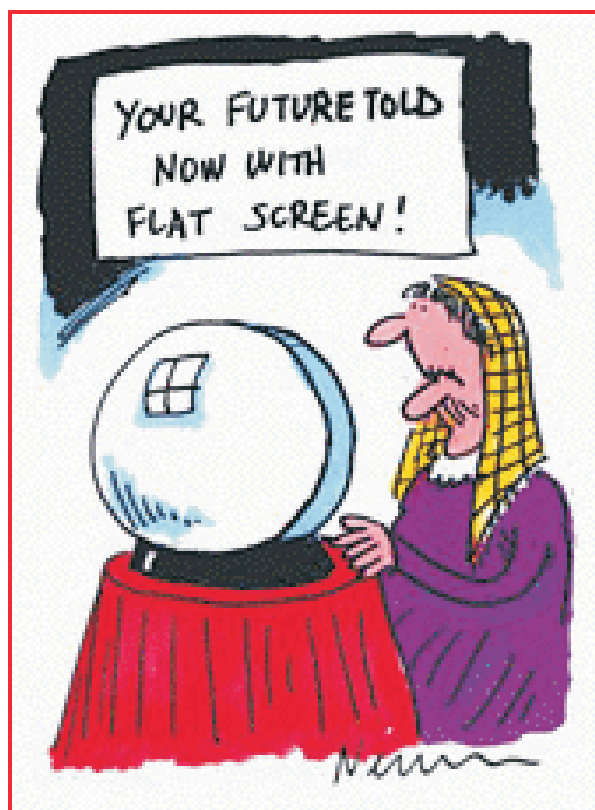
**Multi-Media Workshop** meets on the second Tuesday of the month, prior to the general meeting at 6:00 PM in the Raso Room in the Palisades Mall, West Nyack

**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>



## Message from the President

I want to express my deepest sympathy for all those lost on Tuesday the 11th of September. It is a day that we shall all remember for the rest of our lives. Many have called it a *tragedy*; many have called it a *Holocaust*. Whatever you call it, it has changed our lives forever. I am sure that all of us know someone that has been affected in some way. We are not even sure if anyone in our Group has been lost or injured during this barbaric attack. If anyone knows of a member or a family member that has been affected, please let us know, so that we can try to help in some way.



Will we ever again be comfortable going about our normal lives? I pray that in time we will.

As you all know, our scheduled meetings were cancelled for the month of September. Now that a new month is in front of us, we will try to get back to our schedule. Our General meeting will be held on October 9th: **Focus Technology** will be there, showing off their new products. "Bridging the Digital Divide – looking back and going forward." The presentation will chart a brief history of Video, from analog to the latest Digital Video techniques.

This will also be the beginning of our Holiday Door Prize Giveaways. This has been planned for quite a while, and it may be a great way for us to begin the healing process. We have some great holiday software to give away and even some hardware. For those of you that have always wanted a view cam for your computer, this could be your lucky day.

**PC-Renew** has been going at full speed. By the time you read this, I am sure that there will be refurbished computers being used by some very happy families. At the time of writing this message, PC-Renew had 15 units ready to go. I thank all those who have been putting in the time and effort to make this all happen.

The Multi-Media SIG will be held at 6:00 pm, prior to the General Meeting on Tuesday the 9th. Gene will be ready to go, so don't be late.

On Oct 16th at 7:00 pm, in the Pearl River Library, we will hold our Windows 98/ME SIG. Topic will be announced.

We have some wonderful programs coming up in the next few months:.

- Our November presenter will be **Minolta Corporation**. They will be showing us their new digital cameras and scanners.
- In December, we have **Wizcom** scheduled. They are the manufacturers of small hand scanners - some really neat technology.
- January will be **Microsoft**. They are going to introduce us to their newest operating system...Windows XP!

Hope to see you all at the meeting. Remember...A Group is only as good as its members.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken".

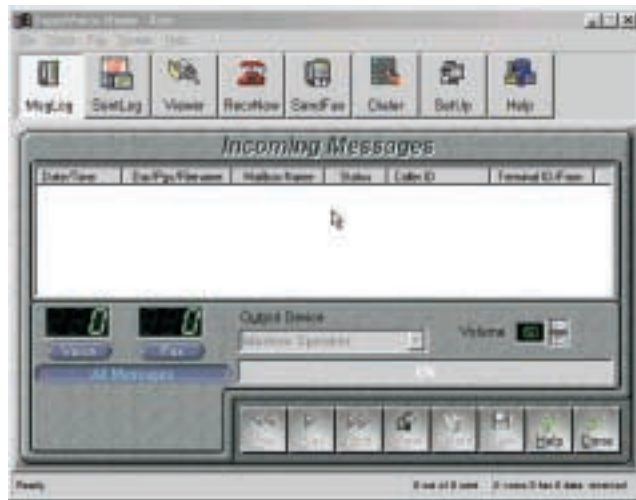
Ken 🖱️

# SuperVoice Home

**Pacific Image Communication, Inc.**

*reviewed by Ken Herbig*

While ago, I sent out a request to MHM for recommendations for an answering machine for my computer. One of the recommendations was **SuperVoice** by Pacific Image Communication, Inc. They produce two versions of their software, "Home" and "Pro." I am using and reviewing their "Home" version.

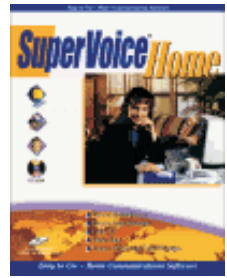


The program comes on a CD and truly installs itself. It locates and identifies your modem and sets up communication with it. The only information I needed to add was my e-mail and "snail mail" addresses, and my phone numbers.

**Super Voice** comes with a single mailbox and fax capabilities. You have the option of recording your own personalized welcome message or using a prerecorded one. If you are into personalizing messages, the program allows you to change any or all the recorded messages. Playing your voice messages are as easy as clicking the mouse. You can selectively save them after you have listened to them or delete them.

When viewing a fax in the viewer, you can rotate it, enlarge it up to 200% or just print it.

When the program installs, it installs a printer "PIC Win 95/98/NT." The actual name will depend on what version of Windows you are



running. When you are in your favorite word processor and you want to send a fax, you can just go to "print" and choose the PIC printer. The **SuperVoice** "Send fax dialog box" will open. At that point, you type in the name and phone number of the person or company that you are sending it to (or select it from the address book you create) and away it goes!

There are many features that I didn't explore. I am sure that message retrieval and forwarding would come in handy, if I traveled or needed to receive messages during the day. With "Caller ID", I could even screen my calls.

I was looking for an easy, efficient way to receive my phone and fax messages, using my computer. **SuperVoice Home** satisfied all my needs and then some. If you are looking for a program to take care of your communication needs, look no further.

## **SUPER VOICE HOME**

([www.supervoiced.com](http://www.supervoiced.com))

Full Version \$19.95

### System Requirements:

PC :486-DX2/66 or faster

(Pentium recommended)

Windows 3.1/3.11/9x/NT

8 MB of RAM (16 MB recommended)

25 MB of free hard disk space

An EIA Class I/II voice/fax modem properly installed in your system. ☎

My wife was teaching her nursery school class about Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. She told them it was a long time ago and paper had not even been invented. So she asked the class how Moses was able to remember all that God told him on Mount Sinai. A four year old replied, "He saved it on a disk."

Net search expert Danny Sullivan, editor of **SearchEngineWatch.com**, was asked this burning question: Given that Google is widely considered the handsdown simplest, fastest, most accurate search site, is there any reason to use anything else? His answer: Yes. "If people haven't tried Google yet, they must," he says "But I always tell people to try a bunch of sites."

"Think of it this way- Just as you wear different pairs of shoes for different occasions, certain search engines may be better for certain searches. If you have been sticking to the same search engines for a while, you may be pleasantly surprised."

Point taken. There are some great search engines that specialize. When looking for prices of digital cameras, for example, a shopping engine like **Buyersindex.com** will take you straight to the stores that sell them, far easier than wading through a long list of Web pages produced by a general search engine.

How to find the right search tool for your needs? The search engine of search engines is **Lookoff.com**. It tells you which sites are good for finding MP3s, stock tips, baseball stats, homework help and more. You'll also find useful search tips and tutorials.

Other worthwhile engines:

- **iLor.com** uses Google's search technology to scour the Web, but goes one better by letting you conveniently create a list of links to visit without ever leaving the results page.
- **Teoma.com** sorts results by topic. Search for "Brazil," for example, and you get headings such as "travel information," "news" and "nature."
- **Ditto.com** searches for pictures.
- **Yahooligans.com** features kid-appropriate sites.
- **Backwash.com** is an entertaining Web directory that sorts sites by personality types such as "Film Buff," "Empty Nester" and "Frat Boy."
- You can read more here:  
[www.quickbrowse.com/press/searchenginewatch.com/](http://www.quickbrowse.com/press/searchenginewatch.com/) 

## from the September APCUG newsletter:

*Our thoughts and hearts go out to everyone affected by the tragic events of the middle of September. Here are just some of the many helpful web sites that Steve Bass, president of the Pasadena PC User Group and a columnist for PC World, suggests in one of his recent Home Office Newsletters:*

### Getting the News

Google's "News links and support information regarding attacks" caches the links onto its servers. You get current access to sites without the wait.

<http://www.google.com/news/>

### "Coping with Terrorism"

The American Psychological Association provides solid advice at"

<http://helping.apa.org/daily/terrorism.html>

### "Coping With the Aftermath of a Disaster" (also APA) at

<http://helping.apa.org/daily/tassey.html>

"Coping With Children's Reaction to Disaster" is an excellent New York City site at

[http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/oem/html/disasters\\_and\\_children.html](http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/oem/html/disasters_and_children.html)

"Tech Companies Share Resources After Attack." PC World has a good article to help companies get assistance keeping their business up and running:

<http://www.pcworld.com/news/article/0,aid,61704,00.asp>

You can sign up for Steve's newsletter at:

[www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,36022,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,36022,00.asp)

# SnagIt 5

## TechSmith Corp.

*reviewed by Ken Herbig*

SnagIt...The name says it all!

There have been many times that I have needed to make a copy of what is on my screen. I had no practical way of doing it, until now. There are many programs that offer this feature, but this one is truly the simplest one I have used. All you need to do is start the program and use a "Hot Key" (combination of keys) to start the capture. In my case the keys are the "Ctrl"-*"Shift"*-*"P"*. You can select any combination you like.

Whether you are surfing the web, or reading one of our previous newsletters from a PDF file, you can capture what you see on the screen. The program gives you many options: full screen, window, active window, region or an object. You can even select what you want by using the "freehand" tool. All you need to do is click and hold your left mouse button and outline what you want to save.



There are times that I want to do different things with the captures that I make. **SnagIt** allows me to select the type of output I want. I can send it to my printer, send it directly to an E-mail, add it to a catalog folder, FTP it directly to a website or save it as a graphic file. This program gives me the option of saving in different formats: BMP, GIF, JPG, PCX, PNG, TGA and TIF.

**SnagIt's** graphics editing capabilities really surprised me; I didn't realize that I would be able to do anything from inside the program. I



can put frames around my capture, adjust the brightness and the contrast, rotate, flip and adjust coloring. It even comes with some of its own plug-ins (posterize, mosaic, emboss, etc.). There are also annotation and watermark features. They both do what they are supposed to do, but I would have like to have seen a "move" option after they were in place. I have the option of positioning them in one of 9 positions. This becomes a little awkward when you have other text or another graphic on the page.

The most fun feature is the "Video Capture." I can actually capture a complete sequence of mouse movements or a sequence of events that are taking place on your screen. For instance, if I want to show someone how to open a file, I can actually go through all the mouse movements and it will make a video file that can be viewed by the recipient of the file. What a great learning tool this can be. There are video programs that I am sure can do a much better job, but this is a major plus for this type of capture program.

Just in case this isn't enough, it also comes with its own cataloging program, so that you can keep track of your different captures. There is also a graphics studio. ich gives you some basic editing tools, such as a highlighter, pencil and other drawing tools. These will suffice for simple editing..

If you have a need for screen captures I highly recommend **SnagIt**. Every time I needed to copy a screen, it worked perfectly and I was able to get exactly what I needed with out any hassle.


see **SnagIt**, next page

## PCRenew...continued

Add in the labor to throw away the cases and parts that are deemed not working. Add in the transportation back to the Hazardous Waste Drop-off.

Add in the friendships that have developed. Add in the feeling we all have that we are all doing something to help those less fortunate. Add in the exchange of knowledge and skills. Add in the rewards we all feel working together, looking forward to coming down to PC ReNew and enjoying a few hours with new friends.

I think that we should change the words from "Sweat Equity" to "Love Equity." This is what we are investing from our hearts as we give back to our community. If you haven't been down to **PCReNew** I want to invite you to join us and invest some "Love Equity."

At the October meeting we will give our first batch of computers to the community. We have commitments to over 90 recipients, and we hope that these computers will better their lives and help them with the skills needed in today's world. - **Join us!** 



## SERIAL MOUSE KILLER

abyee


## SnagIt...continued

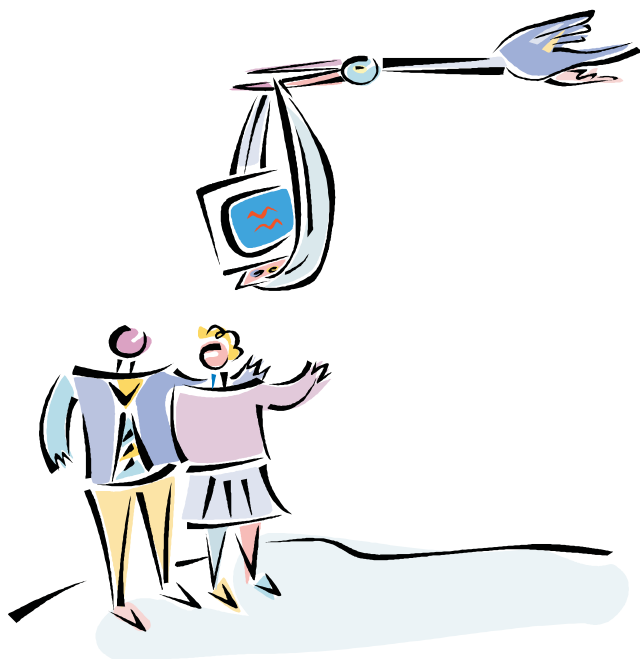
The company is very consumer-friendly. Every week, on their website, there is a "Feature of the Week" page that introduces you to the features of **SnagIt** one at a time. Since last December fifth, they have explained one feature at a time, with screen shots to help in the learning process. They are not just selling you a program and then forgetting about you; they are teaching you the ins and outs of the program one week at a time. They do the same with other programs that they sell.

TechSmith...My hat is off to you! (Finally, a company that cares!

**SnagIt** by TechSmith  
([www.snagit.com](http://www.snagit.com))  
\$39.95

### System Requirements:

Windows 95/98/ME/NT 4.0/2000/XP  
SnagIt Studio requires Windows 95B or higher  
90 MHz processor  
(400 MHz recommended)  
16 MB RAM (64 MB recommended)  
10 MB of hard-disk space  
For mail output, a 32-bit MAPI mail client  
For audio recording and playback, a sound card and microphone. 



# E-Mail Celebrates Its 30th Birthday

by Bernhard Warner, European Internet Correspondent

LONDON (Reuters) - As great inventions go, e-mail had a rather ho-hum beginning back in 1971.

In fact, Ray Tomlinson, the American engineer considered the "father of e-mail," can't quite recall when the first message was sent, what it said, or even who the recipient was.

"I have no idea what the first one was," he told Reuters. "It might have been the first line from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address for all I know. The only thing I know was it was all in upper case."

Tomlinson, principal engineer at Cambridge, Massachusetts.-based BBN Technologies, finds himself in the spotlight again after all these years, having to answer questions about the computer program he designed as it reaches its 30th birthday in the coming weeks.

He modestly calls his baby "no major tour de force." It was just 200 lines of code, he says. And the inspiration — one computer program to enable file transfers and a second crude messaging program — already existed, he said.

But the programs had their flaws. For example, the message program only enabled a user to send a communique to a colleague's mailbox as long as that mailbox was located on the same computer as the sender's.

Tomlinson got around this by creating remote personal mailboxes that could send and receive messages via a computer network. He also conceived the now-famous "+" symbol to ensure a message was sent to a designated recipient.

The end product, he said, was simply the combination of the two existing programs, enabling a person to send a message for the first time to a specified computer user on any computer hooked up to the ARPA Net, the predecessor to today's Internet, developed by the U.S. Department of Defense.

Thirty years on, e-mail has become a vital form of communication.

Last month, e-mail became the only reliable link for many frantic souls during the hijacked plane attacks in the United States. It connected friends and family in New York and Washington DC as

telephone circuits became overloaded in the hours after planes toppled the World Trade Center and blew apart a section of the Pentagon.

Poignant e-mails from survivors have circulated around the world, filling in clues about harrowing escapes and daring rescue attempts.


A week later, it was e-mail that helped spread the damaging Nimda computer virus, knocking out corporate computer networks around the globe and inflicting hundreds of millions of dollars worth of damage.

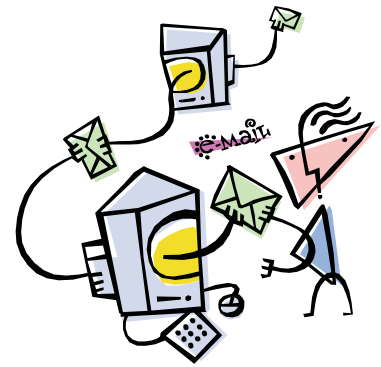
Like all essential communication devices, e-mail has a love-hate relationship with its users. For every, pick-me-up message of praise or joke sent electronically, it seems there are an equal number of unsolicited e-mail reminders that we can lose weight overnight, make money working from home or earn an honorary college degree.

But back in the autumn of 1971 — Tomlinson says he can't recall which month — e-mail was a relatively small success. That is, he added, simply because there were just a few hundred users of the ARPA Net that could put it to use. And, the top-of-the-line modem connection at the time operated at a snail-like 300 baud, roughly one-twentieth of the speed of today's standard 56.6 kbps modem. It made only the most concise message practical.

"Reliance took a few years to happen," said Tomlinson. It wasn't until the personal computer boom in the mid-1980s that e-mail trickled into the lives of computer enthusiasts and university students.

Another major stage in its development came in the mid-90s as the first Web browsers introduced the World Wide Web to the couch potato. As Web usage grew so did e-mail.

Over the years, Tomlinson said, complete strangers have sent him notes of thanks and a few of criticism for his invention — all by e-mail, of course. 





# Scanner Solutions

by Winston Steward with Martin C. Brown

Book Review by William L. Ballinger



This book is small enough to fit in a book bag or laptop-carrying bag. This will allow you to carry the book to read on the train or bus while commuting to work. Its cover has several small color photographs on it that sparked my attention. Inside, it is full of information about buying a flatbed scanner, how a scanner works, photo editing, optical character recognition (OCR), special projects, and more.

One of the problems I found with the book is that some of the websites the author has listed have changed their content or are gone: despite this, the author's concepts are still valid.

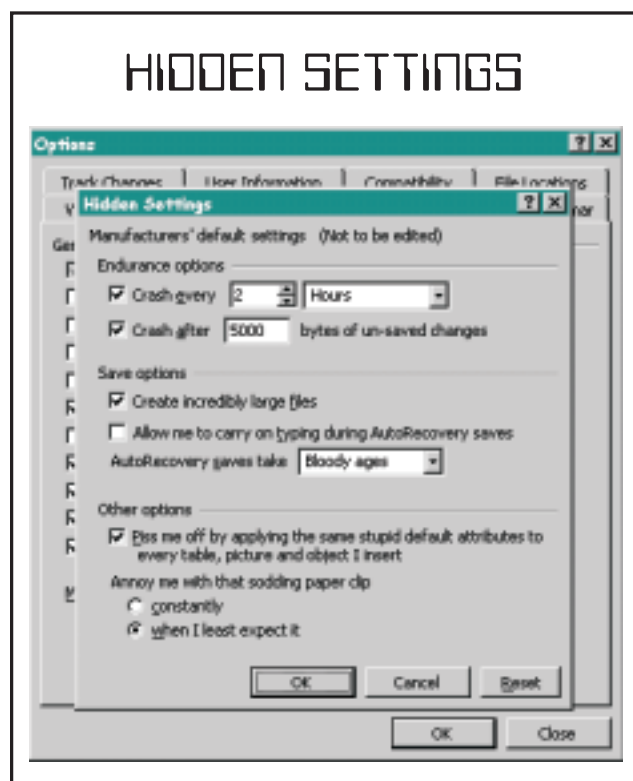
In the chapter about buying a scanner, I was happy to see my scanner listed, the UMAX Astra 2100U. The author indicated that it has good software for beginners; since I have had it for a year, I agree. It has a photo editing program called *Adobe Photodeluxe Home Edition, version 3*. It can do simple corrections such as removing red eye, dust and scratches, and cloning. The author shows you how to correct your photo's problems and compares this program with several others. The author fails to inform you, however, that this software has a problem in its calendar program with its years; it stops at year 2002. I is easy to use, however. You can make monthly and yearly calendars, and you can add borders. If you really like calendars, you may find out that you have other calendar programs on your computer. Use the "Find" function and type in calendar and enter. I discovered I had a calendar program from my printer's software.

The author talked about how to scan in documents larger than your printer's 8.5 x 11 bed and stitch them together. He mentioned a downloadable program called "Visual Stitcher." The secret to using the "Stitching Programs" is to make your scans in equal sizes and overlap parts of each scan.

The author gives some good advice for scanning other people's work. Usually you can scan anyone's work if you use for your own personal use; you run into trouble if you use someone's copyrighted image for something you want to sell. The author mentions the "fair use rule" that usually protects educators when they copy an image to help with a class subject. Finally, the author recommends: when in doubt, write to the creator of the image to get permission.

I recommend this book for everyone, from the beginner to the advanced computer user. It should be a good reference book for several years, although it is good for flatbed scanners only. It does not offer much advice for buying or using negative and slide scanners, except they can be quite expensive and are used for professional photographic work.

Muska & Lipman Publishing  
www.musalipman.com  
List price \$29.95 



# SOFTWARE available for REVIEW

**YOU KNOW** you like free stuff! **PICK ONE**, write down what you think about it, and it's **YOURS TO KEEP!** Email **Roberta** at [Roberta316@yahoo.com](mailto:Roberta316@yahoo.com) or **Ken** at [hobbikat@hobbikats.com](mailto:hobbikat@hobbikats.com)

- ✓ **Visual Day Planner**, \$29.95  
Organize your life...visually! Easily sets reminders, appointments and memos by simply typing into it like a word processor  
[www.inklineglobal.com/](http://www.inklineglobal.com/)
- ✓ **Web Media Publisher**, \$50.00  
Introduced as the first 32 bit professional HTML editor  
[www.wbmedia.com/publisher/](http://www.wbmedia.com/publisher/)
- ✓ **ArtIcons Pro 3.0** for Win 9x/ME/NT/2000/XP  
Allows professional and amateur graphic artists to create and edit icon images and manage icon files and libraries with ease.  
[www.aha-soft.com](http://www.aha-soft.com)
- ✓ **Camtasia**, (\$149.95)  
An ingenious Windows application that's like no screen capturing utility you've ever seen.  
[www.techsmith.com](http://www.techsmith.com)
- ✓ **CDH Media Wizard** (\$50.00)  
A powerful, all-in-one multimedia application supporting playback of all popular formats.  
[www.cdhnow.com/](http://www.cdhnow.com/)
- ✓ **Dubit** (\$19.95)  
A multimedia tool which lets you easily add audio to movie clips and images.  
[www.techsmith.com](http://www.techsmith.com)
- ✓ **HTML Guard 2.0** (\$15.00)  
Protects your web site from unauthorized copying.  
[www.aw-soft.com/htmlguard.html](http://www.aw-soft.com/htmlguard.html)
- ✓ **Jigsaws Galore 4.0 D/L** (\$25.00) / Mail (\$39.00)  
The most powerful Windows Jigsaw Player/Creator available, with features never seen before!  
[www.dgray.com](http://www.dgray.com)
- ✓ **Oligo 2.0** (\$29.95)  
Change the way your Browser looks!  
[www.inklineglobal.com/](http://www.inklineglobal.com/)
- ✓ **Typing Master 2002** (\$29.90)  
Learn and practice the professional ten-finger technique with this effective self-paced typing tutor.  
[www.TypingMaster.com](http://www.TypingMaster.com)

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## Computer Rage Across the Pond

Computer rage is on the increase in offices across the country, according to a new report. One in four Britons have attacked their machines, with some even injuring themselves in the process. Common problems sparking anger at machines include system crashes and sticky mice.

The report on rage survey has been compiled by the magazine *Computeractive*. Editor James Harding told Ananova: "Computer rage is increasing, partly because of the pressure office workers are under and partly because people have become too reliant on their computers. They see their PC as a magical solution to their problems. If they can't get it to work exactly how they want to they get upset."

An NOP survey found 30% of workers had witnessed physical attacks on computers and 70% had heard people swearing at their machines.

A survey by MORI found one in eight people had seen colleagues bullying members of the office IT department when things went wrong.

Tips for avoiding computer rage include deleting unnecessary files to cut down on system crashes, investing in better equipment to speed up connection times and admitting you may have caused the problem in the first place.

Computeractive says the problem is known as desk rage, tech rage, web rage or **CRAP** (Computer Rage Anxiety and Phobia). ☹

*You know exactly when your computer's going to crash... about four seconds after you push it out the window.—Chris White, [www.topfive.com](http://www.topfive.com)*

## COMPUTER TERMINOLOGY EXPLAINED

**Alpha** — Software undergoes alpha testing as a first step in getting user feedback. Alpha is Latin for “doesn’t work.”

**Beta** — Software undergoes beta testing shortly before it’s released. Beta is Latin for “still doesn’t work.”

**Computer** — Instrument of torture. The first computer was invented by Roger “Duffy” Billingsly, a British scientist. In a plot to verthrow Adolf Hitler, Duffy disguised himself as a German ally and offered his invention as a gift to the surly dictator. The plot worked. On April 8, 1945, Adolf became so enraged at the “Incompatible File Format” error message that he shot himself. The war ended soon after Hitler’s death, and Duffy began working for IBM.

**CPU** — Central propulsion unit. The CPU is the computer’s engine. It consists of a hard drive, an interface card and a tiny spinning wheel that’s powered by a running rodent - a gerbil if the machine is a 286, a ferret if it’s a 386 and a ferret on speed if it’s a 486.

**Default Directory** — Black hole. Default directory is where all files that you need disappear to.

**Error message** — Terse, baffling remark used by programmers to place blame on users for the program’s shortcomings.

**File** — A document that has been saved with an unidentifiable name. It helps to think of a file as something stored in a file cabinet - except when you try to remove the file, the cabinet gives you an electric shock and tells you the file format is unknown.

**Hardware** — Collective term for any computer-related object that can be kicked or battered.

**Help** — The feature that assists in generating more questions. When the help feature is used correctly, users are able to navigate through a series of Help screens and end up where they started from without learning anything.

**Input/Output** — Information is input from the keyboard as intelligible data and output to the printer as unrecognizable junk.

**Printer** — A joke in poor taste. A printer consists of three main parts: the case, the jammed paper tray and the blinking red light.

**Programmers** — Computer avengers. Once members of that group of high school nerds who wore tape on their glasses, played Dungeons and Dragons, and memorized Star Trek episodes; now millionaires who create “user-friendly” software to get revenge on whoever gave them noogies.

**Reference Manual** — Object that raises the monitor to eye level. Also used to compensate for that short table leg.

**Users** — Collective term for those who stare vacantly at a monitor. Users are divided into three types: novice, intermediate and expert.

**Novice Users** — People who are afraid that simply pressing a key might break their computer.

**Intermediate Users** — People who don’t know how to fix their computer after they’ve just pressed a key that broke it.

**Expert Users** — People who break other people’s computers.

*by Don Singleton, brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups*

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