

## Use Your Computer to Do Your Taxes

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Our newsletter is published monthly and is a benefit of membership. Your dues support our activities and programs. Dues are \$25/ year for either individuals or families.

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Barbara McKenzie of H & R Block will be here this month to give a demonstration of their "TaxCut" tax preparation software. She will be demonstrating its ease of inputting data, safeguards, final results, E-filing, etc. Barbara is currently the Manager of H & R Block's South Vero Square Office and has had several years experience in income tax preparation. She has also been an instructor for H & R Block's Continuing Education.

TaxCut software is owned & published by H&R Block Digital Tax Solutions, Inc. For more information about the software or their services, visit: [www.taxcut.com](http://www.taxcut.com).

For additional information and resources for filing your taxes online, please visit the Internal Revenue Service website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

Be sure and remember that we are now offering the "Help Desk" in the meeting room from 6–7 PM for those who want to show up early and need a little extra help with a problem or question.



Attendees at one of Jean Grider's recent SIG Meetings.

Vero Beach Computer Group is a self-help group that provides help to members who want to improve their knowledge of computers and accessories. Our motive is to share our experiences and give members a chance to learn and help each other. Every effort is made to share accurate information; however, no representations or warranties either express or implied are made as to its accuracy.

## A Troubleshooting Primer

### How To Figure Out What To Fix mn

Smart Computing, March 2008, Web Only article

Computers are weird, aren't they? There's no other product for which we'd pay hundreds or thousands of dollars and not expect it to work correctly the first time—and every time. Well, alright, you could expect your PC to function flawlessly, but you'd be disappointed.

There are simply too many variables in any computer for it to "just work" throughout its lifetime. The OS (operating system), such as Microsoft Windows, has to work with zillions of combinations of computer parts, including motherboards, processors, RAM modules, and graphics cards. (Apple computers rarely have hardware compatibility problems because the company only has to make sure that its Mac OS works on a relative handful of laptop and desktop computer configurations. On the other hand, Mac users are much more limited than Windows or Linux users regarding the peripherals and upgrades they can add.)

Add in the fact that every computer user can install any updates, software, and device drivers he likes. Also, there's a healthy selection of user-selectable settings for each of the above, making the chances for some sort of conflict increase exponentially. And we haven't even factored in Internet congestion, networking problems, viruses and other malware, defects in storage drives and discs, or human error. . . .

Whew! If computers weren't so insanely useful, and potentially fun, people wouldn't be inclined to bother with them.

To read the full article, visit [www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com).

## New Music Download Service is Free--With Ads

**Otrax will feature tunes from major labels, protected by DRM and supported by ads.**

Yinka Adegoke, Reuters

Sunday, January 27, 2008

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Otrax, a new legal online file-sharing service that allows fans to download songs for free, said on Sunday it will launch with 25 million to 30 million copyrighted tracks with backing from major labels.

The free service will be funded through advertising revenue that Otrax will share with the music companies.

Otrax executives said the company's digital rights management technology will count the number of times each song has been played in order to fairly compensate artists and rights' holders, without restricting consumer use.

The company has focused on ensuring that its network is free of spyware or adware such as pop-ups common on many peer-to-peer networks to improve the customer experience.

"If you want people to come to a legal environment it has to be demonstrably better," said Chief Executive Allan Klepfisz.

To read the rest of the story, please visit [www.pcworld.com/article/id,141864-pg,1/article.html](http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,141864-pg,1/article.html)

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## The Mac Corner

By Eleanor Ryan

### Tip of the Week

#### Dropping Text on the Dock for Fast Results

Let's say you're reading an article online, and you read a sentence that you want to email to a friend. Don't do the copy-and-paste thing. Instead, just highlight the text and drag-and-drop it right on the Mail icon on the Dock. It will open Mail and put the sentence into a new mail message. This tip also works in other Cocoa applications like TextEdit, Stickies and Safari. For example, if you are reading a story and want to do a Google search on something you've read, just highlight the text and drag-and-drop it on the Safari icon in the Dock. It will launch Safari and display the Google Search Results.

#### You're Two Clicks from a Photo's EXIF Data

When you take a photo with a digital camera, the camera imbeds info directly into the file, including the make and model of the camera, the exposure, shutter speed, and a host of other info (called eXIF data). That information is usually viewed within an application like Photoshop or iPhoto, but now you can view it right from the Finder.

Just click the photo's icon, then press Command-I to bring up the info dialog. When it appears, click on the right-facing triangle beside the words "More info" and the basic eXIF data will appear.

#### Introducing MacBook Air—the world's thinnest notebook



MacBook Air is ultrathin, ultraportable, and ultra unlike anything else. But you don't lose inches and pounds overnight. It's the result of rethinking conventions. Of multiple wireless innovations. And of breakthrough design. With MacBook Air, mobile computing suddenly has a new standard. For more information, visit [www.apple.com/macbookair](http://www.apple.com/macbookair).

For a roundup of MacBook Air reviews, visit the PC World blog site at:

<http://blogs.pcworld.com/staffblog/archives/006355.html>.

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# MEETINGS AND SIGS

**All meetings and SIGs are held in the Indian River County Main Library  
located at 1600 21 Street, Vero Beach, Florida**

**February 2008**

Sunday      Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday

					1	2
3	4 <b>General Meeting 7 PM</b>	5 Photoshop Elements & Your Photos 1 - 3 PM	6 Cameras, Scanners & Printers 6-7:30	7 Using Your Computer 2 - 4 PM	8	9
10	11	12 Microsoft Office 2 - 4 PM	13	14 	15	16 Mac Users 10 AM-Noon
17	18	19 VBCG Board of Directors 6:30 PM	20 Surfing the Internet 6 - 7:30 PM	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	

- |                              |                  |         |                |              |
|------------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|--------------|
| Photoshop Elements           | Frank Lombard    | Feb. 5  | (772) 794-2293 | Media Room   |
| Cameras, Scanners & Printers | Frank Lombard    | Feb. 6  | (772) 794-2293 | History Room |
| Using Personal Computers     | Jean Grider      | Feb. 7  | (772) 569-4289 | History Room |
| MS Office, Outlook           | Randy Washington | Feb. 12 | (772) 299-1793 | History Room |
| Surfing the Internet         | Tim Glover       | Feb. 20 | (772) 589-0636 | History Room |
| Macintosh Users Group        | Eleanor Ryan     | Feb. 16 | (772) 562-2869 | History Room |
| Macintosh Users Group        | Joe Piazza       | Feb. 16 | (772) 567-9004 | History Room |

## Tips & Tricks

**CapturePad v0.1b [759K] W98/2k/XP FREE, Lockergnome Windows Digest, 6-21-03**

<http://www.capturepad.com>

CapturePad is a screen & video capture utility which allows you to capture any screen activity into standard AVI file, JPG sequence and even into Flash SWF file. Besides that CapturePad works with any video hardware attached to the computer so you can easily grab and save a video from your webcam, tv tuner, etc. Not only can you use it to capture video to send to family and friends, but also use it to create tutorials or step-by-step instructions. It's a great solution for those who want something easy and quick to use for accomplishing such tasks. There is a paid and free version available.

**PPPCD v1.51 [4.8M] W98/2k/XP FREE, Lockergnome Windows Digest, 6-21-03**

[http://www.download.com/PPPCD/3000-9694\\_4-10067410.html](http://www.download.com/PPPCD/3000-9694_4-10067410.html)

PPPCD lets anyone distribute a PowerPoint 97/2000 compatible presentation on an autorun CD. The program is very easy to use; all you have to do is replace the supplied sample presentation with yours and burn everything on a CD, using your favorite CD burning software. When the CD is inserted, it will automatically launch a welcome screen and start the presentation. If the user does not have PowerPoint installed, it will offer to install the PowerPoint viewer (included). PPPCD is compatible with ANY presentation that will run in PowerPoint 97/2000, including presentation created using 3rd party tools such as StarOffice. This system does not require an uninstaller and makes no changes to the user's system.

**I Hate This Key! v4.0 [492k] W98/2k/XP, Lockergnome Windows Digest, 6-21-03**

<http://www.bytegems.com/ihatethiskey.shtml>

Hardcore gamers and Terminal Services Client user probably wince at the thought of "Windows logo key," because it gives them trouble. Some may have removed it from the keyboard altogether, which works especially if the logo is never used. I Hate This Key offers another solution and it disables the key. Run the program, configure it (to work with full-screen games, full-screen games and applications, never, or always), and hit the logo key with a reckless abandon and nothing happens. Ding dong, the logo key is dead... temporarily.

**Fake or Foto, Lockergnome Windows Digest, 6-21-03**

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

{Real or computer graphic image?} Take the fake or foto challenge to see if you can tell the difference between the real thing and a computer graphic. It's harder than you think. There are ten images per page. Click on an image to get a larger and closer look. The photographers and graphics artists are talented.

**Segmation's Seg-Play, Lockergnome Windows Digest, 6-21-03**

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

{Photograph toy} Seg-Play, a Java-enabled program, is a paint-by-number experience. Seg-Play takes the paint-by-number one step further with a "beat the clock" feature. You'll find various artists, subjects like sailing, objects like butterflies, holidays, cartoon characters, and products like Coca-Cola (sorry, Pepsi fans). Each picture gets a rating from simple to difficult. This could become a bad habit! Seg-Play is cheaper than repairing the mess kids make, leaving paint on everything except the canvas.



## Learning From Failure: Apple's Most Notorious Flops

Wired Magazine, 01.24.08

From the nicotine-beige Macintosh 128K to today's sleek glass-and-aluminum iMac, the Macintosh has come a long way since its debut on Jan. 24, 1984. What hasn't changed is Apple's ability to make devices that have broad appeal. But lest we forget, the road to success has often been bumpy for Apple, and the company has had its fair share of duds over the years.

So to help celebrate 24 years of Mac, we revisit some of Apple's products (not all of them Macs) that just didn't live up to consumer expectations and market demands. As the following list demonstrates, flops often get reworked and find successful implementations in later, more successful products. Indeed, what continues to separate Apple from the rest of the industry is its ability to adapt and learn from prior mistakes. With that in mind, here's our list of Cupertino's momentary lapses in judgment.

To read the rest of the article, please visit:  
[www.wired.com/gadgets/mac/multimedia/2008/01/gallery\\_apple\\_flops](http://www.wired.com/gadgets/mac/multimedia/2008/01/gallery_apple_flops).

## Inside the High-Stakes 700-MHz Spectrum Auction

By Bryan Gardiner, Wired Magazine, 01.24.08

Editor's note: This article updated January 24, 2008

The FCC's 700-MHz-spectrum auction officially began on January 24 and stands to be one of the most significant airwave auctions in U.S. history, potentially affecting everything from the cost of your wireless service to the competitive landscape among U.S. mobile providers for years to come.

With 214 qualified bidders expected to compete for various 700-MHz band licenses -- including Verizon, AT&T and Google -- some industry insiders say the government could rake in as much \$30 billion in the auction. That money will be used to help transition to all digital TV signals by 2009.

Although bidding gets underway on Jan. 24, 2008, the public won't know who the winners and losers are until the auction officially concludes. Read the rest of the story at:  
[www.wired.com/techbiz/it/news/2008/01/auction\\_faq](http://www.wired.com/techbiz/it/news/2008/01/auction_faq).

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### The SIGs

If you are not attending a SIG, you are missing more than you know. Ask someone who attends them each month. It is well worth your time. All you have to do is bring your questions and a pencil and paper. You can even bring a guest if you want. **Try it.**