

February 2008



# MEGAPHONE

Vol. 27,  
Number 2

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

## Editor's Note

*from Paul Van Bloem*

I'll try to keep this Editor's Note short, as I need to spend more time getting the newsletter finished so I can send it out to you, albeit a bit late.

## Thanks

Let me first extend our thanks to Amy Begg DeGroff from the Howard County Library. Her discussion of the library's current software and computer practices was very interesting. I found myself thinking about how big and complex the computer world has grown. Amy talked about open source software the library has adapted to its use, such as the new card catalog software (maybe "book inventory software" would be a better description); I understood most of that part. But when she mentioned some of the applications her team uses to support the library, I was completely lost -- even though my 9 to 5 job is in computer support, too (not libraries, though).

Anyway, we appreciate Amy coming and telling us about the exciting stuff going on at **hclibrary.org**.

## Welcome Back, Rob

This meeting sees the return of the Washington Post's Rob Pegoraro to the Florence Bain Center. Rob visited us back in the summer of 2006, and gave a fascinating talk on his work with new equipment, writing reviews, and otherwise getting paid to do what most CMUGgers would be glad to do for free.

This time around, Rob will be telling us about the gadgets he saw at CES, the big Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas last month. Beyond the gadgets, I hope he'll talk a bit about where he sees technology heading and how it will affect us.

If you want to get a head start, you might try reading some of Rob's blog, *Faster Forward*, which can be found at **http://blog.washingtonpost.com/**

**fasterforward/**.

## Snow Reminder

A brief reminder about snow cancellations. If the Howard County schools close for the day, or close early, or cancel evening activities, then the Bain Center will also be closed, and we will cancel our meeting. Hopefully that won't be a problem when Rob comes!

There is a link from the CMUG website (<http://mycmug.org>) to SchoolsOut.com (<http://www.schoolsout.com/view/school/47>). Howard County school closings can be found there. We'll try to get a notice up on the website if the meeting is cancelled, but that may be hard to do (especially if the webmaster is snowed in at his office in stead of at home).

## Digital TV

Rob's blog post for Thursday (2/14) deals with the analog to digital TV switchover we are counting down to (about a year to go). He talks a bit about the converter boxes that those of us who haven't bought a new TV will need to receive over-the-air broadcasts (see [http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fasterforward/2008/02/deciphering\\_digital\\_tv.html](http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fasterforward/2008/02/deciphering_digital_tv.html)).

This reminded me of a related topic I've been meaning to mention, namely video via the Internet.

I imagine most of you have at least



## Next General Meeting

Rob Pegoraro from the Washington Post is back from CES, and will tell us all about what he saw  
Wednesday, February 20, 7:30 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

## Next Windows SIG Meeting

Topic: Continuation of Finding It on the Web  
Tuesday, February 26, 7 pm.....Florence Bain Senior Center

## Inside the Megaphone

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looked at online video like short news shows on WBALtv.com or amateur movies on YouTube. If you have a Tivo or a DVR, you've watched video captured on a hard disk and streamed to you when you ask for it.

I've noticed more TV networks are offering video of their shows online. ABC's show *Lost*, for example, seems to be available to watch on their website the day after it first airs on TV.

Another website, Hulu.com, seems to be a collaboration between NBC and Fox (or their respective owners, I guess). It has the most recent season of many shows from these two networks, as well as some other networks: *The Simpsons*, *Terminator*, *Family Guy*, *The Tonight Show*, *Saturday Night Live*, and *24*. There is also at least one season available for a number of "classic" shows, like *Battlestar Galactica* (I mean the old one from the late 1970s, with Lorne Greene).

Now, maybe watching TV on your computer monitor is not quite the way you want to spend your evenings. After all, the comfy chairs all face the TV, not the computer. However, the new TVs all seem to work as monitors, so it's not that hard to hook up your computer (even wirelessly) to your TV. In my case, my 17" computer monitor is not much smaller, and is much much newer, than my 19" television!

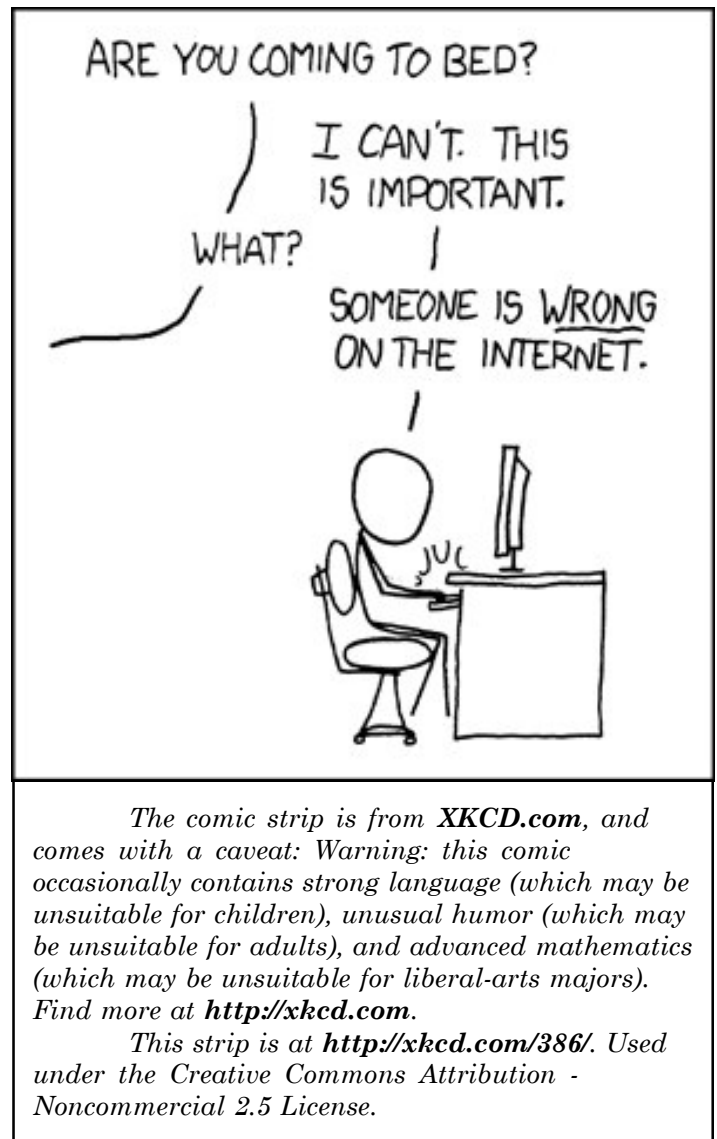
One of the things that puzzles me is how Hulu makes anyone any money. The last time I checked out the site, you could watch whole episodes "sponsored by" an advertiser, and there were two short (less than a minute) ads, at around the 1/3 and 2/3 mark of the show.

On the other hand, I usually am not home to watch shows during prime-time. If I taped the shows (not that we use tape any more!), I would zip past the commercials anyway. I think Hulu is an experiment to see what people will watch and how much advertising they will accept before going somewhere else (or finding a way to skip the ads).

If you're interested in Hulu, I recommend you sign up. It's currently a "private beta", which in this case means you sign up to say you're interested, and wait for them to let you in. In my case, the wait was around 24 hours. I suppose that must vary; at some point they may decide they have enough "testers" (tho I haven't visited very often, so haven't done much testing for them).

If you can tear yourself away from your computer and your TV, I hope to see you next Wednesday at the Florence Bain Center.

- Paul / Ye Ed



## Upcoming Meetings and Help Needed

As was announced previously, Andrew Rein has stepped down from his job as Program Director. So CMUG is in need of someone who can coordinate presentations for our general meetings.

The presentations are an important part of the educational mission of our user group. The Program Director acts as a central coordinator, and as liaison between the group and the speaker. So, this is an important job. On the other hand, I don't think it's particularly time-consuming; we only have 11 presentations a year, after all, and most of the communication can be done via email. If you have questions about the workload or are otherwise interested, you might speak with Andrew (or one of the other officers) at the meeting.

**March 19:** To be determined

**April 16:** Dave Methvin on Windows Vista

**May 21:** To be determined.

# CMUG Finances

## Statement for Calendar Year 2007

Below are CMUG's financial numbers for 2007. If you have any questions, please talk to me at the meeting, or email me at [jweske@juno.com](mailto:jweske@juno.com).

Our biggest expense continues to be the room rentals. Note that the \$440 we paid to rent space for the WinSIG meetings has been about half offset (44%) by donations from WinSIG attendees.

The \$1300 I show for General Meeting room

rental has not actually been paid, because we still have not received an invoice from Howard County. Rather than include a note that we owe money for past room rentals, I am showing it as an ongoing expense.

We didn't buy any equipment in 2007. Thanks to donations by members for CDs of the Month, the equipment fund increased by about \$500 during the year. Since our laptop was purchased in 2002, it's good that we have the replacement expense covered.

- John Weske

### General Fund:

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>		<b>\$ 2,551.57</b>
<b>General Income:</b>		
Membership dues - renewals:	1,230.00	
Membership dues - new:	60.00	
WinSIG donations:	192.00	
<b>Total General Income in 2006:</b>	<b>1,482.00</b>	
<b>General Expenses:</b>		
Newsletter:		
Printing:	338.91	
Postage:	217.80	
<b>Total Newsletter expense:</b>	<b>556.71</b>	
Room rental:		
General Meeting (thru 12/07):	1,300.00	
Windows SIG (thru 6/08) :	440.00	
<b>Total Room rental:</b>	<b>1,740.00</b>	
Other expenses:		
APCUG dues (2007 & 2008):	100.00	
PO Box rental (12 months):	92.00	
Misc expenses:	29.16	
<b>Total Other expenses:</b>	<b>221.16</b>	
<b>Total General Expenses in 2006:</b>	<b>2,517.87</b>	
<b>Total General Fund increase/(decrease):</b>	<b>(1,035.87)</b>	
<b>Ending Balance:</b>		<b>\$ 1,515.70</b>

### Equipment Fund:

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>		<b>\$ 1,416.57</b>
<b>Equipment Income:</b>		
Donations for CDs of the Month:	<b>535.00</b>	
<b>Equipment Expenses:</b>		
Supplies (blank CDs):	12.58	
Personal property tax	18.10	
<b>Total Equipment Expenses in 2006:</b>	<b>30.68</b>	
<b>Total Equipment Fund increase/(decrease):</b>	<b>504.23</b>	
<b>Ending Balance:</b>		<b>\$ 1,920.89</b>

### CMUG Totals:

Beginning Balances, 1/1/07	
General Fund:	\$ 2,551.57
Equipment Fund:	1,416.57
<b>Total Beginning Balance:</b>	<b>3,968.14</b>
Change in Balances for 2007	
General Fund:	(1,035.87)
Equipment Fund:	504.23
<b>Total Change in Balances:</b>	<b>(531.55)</b>
Ending Balances, 12/31/07	
General Fund:	1,515.70
Equipment Fund:	1,920.89
<b>Total Ending Balance:</b>	<b>\$ 3,436.59</b>

### Windows SIG February 26 Meeting: "Finding It on the Web - Continued"

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month, except in December. The SIG focuses on using and maintaining Windows, all platforms. We take questions, present tips and techniques, demonstrate freeware/shareware and even feature some web topics using a little trickery.

This month, our topic will be a continuation of last month's "Finding It on the Web." If you have a suggestion for a topic for a future SIG meeting, please email me at [mikes\\_line@hotmail.com](mailto:mikes_line@hotmail.com).

Remember that the meetings are at the Florence Bain Senior Center, and begin at 7 pm. See the CMUG website at <http://CMUG.org> for maps and directions.

- Mike Hayes

# Deals from the DealsGuy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

## Looking Back

Time sure passes quickly. I wrote my first DealsGuy column in November 1994 and have never missed a month since. I am not a journalist by trade, nor do I pretend to be one, but I am flattered that this column has stayed popular as long as it has. Editors sometimes forward complimentary comments from their members about the DealsGuy column. Two groups print only part of it in the newsletters they place around their community to attract new members, and readers must become a member to get the entire column.

I am also grateful for the many friends I made over the years through the column. I have been offered places to stay just about anywhere in the US.

Years ago, I received a request from a professional journalist to be added to my email list for the column, and I told him I was honored by the request from him. He told me something that I have thought about a few times since. He said I had blazed a trail with the syndication of my DealsGuy column to user groups and that others would probably follow. At that time, most articles written were from the editor and the group's own members, mostly reviews, but some of the better ones were reprinted selectively in other newsletters.

However, the DealsGuy column certainly has its hard-line critics. Some editors strongly dislike my column, and other editors feel I write too much about myself. In fact, I'm still reeling from one editor's strong comments at a conference. People sometimes request they be put on my email list because their editor refuses to carry the DealsGuy column. A few editors only carry the product parts of the column because they say their members have no interest in my personal comments at the beginning, but I sometimes hear from UG members asking how to see the entire DealsGuy column.

In the early days of the column, it was not uncommon for user group people I met at conventions to ask how they could get into writing a monthly column as I was doing. I tried giving them tips, but how can a guy who began writing a column accidentally offer helpful tips when he himself doesn't

really know what he is doing? Nowadays it's great to see so many authors writing interesting monthly columns that help provide a packed newsletter for any editor and there are many user groups with regular material from their own members. I guess that I'll stick with it a while longer since nobody else wants this job.

## Tax Tips

If you haven't done your 2007 income tax yet, don't forget about Tax Act for computing your income tax for free: [www.2ndstorysoftware.com](http://www.2ndstorysoftware.com). I use the pay version because it brings forward information from last year's tax return (if you used it last year) along with some comparison features. You can even e-file with the free version. If you would rather someone else did the work, check when and where the AARP volunteers are working to help seniors out. There are other free ways to do your taxes on the Government site ([IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov)).

## Goodbye FedEx, Good Riddance

Remember my bad experience with FedEx delivery last month? They refused my claim saying that according to their log the packages were delivered to the address and that's all they were required to do since no signature was requested. Actually, they could simply throw them out the window as they were driving by, throw them away if they were running late and enter "delivered" in the log, or even just set them beside the road, as they would have had to do in our case, at 9:06 PM according to their log. When I was told it wouldn't be delivered after 8 PM, my son closed the driveway gate. They don't seem to have my conversation with the Phoenix office in their log, yet they called me back the next morning to offer a delivery time because the packages had been in the truck for two days. No packages were ever found at the address and their letter denying the claim says they hope they can count on my continued business. After another bad experience, not a chance!

## Simplify and Organize Launching

This is designed to replace the standard Quick Launch. The program emulates the standard features of Quick Launch while including lots of grouping and menu options, many useful plug-ins and some skinning abilities. True Launch Bar helps clear your desktop working space by removing randomly placed shortcuts and organizing them in convenient groups and menus. True Launch Bar provides users with a brand-new functionality enabling ultra-fast access to any of your PC contents!

True Launch Bar stores shortcuts in the same folder as Windows Quick Launch. All the icons installed into Quick Launch are automatically installed for True Launch Bar. True Launch Bar can be docked into the taskbar; you can simply drag your shortcuts onto the toolbar or menu by





pressing any of the mouse buttons. Right button dragging activates a Context menu, grouping links into popup menus. The Virtual Folders feature allows you to add any folder as a menu and control it through Windows Explorer-like context menus. It can be any folder on your disk or on a local network (Favorites, Programs, Recent, etc.), as well as file system folders such as My Computer, Control Panel, Printers, etc. Toolbar buttons will not only launch the applications, but also act like small applets. If you add a Media Control plug-in onto the True Launch Bar, the button will become a real control center of the media player with Stop, Play, Pause and volume adjusting options.

True Launch Bar runs under Windows 9x, NT, 2K, XP, 2003 and Windows Vista. 25% discount makes the cost \$14.90 (USD) for a single-user license. Links to purchase with the discount are:

☞ Personal License (one person, one or more computers for \$14.90): [www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=51538&pc=7L0L7](http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=51538&pc=7L0L7) and

☞ Home license (one copy on multiple computers and multiple users for \$35): [www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=53346&pc=7U0I4](http://www.regsoft.net/purchase.php3?productid=53346&pc=7U0I4).

Licensed customers are entitled to lifetime technical support and free updates. Additional information on True Launch Bar, as well as its fully functional evaluation version with a 30-day trial period is available from [www.truelaunchbar.com](http://www.truelaunchbar.com).

☞ Download link: 32-bit version: <http://download.truelaunchbar.com/install/truelaunchbar42.exe> (4.3 MB)

☞ 64-bit version: <http://download.truelaunchbar.com/install64/truelaunchbar64v42.msi> (4.7 MB)

☞ Company website: [www.tordex.com](http://www.tordex.com)

☞ Email: [info@tordex.com](mailto:info@tordex.com)

### Another Free PDF Maker

Patrick Sullivan reads the DealsGuy column in The DataBus, a great newsletter from The Dayton Microcomputer Association Inc. ([www.dma.org](http://www.dma.org)), and he sent his favorite application for converting a file to PDF. He said a friend needed a free one and his search found PrimoPDF at [www.primopdf.com](http://www.primopdf.com). He says its PDF file is not as small as Adobe Distiller creates, but he is well satisfied with it and has not found it to implant ads for itself. There is now a new release on their Web site, but he has not tried it because his version works fine.

### This Product Offers Canned Replies

IT-Services Thomas Holz announces the release of version 1.0 of Textmodules for Software Support, a set of ready-to-use replies to quickly answer typical software-related questions by email. The product is absolutely free and comes as an add-on to the new version of ReplyButler for Outlook. Enlarge

the assortment of reply patterns and make your reply on the fly.

With a proper set of text modules, you can answer your emails quickly. In Textmodules for Software Support, you'll find 55 new text modules properly sorted into 18 folders. The modules include typical phrases, answers to common problems, questions for details and more. In addition, there are many reply patterns related to office work and journalism. It uses the correct name and gender in the addressing phrase by itself, securing against any typos in names.



You can get Textmodules for Software Support free of charge, as well as the trial version of ReplyButler for Outlook at [www.replybutler.com/en/produkte/replybutler.php](http://www.replybutler.com/en/produkte/replybutler.php).

ReplyButler for Outlook runs under Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003/Vista and Outlook 2000/2002/2003/XP/2007, and costs \$15 for a single-user license. The company offers user group members 25% discount on the purchase of ReplyButler Business Edition, normally \$49. Licensed customers get the fully-functional version of the product, free technical support and free upgrades. Further information on ReplyButler for Outlook is available at our Web site. (DealsGuy note: I included this item for the free part of it, but was unable to get through using their email address for information about using the discount on their business version. Try a contact from their Web site.)

☞ Product page: <http://replybutler.com/en/produkte/replybutler.php>

☞ Product download link: [http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButlerE\\_Freeware.exe](http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButlerE_Freeware.exe)

☞ Free add-on link: [http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButler\\_TextLib\\_SoftwareSupport.exe](http://replybutler.com/download/getfile.php?file=ReplyButler_TextLib_SoftwareSupport.exe)

☞ Email: [presscontact@itsth.com](mailto:presscontact@itsth.com)

### That's All Folks

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my website (most not offering a discount): [www.dealsguy.com](http://www.dealsguy.com). Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

- Bob (The Cheapskate) Click  
[bobclick at bellsouth dot net](http://bobclick@bellsouth.net)



# Living with Internet Explorer

## Safer Browsing

by Mike Hayes

If you attend the Windows SIG, you know I recommend using Firefox (FF) browser, for several good reasons. It has been developed and supported by a community of volunteers who have made FF a world-class browser and continue to update it with fixes as vulnerabilities are discovered. I am currently using Firefox3 beta 2 and I demonstrated some of the browser's new features at a recent SIG meeting. (I should note that other, non-Microsoft browsers like Opera or Netscape are also available. I am not as familiar with them as I am with FF.)

Part of the reason for my enthusiasm for Firefox was the introduction of "tabbed browsing." (Not sure if FF was first, but FF sure made it popular.) After FF was released in 2004, it quickly grew in popularity and many users extolled FF for its tabbed browsing, speed, and security. Early on I used it but my recommendation was to be careful of vulnerabilities, as no one knew if FF would remain secure once it became a target. So far my fears are have proved groundless, as FF has released patches quickly and frequently as needed.

Microsoft (MS) has always "owned" the browser market, as Internet Explorer (IE) was built into Windows beginning with Windows 95. After IE 6 was released in 2001, only minor updates were announced for several years. After FF was released, MS included tabbed browsing as one of the planned features for IE 7. Later MS dropped tabbed browsing, saying that it was not something the users wanted. But when IE7's beta was revealed in 2005, it included tabbed browsing, as did the final release in 2006. Since MS has made IE7 available to Windows back to Windows 95, one may conclude MS was trying to hold on to market share.

### ActiveX

But tabbed browsing and a more secure browser did not guarantee MS market share. MS has built an empire around ActiveX code over the years, for its Office suite and browser, and the Internet community jumped to support it. For example, the uploader for FaceBook uses it. ActiveX could be compared to a Java Applet as both act as an interface between what developers want to happen and the end user's experience without needing any additional code. (Non-technical explanation.)

Unfortunately, ActiveX also made it easy for the "bad guys" to steal information from users and

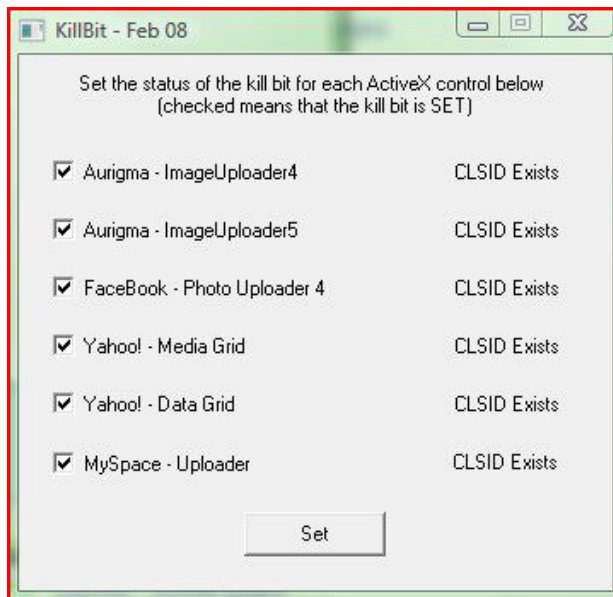
even take over users' PCs. Once the MS user community realized the weakness of ActiveX, many started recommending that ActiveX be disabled in IE, or that users avoid the problem by using another browser. In fact since January 2008 many well-known tech writers are writing articles about "...is it time to dump ActiveX?" and other writers are reprinting articles on how to disable ActiveX as more reports of ActiveX vulnerabilities surface.

The problems with disabling ActiveX are many and one has to wonder if the hassle is worth it. There's a security vs. convenience issue here: many sites will not display correctly and IE is constantly flashing a yellow toolbar stating it. Or, if the user chooses the option of "prompt" in all the necessary selections, your browsing becomes most annoying as each ActiveX control on a page will popup a window asking for permission.

Obviously using FF eliminates this hassle as it doesn't support ActiveX, but you still run into some web pages that will not display correctly or just will not load at all. When I'm browsing with FF and come across one of those pages, I just copy the URL, open IE and go. This still leaves me with what to do about IE's ActiveX. I can disable it and avoid some websites; switch to always prompt and be really inconvenienced with popups; or, leave it alone and risk having my PC taken over or my identity stolen.

Fortunately for us, the "good guys" have also been hard at work and there is another alternative. Someone figured out exactly what area of Windows' code was being used by the bad guys and has

documented the Windows Registry changes one needs to make to protect IE from such vulnerabilities. Basically you need to edit the Registry by selecting the Class ID's (CLSID) that match the specific vulnerabilities being used. (Visit <http://isc.sans.org/diary.html?storyid=3929> for some recent examples.) You can read the article and edit the



Registry or you can use the convenient Killbit GUI that Tom Liston developed and has posted on the ISC site (see <http://isc.sans.org/diary.html?storyid=3931>). Download it and run this ASAP so your IE browsing can be rewarding rather than a nightmare.



# Looking for a New Laptop

from Andrew Rein

I recently bought a couple of new laptop computers, and I thought I'd share my experiences and some resources with you. Some of this information would apply to any type of computer.

First I thought about what I wanted to do with this computer, and what was being offered.

Main use: As a source for playing Internet radio (like Pandora, or LastFM, but those are another story), attached to my home stereo. I thought most any simple laptop able to run Firefox would be fine, the cheaper the better.

I looked for something around \$200 on eBay, but there were slim pickings. Then I started to look at the Office Depot and Staples newspaper ads and for around \$300-350 there were several choices. I thought spending a little more for a brand new system with a warranty was the best way to go. I did have to accept Windows Vista for most of my choices. (That's another story also.)

Next I considered the reliability and reputation of the brands that met my price point. I considered Dell, since most people usually suggest them as good value and solid reputation. But I checked some recent surveys and they indicated that Dell has slipped in service, and that Lenovo (Chinese-owned) was now a better choice for laptops. Toshiba and HP/Compaq (now the same company) were about tied with Dell. Acer was really bad.

See [www.pcworld.com/printable/article/id,139958/printable.html](http://www.pcworld.com/printable/article/id,139958/printable.html) or <http://iezoj.notlong.com>

Another thing I thought about was the **Crapware Factor**. I bought one Toshiba, and it took me over an hour to delete all of the junkware (trial software, AOL, Napster, etc.) they put on that brand. I bought another Lenovo, and it had a lot less of that stuff. I know you can custom order some Dells with no junkware, but you have to ask for that. One company has developed a program, **PC Decrapifier**, to help remove this unwanted software. But it is hit-or-miss in effectiveness.

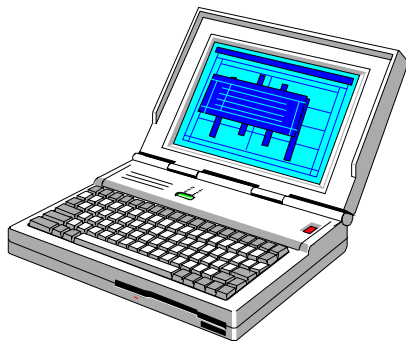
Finally, I selected a vendor that had a **return policy** I was happy about, since I like to really try stuff out before making a final decision. I think buying with a good return policy is important. Not just because bad design and defective products are possible, but also that personal preferences that are hard to predict (keyboard feel, screen look, etc.) are important factors.

I avoided BestBuy, Circuit City, and Dell cause they all charge a 15% restock fee if you want to return a computer. On the other hand Office Depot

had a model I wanted, and at the lowest price after rebates, with a 14 day full refund policy. Staples also offers 14 day full returns, as of this writing. That could all change, ask before you give 'em your money. They may all get worse, or better.

So, you say, what did you end up getting?

**Lenovo IdeaPad Y510:** 15.4" widescreen LCD display with Intel Pentium dual-core processor, 2 GB memory, a 250 GB hard drive, CD/DVD burner and multiformat wireless LAN. It has an optical audio output too, a plus for me. This was \$600 after rebate. The price went down another \$40 two weeks after I bought it, and Office Depot was nice enough to give me that too when I went in and asked the manager for it. Pretty good deal.



But the Windows Vista? Whole other story. I had to reformat and restore the system 2 weeks after I got it. Maybe because of all the software I installed and uninstalled in testing it. I found the Lenovo phone support to be adequate, not

great but not terrible. Both times I called them I got native-speakers of American English, and both were in North America. They seemed both knowledgeable, and caring.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [cdlots <at> yahoo <dot> com](mailto:cdlots@yahoo.com).

## Resources:

- ↪ **Consumer Search**, nice list of other reviews, with some consideration for the quality of the reviews. [www.consumersearch.com/www/computers/laptops/index.html](http://www.consumersearch.com/www/computers/laptops/index.html) or [www.consumersearch.com/www/computers/laptops/reviews.html](http://www.consumersearch.com/www/computers/laptops/reviews.html) or <http://tinyurl.com/y8c3jp>.
- ↪ **PC World**, sorta ok, take with a grain of salt, sometimes out of date: [www.pcworld.com/product/reviewfinder.html?id=6&sort\\_by=1](http://www.pcworld.com/product/reviewfinder.html?id=6&sort_by=1) or <http://tinyurl.com/2bwfeh>.
- ↪ **Bizrate Laptop Computers Buying Guide**, includes some summaries, price search, and user ratings: [www.bizrate.com/laptopcomputers/buying\\_guides/index.html](http://www.bizrate.com/laptopcomputers/buying_guides/index.html) or <http://tinyurl.com/2d2vya>.
- ↪ **Amazon**, I like to look up models here, see if folks have complaints: [www.amazon.com/s/ref=sr\\_nr\\_n\\_1?ie=UTF8&rs=541966&keywords=laptop&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Alaptop%2Ci%3Aelectronics%2Cn%3A172282%2Cn%3A541966%2Cn%3A565108](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=sr_nr_n_1?ie=UTF8&rs=541966&keywords=laptop&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Alaptop%2Ci%3Aelectronics%2Cn%3A172282%2Cn%3A541966%2Cn%3A565108) or <http://tinyurl.com/2bp5np>.
- ↪ **PC Mag**, worth a look, but not my first choice: [www.pcmag.com/category2/0,1738,9,00.asp](http://www.pcmag.com/category2/0,1738,9,00.asp) or <http://tinyurl.com/34lpg>.



# CMUG MEGAPHONE

George Coffin  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045



Meeting:  
**Wednesday, February 20, 7:30 pm**  
Rob Pegoraro from the Washington Post  
will be speaking on what he saw  
at CES and other topics

## CENTRAL MARYLAND USER GROUP

### Membership and Change of Address

Send renewals and address changes to:  
George Coffin  
CMUG Membership  
8652 Open Meadow Way  
Columbia, MD 21045  
gcoffin3@comcast.net

### Reviews

Send review software, hardware, books,  
and info to:  
CMUG Reviews  
Att: Art Silverglate  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
art.silverglate@gmail.com

### Editorial Copy

Send articles, letters, ad copy, questions,  
and comments to:  
CMUG Megaphone  
Att: Paul Van Bloem  
PO Box 125  
Columbia, MD 21045  
pjvanbloem@aol.com

Use any of these formats: ASCII (text),  
RTF, or Word.

### CMUG Officers and Contacts

President.....Mike Kerwin.....410-531-1822..kerwinm@dea.nci.nih.gov  
Vice President.....Mike Hayes.....410-465-1131....mikes\_line@hotmail.com  
Secretary.....Bill Baxter.....410-531-1822.....billbaxter@erols.com  
Treasurer.....John Weske.....301-774-7564.....jsweske@juno.com  
Asst Treasurer.....Mary Guarnieri..410-531-2820...watermelon@comcast.net  
Membership.....George Coffin.....410-750-6914.....gcoffin3@comcast.net  
Reviews.....Art Silverglate....410-750-2435..art.silverglate@gmail.com  
Programs.....  
Publicity.....Jack Fogarty.....301-774-0331.....jfogarty@bcpl.net  
Megaphone Editor...Paul Van Bloem..410-549-3070.....pjvanbloem@aol.com  
Board Member.....Sumi Kinoshita..301-549-3174.....skinoshita@juno.com  
Andrew Rein.....240-473-4299.....cdlots@yahoo.com

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General meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Florence Bain Senior Center, near the Harpers Choice Village Center in Columbia MD. The number there is 410-313-7213.

Membership in the user group is currently \$30 (cheap!). Membership includes a monthly subscription to the CMUG Megaphone, a membership directory, full access privileges to the Website, and drawings for free and review software at meetings.

<http://myCMUG.org>

