

November 2002

VBCG Monthly Meeting

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Date: November 5, 2002

Place: Christ By The Sea
3755 A1A Vero Beach

Time: 7:00 PM



Homepage

Corrected 11/03/02

Mr Roberts Daniels of Adobe to Speak

The Vero Beach Computer Group welcomes Mr. Robert McDaniels, from Adobe Systems Inc, who will speak at Christ By The Sea, Tuesday November 5, 2002 at 7:00 PM. This and all future meetings will also be at the Library. The Library is unavailable because of the Election. There will be voting booths in our regular meeting place at he library. We will return to the Library again next month.

Mr. McDaniels talk will focus on two particular Adobe products, Adobe® Photoshop®, and Adobe Photo-shop Elements. His presentation will cover basic Image Correction, Photo-

Retouching, Adding text and compositing images, building slide shows, making a web photo gallery, and preparing pictures for printing.

Adobe® Photoshop®, the professional image-editing standard, helps graphic designers, photographers, and Web designers create the highest quality images for print, the Web, and anywhere else. Adobe Photo-shop Elements software offers the perfect combination of power and simplicity for photo hobbyists and amateur photographers who want to do more with their digital photos.

Mr. Robert McDaniels is an Application Engineer for Adobe Systems. He has worked at Adobe for the past 3 1/2 years and is a certified expert in many of their graphics, web design, and publishing tools. Currently, Mr. McDaniels works in the Southeast US for the Enterprise sales team helping customers understand Adobe's enterprise-class, server-based business solutions.

Please join us at Christ By The Sea to hear answers to questions you might have, from someone who really knows the answers and is an expert on the topics he will cover.

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Making an Internet Shortcut

By Rafe Padgett, Vice President

Question:

What is an Internet Shortcut?

Answer: It is, in simple terms, an icon that you can click on to get to a specific site.

Question: Why would I want to do this?

Answer: There are probably varied uses for Internet Shortcuts. The following is what I use them for. There are about 15 sites I go to when I first start my surfing session. I don't go to all 15 of them at once, I just pick whatever one seems appropriate and go there. In the My Documents Folder, I right-clicked on an empty space and went to New > Folder and left-clicked. I named the Folder InternetShortcuts

but you can name it anything your system allows. I filled this folder with Internet Shortcuts that I made and when I start my computer I open this folder to start my surfing. You can right-click the folder and send a shortcut to the Desktop and start surfing from there as long as you have an Internet connection

To make an Internet Shotcut, do the following:

1. In Windows, open Notepad. The path to Notepad is Start > Programs > Accessories > Notepad.
2. Type the following two lines exactly as they appear:
[InternetShortcut]
URL=http://www.yahoo.com
3. Click on File > Save As and name the file

Yahoo.url or anything else with a .url ending. Don't forget the dot (period) between Yahoo and url. Drop down the Save As Type box and choose All Files. Navigate to your InternetShortcuts folder with your up arrow and your Save In dropdown box at the top of the Save As screen and click the Save button. (When you click on File > Save As you may already be at the My Documents folder and all you have to do is double-click the InternetShortcuts folder to open it.) The Save In box should say InternetShortcuts when you click Save.

4. An icon should appear in your folder. When you click it you should go to Yahoo. Make similar shortcuts for other sites you frequent the same way.

Did You Know That

Do you ever download things from the Internet? Sometimes the names are totally meaningless. I had to download the Driver for an HP 3200 scanner. Do you think they would use a name like hp3200sj.exe or sj3200.exe — NO the name of the driver is sj648en.exe. There is a solution for all those names that make no sense. Just get a notepad and keep it at your desk just for computer things. **Have a section for Downloads.** As you download something, write the name and what it is, in that section.

Have another section for **special passwords** you use. **Make sure you include the password for your ISP.** If you lose your computer and have to restore, you need this information.

Have another section to **record the Key for your software.** (I also use a marker and record it on the front of the CD as well, because I keep mine in a carrying case rather than the CD case it came in).

Have another section for all the **information on your computer** that you will need when you call technical support.

If you make your own **shortcut keys** like I do, you need to have them recorded in this little book too. Just in case!

You may be wondering why I suggested a notebook rather than your word processor. The reason is that if a virus gets your system or for any reason you lose your system, and you have to restore your computer, you will not be able to get to this information. You can keep a copy in your word processor, but be sure to keep it current and back it up on a floppy, zip, or CD.

A favorite website of mine is one I have mentioned before. I have found so many useful hints here. Just copy this to the address bar of Internet Explorer

<http://mrswizard.com>

and you will find all kinds of goodies. Doug Horton told me about this site several years ago and I receive her newsletter each month and keep all of them. This month she explains how to work with layers in Paint Shot Pro. I went out and bought it. It is supposed to be the most popular. All of them are good. Personally I like Adobe PhotoShop Elements **much better** and even **PC World's Digital Focus has finally recognized Adobe.** See the 9/17 newsletter.

I have been using Adobe for years and when I got Adobe Photoshop Elements it soon became my favorite of all photo editing software. Everything is so much easier, and the view area is so much larger than in Photo Paint Pro where you have a thumbnail size area where you see a portion of the image to enhance.

Another tip was one I discovered while attending Cindy's Word SIG. I use it a lot in doing the Homepage using Microsoft Publisher 2002 which Mindshare Users Group gave us. It is on copying formatted text. I spent quite some time trying to copy an article from word to a text frame in Publisher. Finally I gave up and did a Ctrl+A to select the article, then a Ctrl+C to copy it to the Windows Clipboard. Then I opened Notepad and did a Ctrl+V to paste it. All the formatting was re-

By Jean B Grider, Staff Writer



moved and I was able to then copy it into Publisher where I changed the font and font size.

Below is a tip from Mrs wizard:

Here's another Tiny Treasure FREEWARE from Analog X. They have some of the most useful, easy to install, won't mess up your system stuff you will ever find.

Does your computer always seem to run better when you first turn it on? Do you ever wonder why it seems to become more and more sluggish as the day goes on? Want a little something that can help it be more frisky all day long?

Run it whenever you want a little something to periodically flush your system of memory hogging stuff that doesn't need to be running any more. Sometimes just closing a program isn't enough. This little darlin seems to be just the thing for those lingering goodies that don't seem to believe you really want to close them.

MaxMem is "no muss, no fuss" freeware. It is a quick download (only 214 Kb), easy to install, very intuitive to learn and use, and won't gum up your system while you are using it.

If you have an old dinosaur of a computer that is slow as molasses in January, don't expect MaxMem to make it act like a 2 gig processor with memory out the wazoo. It's not going to happen. But everyone should see a noticeable improvement ...even the old dinosaurs.

Should We Update Our Motto as we Upgrade Our Computers?

This is our old motto. I don't know how long it has been in existence and it is certainly what we stand for.

To share our experiences as a self-help group that gives everyone a chance to learn, and help each other.

What do you think of this?

To share our experiences as a

self-help group that gives everyone a chance to learn and keep up with the new technology, and become aware of some of the exciting and varied uses of computers.

If you have any suggestions, please

send them to the editor @

Vbcgeditor@yahoo.com



Bugs and Dust Balls: A 'Clean' Installation Submitted by by Sarah Milstein of NY Times 10/24/02 Sammy SanMiguel, President

If you want to upgrade your computer's memory and operating system and you are doing it yourself, you will need a telephone, a vacuum cleaner and superhuman patience. The rest depends on your computer's configuration. (More on the required items in a moment.) Recently my home PC began showing signs of age. A Dell Dimension with a Pentium III chip and a 450-megahertz processor, it was zippy when I bought it in 1999. But over time, the boot sequence had slowed to nearly five minutes. I took to paging through magazines while waiting for applications to load. The D.S.L. ran at dial-up speed, and the power light didn't work. Worse, the computer crashed frequently. I figured I could get better performance by boosting the machine's RAM, or random access memory, from 128 to 512 megabytes. RAM is a computer's short-term memory, holding applications and files that are in use when the machine is on. More RAM makes a computer run faster. (Most new ones have at least 256 megabytes.) It comes on chips mounted on a computer's motherboard. I also wanted to replace my balky Windows 98 operating system with the more stable Windows XP. Because I had read that upgrading from 98 (that is, installing XP on top of 98 and retaining all of the programs, files and settings) tended to cause problems, I wanted to do what is called a clean install, wiping out the existing programs and data, then installing XP from scratch.

I called Dell to find out whether my computer had internal space for more RAM and whether my hardware was compatible with Windows XP. The representative said my motherboard had three slots for RAM and that one already held a 128-megabyte chip. I decided to order an additional 128-megabyte chip (\$35.95) and a 256-megabyte chip (\$68.95) and bought the Windows XP Home Edition (\$189.95). Next I called Dell's technical support line to find out whether I would need to update any of the drivers or the BIOS. (A driver is a small program that allows a peripheral device to communicate with software. BIOS, or basic input-output system, is a built-in program that starts up a computer.) The technician said that the sound-card driver and the BIOS would have to be updated and that I could download new versions from Dell's Web site. I went to the Web site and was immediately confused. Should I download the files for Windows 98 or XP? And where was the sound-card driver? I called Dell again. A woman helped me locate the sound-card driver but said that it might not work with XP. She also directed me to the appropriate BIOS file, but it required a blank 3.5-inch floppy diskette and I didn't have one.

I bought a box of diskettes (\$4.95), but none worked. I called Dell again. It took three calls (plus one disconnection after 20 minutes on hold) to figure out that my floppy drive was broken. I couldn't install XP without the new BIOS, and I couldn't update the BIOS without a floppy. I ordered a new floppy drive (\$14.95). Meanwhile, because I planned to erase the hard drive completely, I backed up all my data files. First I exported my bookmarks and my e-mail address book to files. Then I burned a CD with those files and my documents. I also burned discs with my Palm and Quicken data and my Outlook Express e-mail folders. Then I tried transferring the files to my laptop, which runs XP. It didn't work. After a day of tinkering (and cursing), I realized I had burned the CD's in such a way that only the original computer could read them. I reformatted and reburned the discs. The documents transferred, but the laptop wouldn't recognize my e-mail folders. It took another full day - and a lot more cursing - before I hit on a solution. In the Microsoft knowledge base, a searchable archive of how-to articles at the company's Web site (microsoft.com; click on Support), I found a note about backing up folders.dbx, an obscure e-mail folder critical for transfers.

When the parts arrived from Dell, I was ready. I pulled off the side panel and installed the RAM, which easily snapped in. But I couldn't figure out how to remove the front panel to replace the floppy drive. I called Dell, and a technician explained how to unhinge the part. I did so and gasped. The front interior section of the computer was coated in dust stalactites a half-inch thick. With Dell still on the phone, I vacuumed up the dirt (and realized that the power light I had thought was dead had simply been smothered). The technician guided me through replacing the floppy drive. It was simple, requiring one Philips screwdriver. We rebooted the computer. The new drive worked perfectly, and I was able to download the updated BIOS. But the technician commented that rebooting took remarkably long. He recommended running two utility programs, ScanDisk and Disk Defragmenter. Each would take about 45 minutes, so he gave me directions and hung up. Halfway through ScanDisk, the computer crashed. I tried Defragmenter. That crashed, too.

The next day, I called Dell. The technician thought there might be a problem with a piece of hardware. She recommended a full diagnostic test, which I could download from Dell. It would take eight hours to run. I downloaded the program and started it. Her directions didn't match the menu options, so I called Dell again. The technician who answered thought my problems might be caused by a virus, not hardware. Tests confirmed his guess. He recommended debugging the hard drive, then reformatting it. I did so, then installed the new BIOS. I was ready to install XP. I took a deep breath and inserted the installation CD. It started itself smoothly. But after about 20 minutes, it rebooted and began the same procedure again. I called Dell. The technician explained that although Dell had sold me a copy of XP, the company did not provide support for it. I would have to call Microsoft. After ranting on my part and huffing on hers, the technician told me how to continue the installation. From there, it went beautifully. Almost.

XP finished installing itself in less than an hour. The 512 megabytes of RAM and XP - plus a debugged hard drive - proved to be a thrillingly fast combination. My software and data files installed very quickly, and all of the drivers worked automatically, including the sound card's. The computer booted in less than a minute. Applications and Web pages loaded instantaneously.

Of course, there were hitches: Word 2000 wouldn't start properly. I called Microsoft and was told that I must pay \$35 to speak to a Microsoft technician. Fuming, I searched Microsoft's knowledge base and found an answer to my question: a template had caused a conflict and had to be moved to a different folder. (When I contacted Microsoft later for this article and the company learned of my experience, it tracked down a record of that earlier call and told me that I had been turned away in error.)

A week after completing the upgrade, I discovered that the scanning function on my Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 1100A no longer worked. A note at Hewlett-Packard's Web site said that I could download a new driver but that it would not support scanning. I sent an e-mail message to the company. The reply suggested that I buy a CD (\$10.77), but it did not say whether the drivers on it would fix the scanning problem. I called Hewlett-Packard and was told that because my three-year-old printer was no longer under warranty, I would have to pay \$25 to speak with a technician who could tell me whether the CD would work. I refused. I took a chance and bought the CD. It arrived two days later and worked perfectly.

After it was all over, I learned that for home users, Microsoft recommends upgrading from Windows 98 to Windows XP rather than doing a clean install, because the latter can be so complicated. What do I recommend? I haven't tried the upgrade. But I imagine it cannot be done without a telephone, a vacuum cleaner and many megabytes of patience.