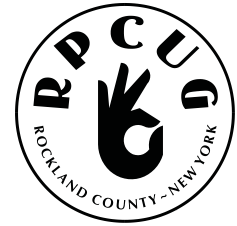


Computer connection

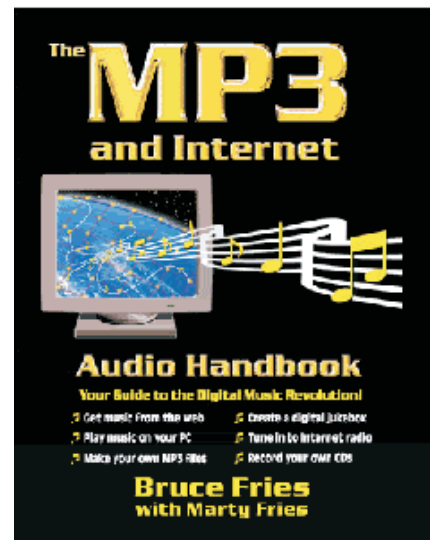
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PC Users Group
APRIL 2001



THE MP3 AND INTERNET AUDIO HANDBOOK

GENERAL MEETING, Tuesday, April 10, 2001: Author Marty Fries will conduct a presentation about digital music on personal computers and the Internet.

His book has been called "The Bible of MP3" and is widely recognized as the most user-friendly and comprehensive book on the subject. Bruce's presentation includes a discussion of how MP3 and the Internet are revolutionizing the music industry and a live demonstration of recording and playing music on a PC, using **MusicMatch Jukebox**, **Winamp** and **CoolEdit**. He will also discuss the issues regarding copyright laws and online music and answer questions about MP3 and related technologies.



JOIN US and find out about:

- Downloading music from the Internet
- Listening to Internet radio
- Recording and playing music on a PC
- Creating compilation music CDs
- Converting vinyl records to CDs
- Legal issues surrounding online music

JOIN US and see:

- MusicMatch Jukebox
- Working with playlists
- Automatic crossfading
- Visualization and other effects

[www.mp3handbook.com/
index.htm](http://www.mp3handbook.com/index.htm)

Bruce Fries is a writer, technology consultant, and entrepreneur who lives in Silver Spring, Maryland. He is an associate of The Audio Engineering Society and founder of several high-tech companies. Marty Fries is a technology consultant, audio engineer and blues pianist, based in Laurel, Maryland. He has designed and built studio equipment and is the founder of Imagimedia.net, a CAD and network services company.


Bruce and Marty recognized the potential of MP3 in late 1998, when it was closing in on sex as the most popular Internet search-term. There was little information available about MP3, so they decided to write a book to teach others about the benefits of this exciting new technology. The result was The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook, widely acclaimed as the most reader-friendly and comprehensive book on the subject. The book has been called the "Bible of Mp3, and has been adopted as a textbook by several universities, including UCLA and Cal Poly.

Bruce and Marty are in the process of conducting a 100-city "missionary" tour to teach people about the benefits of Internet music and the MP3 encoding format. 🎵

MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

PLUG AND PLAY

SOUNDS LIKE a Fisher Price toy, eh? Pull the cord and hear: "The geek says... Waaagh!" Well... it isn't a toy, but the scream you just heard was genuine. Oddly enough, plugging and playing has to do with computers. It's a term that was allegedly developed by Microsoft (a little company that makes software, you've probably heard of it). PnP allows you to plug in a peripheral and have the PC or Operating System automatically recognize it. In other words, you don't have to go in and tell the computer that you've just added a new piece of hardware. Hardly. Er, it used to hardly work.

Now that it's been around for a while, we have something called "Universal Plug and Play." It's a standard of sorts. I remember when we used to call it Plug and Pray. Heh... some of us STILL do. "IRQ 54, where are you?" 



THE ROCKLAND PC USERS GROUP

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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, April 10, 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

The **Beginners 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

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>

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PC against its worst enemy—you!

by David Coursey
Executive Editor, AnchorDesk

The biggest threat to your data isn't some virus or hacker. It's YOU. That's right, the worst killer of information stored on personal computers isn't some external threat; it's the user sitting at the keyboard who accidentally does something that wipes out anything from a single file to an entire disk....ALL IT TAKES IS ONE SLIP and your precious files can go off to live in never-never land with Peter Pan, your childhood pets, and all the money you used to have invested in the Nasdaq. And once your files are off to data heaven, it can be very difficult to bring them back without help from, well, you know who.

www.zdnet.com/anchordesk/stories/story/0,10738,2695606,00.html

Message from the President: Spring has Sprung!

The days are getting longer and becoming warmer. The buds on the trees are beginning to expand and things are turning green. What a great time to take your camera and your Sony Walkman and get out there to enjoy the Spring!

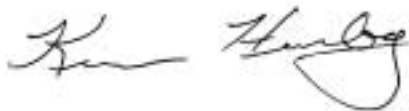
Talking about a Walkman, how about an MP3 Player? I don't know how many of you download MP3 Music files, but I rarely do; I really don't know that much about where to get them or what to do with them. Napster seems to have been their main internet location. I am sure that they will still be around, but they will be more restricted than before. I have been told that there are many other sites that are popping up to take Napster's place. Anyway, I look forward to this month's presenter giving us the latest on MP3's.

Marty Fries, author of "The MP3 and Internet Audio Handbook", will be our guest speaker at this month's General Meeting on April 10th. For those of you that are into burning music CDs, Marty will be answering all your questions on recording and playing music on a PC, creating compilation music CDs and even converting vinyl records to CDs. This looks to be a very informative evening.

Our thanks to PC World magazine for sending us complimentary copies of their April issue for distribution. They also sent us a couple of really nice door prizes for the meeting. Looks like we are going to have to call this "PC World Night."

On the "Review" front, we have a couple of new programs available that are perfect for this month. The list follows.

For our May meeting we have Kathy Kraus from Imagine LAN Inc., makers of ConfigSafe and RegSafe. You can also join the Multi-Media Workshop or the Beginners Group prior to the meeting. I look forward to seeing everyone there. Bring a friend and "JOIN THE FUN!"



SOFTWARE available for REVIEW

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

Email Ken at hobbikat@hobbikats.com

- ✓ **Blaze Media Pro**
Audio and Video conversion software. This program supports all popular media formats.
\$50.00
www.blazemp.com
- ✓ **Camtasia**, \$149.95
www.techsmith.com
- ✓ **Dubit**, \$19.95
www.techsmith.com
- ✓ **Hang 3000**, \$25.00
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime
- ✓ **Incredible E-mailer**, \$59.95
www.toolfactory.com
- ✓ **Jigsaws Galore 4.0**
D/L \$25.00 / Mail \$39.00
www.dgray.com
- ✓ **Oligo 2.0**, \$29.95
www.inklineglobal.com/
- ✓ **Presidents 3000**, \$20.00
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime
- ✓ **Snagit**, \$39.95
www.techsmith.com
- ✓ **States 3000**, \$20.00
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime
- ✓ **Visual Day Planner 7.1**
\$29.95
www.inklineglobal.com/
- ✓ **Web Media Publisher**, \$50.00
www.wbmedia.com/publisher/

News PCUG leaders need to know...

by Jack Marsella

PCWorld just released this article. It details more of the former rumors of significant REGISTRATION changes that are bound to cause Upgraders and Casual users plenty of problems. Look at:

<http://www.idg.net/go.cgi?id=446481>

My reaction has been pure outrage ever since I heard rumors of the Windows XP registration scheme. I've known full well that Bill Gates has a paranoia about people stealing his software, ever since he addressed a user group in the early days of computing: asking people not to illegally copy MS software (I believe it was DOS at that time). But, to put this new scheme in place says MS considers the majority of Windows users are not honest, and will somehow illegally copy the Operating System.

By-The-Way MS has been trying to circumvent the Federal Copyright laws by making all users agree to license agreements that makes users give up their rights to such things as "Fair Use" and "Backup Copies." Technically the license agreement(s) have been chipping away with ever more stringent restrictions on your Rights of Use of their product(s).

The world's richest man is so afraid someone's going to steal an over-priced copy of Windows that he puts the world's stupidest registration scheme in place, thwarting legitimate user's attempts to maintain their computer. I say "over-priced" because my economics teachers taught me that as a product reaches the end of its life cycle the price has to drop to encourage sales. Try buying a Windows95 Upgrade retail box for less than \$85!

(Yes, I meant 9-5, not 98.) From what I've been told, MS sales agreements do NOT allow retailers to sell the MS OS for less, even if the retailer is willing and able to do so!

Did you know that MS employees actively hunt the auction sites for people selling MS products? Even if the product is in the original wrapper and has the official MS seal, MS "requests" that auction sites like eBay to remove the item from the auction site. The theory is that since you, a legitimate purchaser, only license use of the product,

you have no right to sell it. You are not officially licensed to sell it, only to use it! Resellers who are not "authorized resellers" are technically at risk, but because most are so low profile they don't show up on MS's radar screens. Since MS has the legal clout and eBay is so "visible" they're an easy target, especially since eBay probably doesn't have the same legal resources and cash reserves that MS can throw into a legal challenge (even if it turns out to be without merit).

Perhaps we should start a dialog before it's too late to get Microsoft's attention—not that Microsoft might change its mind. But, if enough potential upgraders are informed, unlike the unlucky Windows 2000 "upgraders," we may help minimize their pain and slow sales enough to make some kind of impact on Microsoft's sick mentality / marketing machine efforts.

A letter to the Anti-Trust Judge might perk him up right now; MS has officially complained about his comments about their attitude/mentality in dealing with his Court and comments he's made outside of Court. "Whoops! Sorry judge, we sent YOU the wrong video footage. You really can't remove the browser from the Operating System..."

All comments are welcome. This dialog is important—talk to others about this. Could this be the first step to regain Software Users' rights? ☞



MICROSOFT

PHOTODRAW 2000, version 2

reviewed by Jim Sutherland

PhotoDraw 2000 Version 2 is billed as the “MS Office Graphics Program.” In spite of that proclamation, MS Office is not a prerequisite. **PhotoDraw 2000** can and will function as a standalone program. Microsoft has combined traditionally separate types of graphics programs, drawing and photo/graphic editing, into a single program that shares a common work space. It is designed to open, create, and edit just about any graphic format you can think of. It even has the ability to create web-ready elements such as buttons, banners, and animations. The package has three discs; Disc1 contains the working program, Disc2 contains the content (effects and such), while Disc3 contains the clipart files. A thorough and easy reading user guide is included.

Installation is as simple as inserting Disc1, provided your “auto-insert notification” is enabled for your CD-drive. Total install time was about five minutes and a complete install will occupy approximately 190MB of disc space.

PhotoDraw's real benefit for the average Joe's & Jane's of the computer world is the absolute need to know NOTHING about graphics concepts or jargon! Don't quite understand the different graphics formats or image resolutions? A little fuzzy on the difference between vector graphics (images made up of points, lines, and shapes rather than individual pixels resulting in small files that can be scaled without affecting image quality) and raster graphics (image files that store information for each individual pixel, commonly known as bitmapped images)? Can't recall what effect produces what output? Well, all is forgiven with **PhotoDraw**. Much like the way Windows acts as a visual bridge to system-level text commands, so does PhotoDraw provide visual aid to graphic manipulation and creation. The program uses unique interface elements such as a Picture List that shows all open documents, a Visual Menu that uses icons to identify tasks, and a

Workpane that displays options for the current operation. You literally see what you get...before you get it! The icons that identify tasks/effects are formatted to look like the effect they produce. All this ‘visualization’ comes at the cost of having a slightly busy interface and a sometime crowded screen. I would recommend no less than a 17" monitor set to 1024x768 resolution for acceptable elbow room. Even with that proviso, the interface is always highly comprehensible.

PhotoDraw's ease-of-use is undeniable. It offers 300 business templates for brochures, flyers, letterheads, business cards, Web banners, and buttons. The clip art and content CDs include 20,000 graphics that offer backgrounds, graphics, and photos. All of these items are customizable; you can change clip art with watercolor brush strokes, distortion, or increasing/decreasing transparency to achieve an entirely different appearance. You can also use home-made graphics by importing text or a photo from a scanner, a digital camera, or even another graphics program like Microsoft Paint. **PhotoDraw's** photo-editing capabilities include all the usual suspects such as cloning and touch-ups to remove red-eye; cleaning dust and scratches; correcting brightness, contrast, and color, etc. Most of the automated settings for these functions

produced good results, but I achieved better results in brightness and contrast by working manually. I was able to transform a bright, sunny picture of an iceberg into one that looked as if it was taken during the darkest, most violent period of an Arctic storm. (I have never actually been in an Arctic storm myself, but if it looks anything like that,...count me out!) While **PhotoDraw's** templates look great, they concentrate on design elements and single-page documents, so multi-page creators must look elsewhere. I suppose you could just keep making new single-page documents that follow the design of the original, but that would probably be quite time-consuming and tedious, not to mention contrary to **PhotoDraw's** simplicity mandate. Sharing images with other applications is quite easy; just drag and drop pictures into other programs. I had no problem dropping images into PaintShop Pro or Photoshop. **PhotoDraw** offers several unique options when working with other



Office applications. For example, you can launch PowerPoint (a presentation program) or FrontPage (a web-page design program) directly from **PhotoDraw** to insert images. And in keeping with the simplicity concept, **PhotoDraw** shares color palettes and theme templates with other Office applications. That will save you countless hours of reformatting when moving objects/projects from one application to the other.

With the drawing and painting tools you can create your own objects or spice-up others. There is a wide variety of artistic brush-strokes, such as dry brush or charcoal, that you can use to create an image or outline an existing one. While the effects are not as robust as some dedicated painting programs such as Dabbler, the results are more than acceptable for all but the most demanding professional. Painting is a “free-hand” style in that whatever effect you choose will follow the path you created by dragging the pointer, regardless of how many turns or twists you may make. Drawing, on the other hand, allows you to create precise shapes and gives a much greater degree of control. If you absolutely, positively, have to have a perfectly straight line in your work, use the drawing tools, but if you want a more home-spun look, then the paint tools are for you. Either way, the process is simple, painless, and produces excellent results. One group of tools, the *Photo Brushes*, is especially neat. The brushes can outline images, predefined shapes, or hand drawn items with a variety of preset objects such as paper-doll chains, alligators, or pencils. Unfortunately, you cannot define your own graphic to become an outline, but the ones provided seem to have enough variety. *Autoshapes* and *Shapes* are twin sons of different mothers. Let me explain. They each provide a way to insert shapes, as the names suggest, but each has its own unique shapes and method of insertion. *Autoshapes* draws the actual shape from the moment you start dragging the mouse until you stop. By contrast, with *Shapes*, you drag an empty box to the size you want and the program fills it in with your selection. As with everything else, they can be modified and adjusted to your hearts content. In either case, placing and assembling graphics such as stars, flowchart symbols, and just plain shapes is extremely quick and easy.

For text, **PhotoDraw 2000** offers 200 fonts and a variety of excellent 3-D effects. You can bend text around an arched or circular shape, but you can't flow text along an irregular path, like the edge of a waving flag. Each text and painted piece is an individual object that can be manipulated at any time with a multitude of effects. A multiple-undo feature lets you correct modifications several steps at a time (note - the undo feature is available globally, not just for text modifications). You can view all the modifications in a drop-down list and undo multiple steps at once, rather than continually clicking the undo icon. It saves time but I would have liked to been able to pick each modification individually, say numbers two and six, rather than one thru six. A minor quibble I know, but I gotta complain about something! **PhotoDraw** also supports extra plug-ins (plug-ins are small “helper” programs that work with and rely on host programs to apply their unique effects - usually designed by third-party developers) for additional content and effects. **PhotoDraw** can't import text files of any kind, and I found that inserting large text blocks slowed down the program's performance somewhat.

If you design web pages, **PhotoDraw's** *Web Effects* tools offer a wonderful gallery of predefined styles. You can include hyperlinks (special strings of text that tell your browser to go to a specific web-site when clicked on), slice images, and create animated GIFs. And **PhotoDraw** can even create *rollover* buttons (rollovers are effects that change the appearance of the selected object when you hover over or click it). When creating a Web page, all text is treated as a graphic. That's a mixed blessing; on a positive note, if you resize the text-box, the text will auto-fill to an appropriate size to maintain readability; on the negative side, you can't apply an effect to just some text to make it stand out. It's a minor annoyance if you are accustomed to using desktop publishing programs like Publisher that allow such text manipulation. Also, you can't assign hyperlinks to a text string located within a block of text. It too must be in a separate text-box. In addition to various templates for producing Web graphics, PhotoDraw provides a *Web color palette*, a Web wizard to help you save your file in the optimal format, and a preview option that displays different settings and download times.

The *Web wizard* provides feedback on image quality and download times but offers only simple choices for GIF or JPEG output. If you want more control over the image settings, you must use the Save As dialog box, which unfortunately has no preview. Assembling the various images you create to fashion a Web page requires a separate Web editor such as Front Page.

Help is available at every step with a tutorial offering sample projects, *the Answer Wizard*, and a dialog box that accompanies every icon. Microsoft's attempt to provide a full-featured, yet simple-to-use integrated graphics program is a success. **PhotoDraw 2000** offers neophyte graphic artists just enough creative guidance, and an abundance of powerful tools that are easy to use and understand, needed to design professional looking projects.

Above all, using **PhotoDraw 2000** is simple and just plain fun! Even my nine and twelve year-old sons were working solo after only a few minutes of instruction from yours truly. Regardless of how you feel about Microsoft, reverence or loathing, you have to give them kudos for developing a truly workable, useful, and stable (so far!) program.

PHOTODRAW 2000, version 2, by Microsoft
(www.microsoft.com)
List \$99, street \$79

System requirements:
Pentium 166 or higher
Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000

SVGA monitor, 1 MB video memory
32 MB of RAM
80-200 MB of hard drive space
CD drive

Tested with:
WinME/Celeron 466
256 MB RAM
32 MB video 💡



SAY THE TIME

reviewed by Ken Herbig



Say the Time is a program that does just that! For those of you who like nifty little utility programs, here is a good one for your collection.

The setup was very simple, I followed the menus and set the options.

The program can be set to say the time, the date, or the time and the date. It gives you the option of speaking in a male or female voice. Of course, I chose the female.

You can choose the intervals at which you would like the program to announce the time. It even lets you turn the announcements off between certain hours (so it won't wake you up at night.)

You can also choose the look of the icon from the provided drop-down menu.

There is a reminder screen incorporated into the program. To set it up, you right click on the **Say the Time** icon in your system tray. You choose **Reminders** then click on **Add Reminder**. All you need to do is fill in the information that is requested. (*Label for the reminder, Time – What to say – When you want it – The message that you want it to give you*). You can even have it launch a program at a specific time.

I find this to be a really useful utility, as I lose all track of time when I am on the computer. It has been keeping me out of trouble (sometimes!)

Impaque Technologies has offered us a 25% discount off of the regular price of \$10.95. They have set up a special website for User Group members (www.impaque.com/pcug) where you can order a copy at the special price of \$8.

SAY THE TIME, Millennium Edition
by Impaque Technologies
Minimum System Requirements
Windows 95/98/Me/NT/2000
Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0
Sound card, mouse or tablet
10 MB of hard disk space 🐱

Photo/Graphic Edges 10,000 autof/x

reviewed by Maureen Shannon, NJPCUG

This product came to my way of Ken Herbig, President of the Rockland PC User Group; therefore this article will be in both of our newsletters. I want to thank Ken for contacting Autof/x and requesting this software to review. I chair a Graphics and Web Design SIG (Special Interest Group) for NJPCUG and try to demonstrate and write about a variety of graphic products.

I recently wrote a review in our NJPCUG newsletter about using edges and frames on photos and graphics to enhance them and give them a unique look. I had an earlier version of Photo/Graphic edges and I used Harald Heim's Edges and Frame Galaxy through the Autof/x interface. This version of Photo/Graphic Edges has 10,000 selections to choose from plus you can use the Edge and Frame Galaxy CD-ROM selections from Harald Heim for even more edge choices. Autof/x is the largest developer for plug-ins for Adobe Photoshop. This is a wonderful collection that enables users to express their creativity and artistic style. When you use this software, they say you will "never do square again". That's for sure! Edges come in all shapes and styles, rectangular, round, swirled, twirled, star-shaped, torn, rippled, patterned, and more. Various styles such as Geometric, Artistic, Digital, Painted, Deckled, Feathered, Impressionistic, are a few of the names that make up these varied shapes and styles.

Photo/Graphic Edges takes a plain, straight edge image and changes it into something that is eye catching and a step apart from the usual plain edged image. It will give any web page image or print document graphic a look that will make it stand out from the ordinary. When designing images or enhancing photos, this is what we strive to achieve. Something that will catch the attention of the viewer and draw them into whatever message we are trying to deliver. I use edges frequently to enhance the images I use on our web site. I have also included examples of edges with effects in this review to give you a better idea of

what the interface looks like and how an image can be changed. The color will not be visible but I hope the image will print well enough to show what I am describing.

The product comes on 4 CDs. Disc 1 is the installation CD and it also has an assortment of light, textures, tiles, and several volumes of the edges. In all, there are 17 volumes of edges, 1,000 full size and seamless texture backgrounds, 200 lighting tiles, 100 sepia tones and mezzotints. Due to the size of the contents they need to be run from the CD. The package also includes a manual that has thumbnails of all the edges and the volume number and image number for ease in locating them. It also describes the features on the toolbars and how to use them. There are also troubleshooting tips included to help solve any problems that may occur. I have the earlier version installed on my hard drive with the edges that came with it and the 1,400 edge and frame selections from the Edge and Frame Galaxy. This version upgraded what was on my computer and I didn't have to re-install it to the plug-ins in my graphic programs. It works with all of the graphic programs I have from Jasc Paint Shop Pro, Ulead PhotoImpact 6, Corel PhotoPaint 8 & 9, Photoshop 5, and more (works with any Photoshop plug-in compatible software). It can be added to any plug-in directory without any problems. At least I have not had any problems and I have it installed in all the products mentioned above plus I use several other programs. It also comes as a stand-alone product and it can be used on both Windows and the Mac platforms. I use it as a plug-in since most of what I add it to are graphics I create for our web site. For Paint Shop Pro users if you already have three plug-ins installed, create a plug-in folder (a folder titled plug-ins) inside the one of the plug-in folders already installed and add it inside of the new plug-in folder. Since Paint Shop Pro is limited to three plug-ins, I use this method to install the many other plug-ins I use. The installation was easy and caused no conflicts or problems.

After opening the graphic software and creating or selecting an image, launch the plug-in. The interface will show the image on the right side with a selection of sliders on the right and choices of options across the bottom. It opens with the "edge" choice and after selecting from

the vast amount of offerings you can begin to change the effects. By default it will open with the Autof/x extension. In order to use another type, you have to choose the file extension, such as jpg from the selections available, and then point it to the folder with the other edges. If you have other edge and frames selections, they can now be used with all the effects that come with Photo/Graphic Edges. Aside from having 10,000 selections to choose from, each of these is customizable so the number of possibilities is vast! Each time a slider is changed from default, a color is changed, or an effect added a new edge has been created. The edge can also be scaled or rotated. Multiple effects can be used together.

Other effects that can be added to an image include lighting, shadow, distort, bevel, carve, glow, burn, grain, and sepia tones. Matte color and matte texture add more possibilities to the image effects. There is also an effect log, which keeps track of all the additions that have been made to the image. Each setting on the edges selection can be customized to show a pronounced effect or reduced by setting the opacity and/or softness to create a hazy effect with little or no prominent edge design. By adjusting the opacity you can decide if you want the image to show through the edge. The idea is to create a design that is not only different from the average image but has your own personal style. Each of us brings something special to the designs we create.



Original Image



Example 1
 This example is the interface and an image with an unaltered edge. I selected an edge but have not

changed the color, texture, or added any of the effects in this view. The setting is on the "Select Edge" and all settings are on the default. The original image is black and white with the only color being the violin and the peach colored rose. From this setting, the size of the edge can be adjusted from the default size; it can be enlarged to cover more of the image or decreased to show more of the underlying image. The softness slider will determine if the edge stays sharp as it is now or faded so that the shape can be changed to nothing more than a barely visible shape. The opacity setting can be reduced to allow the image to show through the edge if desired. This image shows a border color of black but because it is set by default to zero there is no black edge on the inside edge where the shape is. By adjusting the slider, the edge can be brought out which add a whole new look to the image. There is an example of this in an image below. The border color can be changed to any color; black is the default setting. The edge color can be changed to match a background so that only the inner effect is visible or with a few added steps in PSP it can be feathered and faded to look as though it is fading into the background. With a little experimentation, I was amazed at all the things I could do with this software. Before when I used it, I just tried simple things and really missed out on the broad scope of changes that can be added. I am very impressed with the effects and love using edges on my graphics.

In this example I added "noise" which is the speckled effect, changed the color to a peach shade, extended the border (black edge on the inner side of the edge), then added the "Sepia Tones" effect to change the outer edge to a whitish color with a gray speckle, and then added a "Glow" to the inner edge to intensify the peach color I started with on the inner edge. The end result has the peach speckled areas flowing


and fading into the grayish area. It blends without leaving a distinct separating line of the colors.



In this image (below) I added one final effect, a bevel. I closed the working window in the hopes it might be easier to see the effects on a larger image. If I wanted to blend the edge of this image into the background of the page it will be used on, I would add another edge and match the color so that the image appears to be part of the background and leave a hard line between image and back-

ground. I don't know that I would use all of these effects on an image but I wanted to demonstrate what several effects would look like.



Autof/x Photo/Graphic Edges retails for \$199.95, a good investment because of all the possibilities it offers in creating artistic designs. Great tools are necessary when working with graphics and also to compete in today's graphic design market. Plain may always have its place because of the simplicity but I march to the beat of a different drummer and like tools that allow me to create more exciting images. Print projects and web designs both will benefit from using a design that is unique. This product offers the user many ideas and design elements to work with. I have seen examples of designs with edge effects that are so dramatic and beautiful that I can only hope to get to this level. Whether the image is greatly enhanced or just has simple effects added with the addition of an edge it absolutely adds that something extra a plain edge can't. This is a product that I would recommend to anyone who wants to work with excellent image enhancing software. 

STAY CONNECTED 3.1

reviewed by Ken Herbig

Do you have a problem with your internet connection being dropped if you leave your computer for more than 10 to 15 minutes? I have been experiencing this problem for the past month or so.

I go downstairs to have dinner, taking less than a half an hour. When I come back my dial-up connection is lost.

At first, I chalked it up to a poor connection. But then it began to happen more often and in less time; I noticed that it was happening more in peak usage hours than it did late in the evening. I was really getting annoyed with my Internet Service Provider.

I decided to take my own advice and try a program that I have been asking you folks to review. Stay Connected 3.1 is a downloadable Shareware Program that is fully functional and has a 21-day trial period. At the end of that time, if you use the program you should register it.

The program comes in a Zip file, so you will need an unzip program such as WinZip to install it. I installed it from within WinZip with no problems at all. It also installs its own help file and an uninstall program along with it.

The setup was very simple. You can use the Setup Wizard, or if you want more control you can use the Advanced Configuration option. When the program is started it puts an icon on your task bar. Once you are on line, you activate it with a leftclick, or you can choose to have it start automatically.

Here's how it works: it connects to different web sites that are already programmed in, all in the background, so you never even know that is happening. In this way it tricks the ISP in believing that you are actively surfing the web, so they won't disconnect you.

The company states that it will work with most internet providers, including AOL & NetZero.

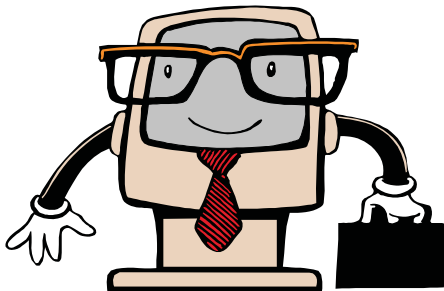
When you install the program there is an option to use a dialer that is included with the program. I chose to stay with the Windows dialer. I like the fact that it gave me an option instead of just installing it. (I like choices!)

I am very pleased with the program so far. It is a pleasure to go away from the computer and when I come back, still be connected.

STAY CONNECTED, by Incline Global
(www.inclineglobal.com)
\$ 19.95

System Requirements:

- Pentium Class processor or above
- 8 MB RAM (minimum)
- 4 MB of free hard disk space
- Microsoft Windows 95/98/NT/2000
- Any form of dial-up networking capability
- Internet connectivity via your local ISP (also supports AOL, NetZero.)



FONT OF KNOWLEDGE

Fonts deserve mention because they are essential to creative expression in documents that are published. As writers, we are sensitive to content, but when it comes to the visual presentation, fonts really help out. Don't spend a nickel or a pence for a font until you point your browser by <ftp://www.fontface.com> and see what they have to offer.

Most of the fonts come in zip format, so here's what you do: go back to www.download.com and grab up WinZip. Install WinZip and then go back to the <http://www.fontface.com> site for a good browse. When you download a font, don't download it to the fonts directory right away. Download the zip file to a new folder you've reserved just for zipped files. When you are all done shopping at fontface, double-click on the font of your choice. WinZip will spring into action. In the first input box you will see the "destination folder" cited as the current folder you are in. Click the browse button and find your fonts folder typically `c:\windows\fonts`.) This is where you want to expand the zipped up file in. Next time you are composing an HTML mail or some other RTF-based document, you can select one of your new fonts from the menu. **asdf;lkj**

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PUT YOUR TONGUE IN YOUR CHEEK AND SAY GOODBYE with a ;-^)

But that's just the beginning! Using our FREE list (no strings attached), you'll be able to grin widely like this :-D

or STICK YOUR TONGUE OUT :-p

or even LOOK EMBARRASSED :-}

(that's a subtle one). Your friends will be BUG-EYED =8O with amazement (and maybe you'll get a little less e-mail for a day or two)!

Note: Emoticons can become addictive.

Anyway, here they are...

http://whatis.techtarget.com/WhatIs_Definition_Page/0,4152,212057,00.html



Thanks! **C|:-=** (Charlie Chaplin)



ROCKLAND PC USERS GROUP

169 South Main Street
PMB 384
New City, NY 10956-3358

F I R S T C L A S S



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

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