

August 2001

COMPUTER Connection

AUGUST 2001

Rockland PC Users Group Presents: ANNUAL SWAP MEET / WHITE ELEPHANT SALE

August 14, 2001, 7:15 PM, Raso Room in the Palisades Mall

Everyone loves a bargain. One person's white elephant is another's treasure. Each August, RPCUG members and friends come to buy, sell, swap or browse at the **Annual Swap Meet**. There are always terrific deals in hardware and software. Sellers are looking to recover a bit of their investments in computer-related products that they have become tired of or outgrown.

Many of us have recently upgraded our computers or purchased new software and find that we have no further use for certain worthwhile applications. It is a shame to have perfectly good equipment or software sit in a garage or basement when it could be humming along in someone else's home or office. So, we have scanned our closets for unwanted but usable hardware, software, computer books, floppies and other items. Now is your chance to get a really great buy on that piece of hardware or software that you have been wanting, but has been out of reach until now.

The swap meet is open to the public as always, but only RPCUG & WPCUG members may offer their wares for sale or swap.

SWAP MEET GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS

Here are the guidelines that have made the buy, sell, swap portion of our meeting successful each year. Find a table on which to display your offerings. You may have to share a table with others. You are responsible for safeguarding your goods and for carrying home or donating for door prizes anything that remain when the swap portion of the meeting is over.

SOFTWARE RULES

- Include all documents, disks and packing materials.
- It is illegal to sell, trade or give away software that you have upgraded to a newer version.
- Delete the transferred software from your hard disk. Retain no copies.

HARDWARE RULES

- Decide on your guarantee and put in writing: Sold As Is; Guaranteed to Work According to Documentation; 30-day No Questions Asked Refund; Satisfaction Guaranteed or your money back, etc.
- Include all cords, cables, and accessories that originally came with the item.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Price items far below discount.
 - Know the price you expect for each item. Use Post-its to mark items.
 - Be open; do not withhold information.
 - Bring cash for buying or making change and your checkbook.
 - Sellers should have pen and paper on hand.
 - Each seller is responsible for NY State sales tax and compliance with license terms.
 - Don't bring too much stuff. We are allowing about an hour for this activity. Remember, you will have to carry home or donate all unsold/untraded items.
 - No commercial or non-member vendors are allowed; you may bring, but are responsible for, non-member friends. Please e-mail Ken (Hobbikat@warwick.net) if you plan on setting up at a table so we get an idea of the number of tables needed.
- Thanks.

MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

WEB SITES editor's picks:

How Microsoft licenses hurt kids in East Timor—and you!

www.zdnet.com/anchordesk/stories/story/0,10738,2800646,00.html

BUMPER SNICKERS:

<http://lowendmac.com/lite/01/0703.html>

HOW TO CHOOSE A SEARCH ENGINE...

<http://library.albany.edu/internet/choose.html>

GRAPHICS TO FIGHT BANDWIDTH ABUSERS

www.photodude.com/test/thief.htm

SERIOUS TIME-WASTING

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

SUCH VARIETY!

Got a favorite? email the editor!
mcbaade@aol.com



THE ROCKLAND PC USERS GROUP

OFFICERS

President: Ken Herbig, / hobbikat@hobbikats.com
Vice President: Eugene Frank, / hhw@icu.com
Secretary: Mary Ann DeCurtis, / khb895@msn.com
Treasurer: Thea Zendell, / tzend282@aol.com
Member-at-Large: Gary Fitzgerald, / gjfitz1@aol.com

COMMITTEES

Intergroup Liaison: Jack Marsella, / mumbassa@bestweb.net
Membership: Frank Palmeri, / palmshet@aol.com
Programs: Sondra Coulter, / mscoulter@aol.com
Public Relations: Sy Berber, / syber@icu.com
Review Editor: Roberta Mikkelson, / Roberta316@yahoo.com
Shareware Librarian: Alain Lajoux, / allx@netzero.net
Webmaster: Steve Weinberg, / rpcug@acd-pc.com
PCReNew: Hank Feinberg, / pcrenew@totalpromotions.net

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Marian Baade, ~

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,

MEETING SCHEDULE

GENERAL MEETING

7:15 PM

MULTIMEDIA WORKSHOP

6:00 PM

Tuesday, August 14, 2001

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

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

Windows 98/ME SIG meets on the third Tuesday of the month in the Pearl River Room at the Pearl River Library, 7-8:45 PM.

The **Investment Workshop (SIG)** meetings will vary for the present; please consult the web site for details

The **Executive Board** meets last Thursday of the month
West Nyack Library, 7:00 PM

The Rockland PC Users Group, a tax-exempt educational organization, meets monthly, usually on the second Tuesday. Meetings begin at 7:15 PM. The latest information about meeting programs and dates is available on the Internet at <http://www.rpcug.org>



Message from the President

For those of you that have never been to our "Annual Swap Meet," come out and **JOIN THE FUN!**

If you have any hardware or software that is still in good condition, but you aren't using it any longer, pack it up and bring it to the General Meeting. This is a fun evening for everyone, and you never know, you may find that special item you have been looking for.



show how to use them. So if you hear people talking about saving important files or performing backups to a burner or zip drive and you don't know what they are talking about, come out and join us. You may walk away with a little bit of information that you didn't have before you came.

For those of you that were at the July General meeting, you may have already read the next part of my message. We did not send out a newsletter last month and I felt strongly that it was important enough to reprint.

The August meeting is another joint meeting with the Westchester PC Users Group. Last month's joint meeting was a great success. There was a wonderful turnout of over 100 combined members. It was such a pleasure to see so many members enjoying themselves. I hope that this is only the beginning of things to come.

PC-Renew looks like it has really begun. Hank Feinberg and the members of the project have been busy collecting computers and monitors. Looks like they are ready to start building their first computers. If you haven't signed up to be part of this fantastic project, contact Hank at the next meeting or go to our website and sign up. There is a rumor out there that they may have already built their first computer.

The Graphics SIG is moving along nicely; Gene Frank has been doing a great job. The member turn-out has really grown in the past year. I hope you can get to the meeting a little early and sit in on one of his presentations. You never know...you may learn something.

I have been sitting in as the Windows 98/ME SIG leader. I am sure that there are plenty of you out there that know a lot more than I do, so come on out and share your knowledge. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 PM, in the Pearl River Room of the Pearl River Library.

With everyone talking about "burners" & "zip drives", I thought it would be interesting to

"Last year was my first experience with a joint meeting. What a pleasure it was to see members from both groups participating in the meeting. Jonathan Hauff doing the Q&A prior to the meeting, members talking to each other at the break. This is what User Groups should be all about. In our busy lives we sometimes lose track of the importance of stopping and smelling the roses; talking with a friend or a member that you may not have known before.

"While I was making up some Photo ID Badges for PC-Renew, I noticed that I did not know the names of many of the members that I had photos of. This was quite an eye-opening experience for me. I am your President and I don't know all your names. I began to think... I wonder how many of us don't know each other. We are a group and we should make a conscious effort to get to know each other better. The more we do, the stronger the group will become. At the break find someone you don't know and go up and introduce yourself - you may be surprised at the response."

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

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

Ken Herbig
President, RPCUG

Progress Report on *Project PC ReNew*

by Hank Feinberg

When you build a house, it takes a while to lay the foundation, build the framing and put the roof on.

At PC Renew, we have made this sort of progress in a relatively short time. It was less than three months ago that we came up with the idea for **Project PC ReNew**. The board gave us their approval and off we went to get this project going.

First we had to locate FREE space for a workshop and storage. This was done in less than a month.

We now have a complete workshop with 32 feet of hand-built workbenches. This gives us room for up to 7- 8 technicians to work at any time.

We have doubled our shelving space and added another 16 feet of shelving because we have run out of space for the computers we have received. In all, we have upwards of 70 units to be worked on, with more to come.

The key to **Project PC ReNew** has been donations; donations of time, labor materials and talent. We have a wonderful group of volunteers who have formed the nucleus and heart of **Project PC ReNew**. The RPCUG is rich in talent and heart.

We have finished installing the electricity to the benches and the lighting over the work areas. This work was donated by Jeff Seidel; he is a licensed electrician in Rockland County. Thank you, Jeff, for this donation!

Now we can begin to work on our inventory. Bob Jenks and Alain Lejoux have been working together and outlining a course that all technicians will have to take to learn computer diagnosis and repair. Some of this will be hands- on "on the job training."



We are working with the Rockland County Department of Social Services, and have committed to giving at least 30 systems to people enrolled in Next Step, a program that teaches welfare mothers computer skills to make them employable upon graduation from the program.

We are in need of old operating systems. If you have a licensed copy of

Windows 95 you are longer are using, we would love to have it. You will receive a tax letter for the full retail value of this program. We also need Microsoft Word and Excel.

If you signed up to learn and work on computer repair, please be patient. We have been putting everything in place to make sure that this program is successful, well planned and well executed. The training has begun and we will be contacting you soon.

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

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

Business Planning Software

If you're starting a small business, you could probably use some business-oriented software. Of course, business software tends to be expensive. But perhaps you don't really need to drop a pot of money on software right now — not when you can use some inexpensive shareware, or even some freeware.
www.bizoffice.com/soft_general.html

Natural Keyboard Pro

by Microsoft

Reviewed by Ken Herbig

I have been using a **Natural Keyboard** for about a year and a half. I enjoy the shape and feel of it. Many have told me that they wouldn't want to use one because of the funny shape; on the contrary, the ergonomic design has helped me type faster and with less fatigue than I used to experience. I wasn't the world's fastest typist to begin with, so I got used to the split key design rather quickly.

The new **Natural Keyboard Pro** has the same comfortable layout as my previous one, except for a row of 19 buttons at the top, above the "F" key row.

For those of you that would rather use the keyboard to maneuver instead of constantly having to use the mouse, **This board is for you!**

The row of buttons that have been added to the keyboard are shortcuts to your favorite programs, from your e-mail program or your favorite web browser, to controlling your multi-media functions. I was very impressed with the install program, which is very user-friendly. While setting up the shortcut buttons, I had the option of using any web browser and any e-mail program. This was important for those that may not want to use Outlook Express or Internet Explorer. There are also two buttons that you could use for any function that you chose. I programmed one to start Excel and the other Windows Explorer.

The buttons are laid out with the button for your Email program in the middle. To the left are all your browser buttons. There are buttons for forward and back, stop, refresh, search and even your favorites. On the right are your multimedia buttons. They start with mute, volume (- & +), play/pause, stop, previous track, next track and a media button to select what program to start.



For those of you that use USB peripherals, the keyboard comes with two USB ports built in. This comes in very useful if you need to connect something quickly. You don't have to get in the back of your computer. Just plug it in the back of the keyboard and away you go. To use this function you must be running Windows 98 or Windows 2000 Pro.

For those of you that are fairly new to computing, they have also labeled the keys that you use for your CTR hotkeys.

I was very pleased with the feel of the keyboard. It is easy to remember the way the shortcut buttons are arranged and they are located conveniently for accessibility. I recommend the MS Natural Keyboard Pro.

MICROSOFT NATURAL KEYBOARD

(www.microsoft.com)

price: \$ 79.95

The board comes with a 3-year limited warranty

System Requirements:

486 or Pentium processor

16 MB RAM

35 MB hard drive space

CD-ROM drive

Microsoft Windows 95, Windows 98,

Windows NT Workstation or

Server version 4 with Service Pack 3 or

higher

A USB and PS/2 connection to your PC

(fulfillment card included a PS/2 to AT

(5-pin DIN) adapter.

SOFTWARE available for REVIEW

PICK ONE, write down what you think about it, and it's **YOURS TO KEEP!**

Email Roberta at Roberta316@yahoo.com
or Ken at hobbikat@hobbikats.com

- ✓ **Camtasia**, \$149.95
an ingenious Windows application that's like no screen capturing utility you've ever seen
www.techsmith.com
- ✓ **CD-Trustee**, \$29.95
automatically catalogs your music collection, just by inserting and removing CDs in your computer.
www.base40.com/
- ✓ **CDH Media Wizard**, \$50.00
is a powerful, all-in-one multimedia application supporting playback of all popular formats.
www.cdhnow.com/
- ✓ **Dubit**, \$19.95
A multimedia tool which lets you easily add audio to movie clips and images
www.techsmith.com
- ✓ **Hang 3000**, \$25.00
A fun, secretly-educational, non-violent, colorful, expandable word-guessing game.
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime
- ✓ **HTML Guard 2.0**, \$15.00
Protects your web site from unauthorized copying.
www.aw-soft.com/htmlguard.html
- ✓ **Incredible E-mailer**, \$59.95
a program that lets anyone enhance email messages with pictures and drawings.
www.toolfactory.com
- ✓ **Jigsaws Galore 4.0**, D/L \$25.00 / Mail \$39.00
The most powerful Windows Jigsaw Player/Creator available with features never before seen.
www.dgray.com
- ✓ **Oligo 2.0**, \$29.95
Change the way your Browser looks!
www.inklineglobal.com/
- ✓ **Presidents 3000**, \$20.00
is a fun, secretly-educational, non-violent, colorful, soundful word-guessing game dedicated to learning all about the Presidents of the United States.
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime

- ✓ **States 3000**, \$20.00
is a fun, secretly-educational, non-violent, colorful, soundful word-guessing game dedicated to learning all about the 50 States (and their capitals, birds, flowers, mottos, etc.)
www.mv.com/ipusers/spacetime
- ✓ **Typing Master 2002**, \$29.90
Learn and practice the professional ten-finger technique with this effective self-paced typing tutor.
www.TypingMaster.com
- ✓ **Visual Day Planner**, \$29.95
Organize your life...visually! Easily sets reminders, appointments and memos by simply typing into it like a word processor
www.inklineglobal.com/
- ✓ **Web Media Publisher**, \$50.00
was introduced as the first 32 bit professional HTML editor
www.wbmedia.com/publisher/

"CLIPPY" LOOKS for a NEW JOB

The Microsoft Office paperclip character we've all grown to hate has been demoted. *Clippy* is the animated paperclip cartoon that pops up at the drop of a hat to offer advice when we really don't want it.



Despite evidence to the contrary, perhaps Microsoft actually has a sense of humor about itself after all. The company has built a website, officeclippy.com, that has the annoying paperclip ask, "Know anyone who's hiring?" Clippy has been turned OFF by default in the latest edition of MS-Office. If you listen closely you can probably hear the cheering of Office users around the world.

The Clippy site is, of course, a plug for Office XP, but at least it's self-deprecating enough to admit that the company didn't get it right the first time (or the second, or the third...).

Geeks with long memories probably still harbor ill feelings for Microsoft's "Bob." If we all write the company at once, maybe they'll build us a Bob site to write about.

www.cnn.com/2001/TECH/ptech/04/12/office.clippy/index.html

BATTERED COMPUTERS: An Epidemic

By Michelle Delio, *Wired News*, www.wired.com

One in every four computers has been physically attacked by its owner, according to a survey. The survey, conducted by a British PC manufacturer, was intended to take a lighthearted look at embarrassing experiences — those little technical bloopers that happen even to ubergeeks, like forwarding a personal love letter to an entire office mailing list.

But instead, a much darker story emerged in the 4,200 replies. Innocent computers are being beaten on a regular basis, often by technically challenged users who decide to take their frustrations out on their helpless machines. “We decided to do some research into people’s relationships with their computers and we were amazed by some of the results,” Novatech managing director David Furby said. “As computers become more and more a part of our daily lives, we obviously share more experiences with them.” It’s not just a British phenomenon, either. Computers are being attacked in offices, homes and hotel rooms around the world — much like the portly, frustrated cubicle worker did (in a staged sketch) on the widely circulated video clip called “Badday.” Many technical support people from the United States, Canada and parts of Europe have sobering stories of brutalized computers being brought in for repair by sad — or in some cases, smug — owners who had smacked, kicked or otherwise deliberately injured their machines. “The incidences of willful neglect have always been high,” said David Tepper, owner of the Village Computer Shop in New York. “We’ve always had to deal with computers damaged by people who dumped their refreshing beverage on the computer’s keyboard, or got tangled up in the cords and bringing (sic) the computer crashing down off their desk.” “But there has also always been a small - but significant - number of machines that were obviously intentionally damaged.” Tepper said the most common

signs of an abused computer are broken keys “from people smacking down on the keyboard with an open hand or sometimes a fist.” But he said the most common abuse foisted on computers is the “sharp slap delivered to the monitor or the hard drive case. If you smack a machine when the hard drive is spinning, you can kill the hard drive.” William Vincent, a

client of Tepper’s, confessed to murdering his hard drive by delivering several sharp blows to the tower of his Dell computer. “I had been working on a presentation that was due the next day and the machine just stalled out totally,” Vincent said. “I hadn’t saved a significant amount of my work, and when I

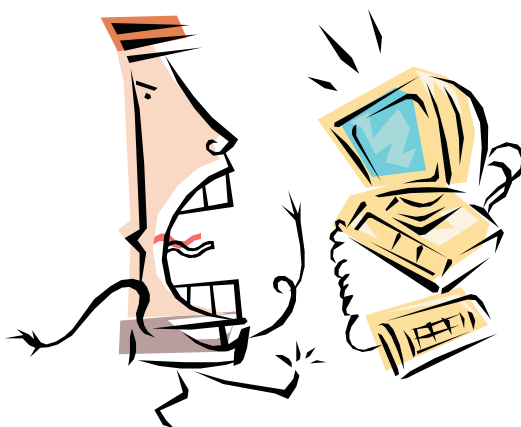
realized I would have to forcibly shut the computer down and lose all that work I guess I went a little nuts and started hitting the machine.”

Vincent said that he believed he could get the machine “unstuck” by smacking it, but he also admitted that frustration played a large part in his actions that day.

“It was so late, and I had so much to do — it was like the computer was just taunting me,” he said.

The “malicious machine” defense is a common one.

Many British respondents to the survey said they were provoked to strike their PCs when sensitive e-mail was sent to the wrong recipient, when a cache of previously visited porn sites was revealed at the wrong time and when a tie got caught in the CD drive’s drawer, trapping the tie’s wearer and causing him to bang his head on the monitor as the drawer closed.



But some support people said many people have simply become accustomed to abusing machines.

"People here tend to express themselves very emotionally," said Marco Lombardi, a computer repair specialist in Milan. "It is not uncommon for them to hit their televisions, their scooters and their computers. It's just how it is done here."

"And sometimes a fast smack does fix the problem, you know," Lombardi added.

Ferenc Takacs, a retired professor of psychology in Budapest, believes that lack of technical knowledge and people's innate desire to humanize their machines sometimes causes them to physically attack computers and other equipment when things go wrong.

"We are all pagans to some degree or another," Takacs said. "We invest machines with personalities, because we don't understand the technology that allows computers, or cars or televisions to do what they do."

"We treat our machines as if they are persons. We talk to them, we name them, we even sometimes plead with and try to cajole the little god inside each machine. And when the little god turns out to be evil we beat the machine to purge the demon."

Novatech's Furby said the company was surprised that a full 25 percent of survey respondents confessed to physically attacking their computers.

"Hopefully as technology improves and computers become ever more user-friendly, these attacks will become less frequent," Furby said.

Michael McKenzie wasn't as optimistic.

McKenzie, a Canadian freelance computer repairman, said, "Computers seem to bring out the hidden hit man in everyone, regardless of their technical

experience. Techies smack their machines as often as non-techies do."

McKenzie said that technically challenged users tend to damage their machines by accident, but "geeks don't have that excuse. They know they are hurting the machine when they pound on it."

McKenzie said that one of his most frequent clients was the head of sales at a large corporation "which shall remain nameless."

The man is prone to pummeling his staff's laptops when his sales force disappoints him, according to McKenzie.

"Once I was told he even kicked a laptop across the conference room," said McKenzie.

But McKenzie said that he wasn't upset about this or other blatant cases of computer abuse.

"The more people wreck their machines and bring them to me for repair, the more time I can spend on a Caribbean island in the winter. And when the choice comes down to me surviving a Canadian winter, and some stupid computer getting the living bytes beaten out of it ... well, as far as I'm concerned, you should all feel free to beat up your purchase."

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A group of young children were sitting in a circle with their teacher. She was going around in turn asking them all questions.

First she asked, "Davy, what noise does a cow make?"

He responded, "It goes moo."

Then she asked, "Alice, what noise does a cat make?"

Alice replied, "It goes meow."

Next she asked, "Jamie, what sound does a lamb make?"

Her response was, "It goes baa."

Finally she questioned one last child, "Jennifer, what sound does a mouse make?"

She replied, "Er, it goes ... click!"



BackupPLUS, Version 6.0

by Avantrix

Reviewed by Steve Weinberg

Backup! There's that vile word that everybody knows or hears about, but generally ignores. Here's a program, BackupPLUS from Avantrix, Inc., that will ease the pain of doing that time-wasting, dreaded, non-productive task. Please, realize that I am being sarcastic here. Backing up your critical data files is one of the most important and productive things you can do in your computing life. All you need is an instance when you removed a file or changed it and you will have to spend hours upon hours recreating or re-installing. This will convince you of the worth of a recent backup.

BackupPLUS is a solid performer with an easy-to-use interface that covers all the bases for most of us. It can be used to backup your data files, not a complete system for disaster recovery. You can backup to just about any media except tape. I backed up my critical data files to my CD on a CDRW disk and then restored to a new location to compare files. Quick and easy with perfect restoration of the originals. Good compression is achieved using the standard ZIP compression. I even used WinZIP (WinZip Computing, Inc.,) to examine and restore a selection of files from the backup set. How convenient!

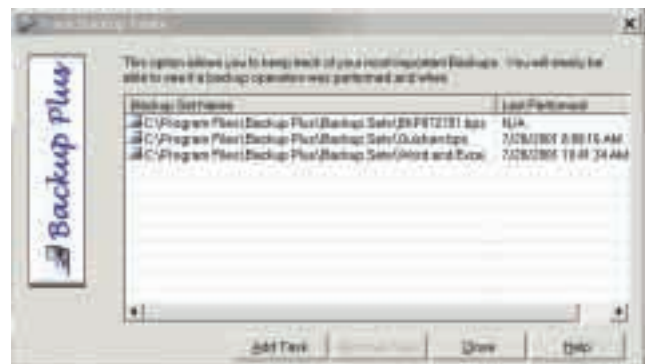
For large backups, or those larger than the removable media (floppy disk, Zip Disk, Jaz Disk, CDR, CDRW, etc.), BackupPLUS has the ability to span multiple disks. I tested this with multiple floppy disks. It worked well and quickly. I even restored from a multiple floppy disk set with no problems.

A "wizard" is included that helps to create backup sets (a definition of which files and folders should be backed up). It worked well in creating the backup set, however, I had to re-select the backup set before I could use it when I had selected floppy disks as the target of the backup.

Installation was a snap. Manual not required. However, the 77-page manual supplied is quite

good at explaining backups and how to use this utility. The shipped version comes with the manual.

BackupPLUS worked very well for me and I will continue to use it. One particularly good feature is the ability to display the backup tasks that I've defined and the date when each was last run (see graphic). There is, also, the ability to set up "timed backups" that will run at predetermined times. My home computer is not on at scheduled times, so this is not an option useful to me. It would also mean that I would have to make sure that I had my backup media of choice (my CDRW) in place at the time of the scheduled backup.



Some negatives were, there is no way I could find to remove a backup set definition. Note that I could easily remove the backup file definition from Windows Explorer. It is not totally Windows compliant. Some windows show a grayed out 'X' box in the upper right corner when they shouldn't, some windows are not re-sizable and no double-click is available on some file selections. BackupPLUS will backup the Windows Registry for many of the Windows versions, but it does not yet do so for Windows 2000. This is a down side for me and I hope that there will be an update from Avantrix that will cover this soon. I have not had a problem with Windows 2000 Registry and hope not to. (I hope not to have to use the restoration features of BackupPLUS either, but, I would be more comfortable if I knew this capability was available.)

All things considered, the negatives are very minimal. You should have and use a backup of some sort. BackupPLUS should be a strong contender to consider in your strategy for saving your critical data. Consider how long it

(continued on page 11)

CD-Maker 2000 Professional

by NewTech Infosystems

reviewed by Steve Weinberg



Burn Your Own CD's; yes!...quickly, easily and cheaply. This no-hassle program allowed me to easily use my newly purchased CD "burner" to create backups of my data files from my 30 gigabyte hard drive almost as easily as using Windows Explorer to copy files from one folder to another. I can create custom CDs with audio, data, video or mixtures of data types.

Installation was a snap, no manual required. However, the manual I found on the CD is quite extensive. It explores the technology of CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW in great detail. There's quite a lot to it (160 pages). There are data types, multi-session CD's, types of CD drives, etc. The list of compatible CD drives is quite extensive and probably covers most of the drives out there today. An on-line list brings you an up-t- the-minute list in case you have a newly released drive. It covers the program and its options quite well (except that I found it difficult to understand how to create a custom music CD consisting of specific selections from music I have on a variety of other CDs.)

With the FileCD program, I was able to format a CD-RW and drag and drop data to it just as I would a standard Windows folder. At various times during this procedure, I was told to click "OK" to eject and re-insert the CD I had just written. But, when I was done, I had nicely backed up my 20 megabytes of data using the same directory structure that I had on my hard drive. I then erased it and re-formatted it. Now, I wrote it all over again. The second write is much easier as the first one on a fresh CD-RW requires a 40 minute format. The second time, I used the "quick format," which took less than a minute. One caution: the files that you may have to retrieve from the CD after it is made will be restored as "Read-Only." This means that you have to change the archive bit via Windows Explorer if you want to be able to modify it. Another noteworthy item is that the CDs created using FileCD can only be read on a computer with FileCD. That's not as big a

deal as you might imagine because there are other programs included that you can use to create a data CD.

The main program, **CD Maker 2000 Professional**, has a very simple interface with most operations taking two steps. Usually, step one consists of selecting the source data; this can be an audio CD, data CD or files on your hard drive. There is a good explanation of the format of various files that can be created or copied.

Less than 15 minutes after installation, I had copied my first audio CD to a CD-R. The copy was perfect until I ruined it by writing on the back label side with a marker that had too hard a point and somewhat affected the tracks on the other side. Whoops! Making direct audio and data copies of complete CDs is a real snap. This is true even though I have only the CD-RW drive on my system. It is a three step process. First, select the source of the data to be copied (the CD-RW has the original CD at this point). Second, one-click to start the copy (this copies the data to the hard drive). Third, the original CD is automatically ejected and a dialog box asks for the CD-R to be inserted. This is now written showing a buffer cache as the writing proceeds. If you should have a slow hard drive or some other reason that the data stream slows down so as not to keep the buffer cache full, the CD may be ruined. It is advisable to turn off all other resident programs, such as screen savers, virus-detection, etc.

There's lots of other software here to explore. I could mix various types of data on a CD and even record Live Audio from any source I wanted. Along with that, there was a way to improve the characteristics of the audio data and reduce hiss, noise, pops, etc. As a bonus, there is a Jewel Case Maker. Fashion and print your own and make as elaborate as you like.

The graphical interface is easy to understand and use. Conversions for WAV files, MP3 files, CD-DA tracks are handled easily. AVI and MPEG file conversion are handled for those

who are video interested. Just hit, "record" when you want to start recording and, "stop" when you are finished and you'll have the "line-in" and microphone inputs recorded live to the CD.

*Performance was very good on Windows 2000 Professional on my Pentium III, 1Ghz with 256 mb RAM using a Goldstar CD burner. This is much more than is required to run CD-Maker 2000 Professional, though. 100Mhz CPU and 16 mb RAM will do the trick.

There is toll-free tech support, and a money-back guarantee if you are not happy during the first 30 days of use (less shipping and handling).

CD-Maker 2000 Professional

by NewTech Infosystems

(<http://www.nticdmaker.com/>)

\$69.99, but much cheaper if you download it from the web

System Requirements:

See Steve's notes, above.* I did not find system requirements listed at NTI's web site.

There is a downloadable trial version.
— (editor)

BACKUP Plus...(continued from page 9)

has taken you to create your data and you might reconsider not backing it up.

Or order it from the Internet for \$39.95 at:
www.backupplus.net/

To get the

BACKUP Plus by Avantrix

(<http://www.backupplus.net/>)

\$39.95 on the internet,
CD and manual shipped, \$44.95 plus \$6.95 s/h.

System requirements:

- Pentium (P/166 recommended)
- Windows 95/98/2000/NT 4.0+
- 16 mb RAM (32 MB recommended)
- SVGA (True Color recommended)
- 8 mb hard disk space

PCUGchat & Mailing listserv YOU ARE INVITED!

Dear Members and Friends:

Last week I discovered that AIM (Instant Messenger) users who are NOT AOL members can enter a private AOL chat room. This was not possible until recently and all it requires is a recent copy of AIM for the non-AOL member.

AOL members need do nothing differently. The point of this e-mail is to invite you to join us for the chat and/or for the mailing list. If you have been enjoying the Members Helping Members list that you are currently on, you will find that the PCUGchat list takes it a step further as it is frequented by more advanced technical people. Then there is also the Sunday night chat for those who wish to share or gain knowledge in real time.

This list is open to all computer enthusiasts who are AOL members or use a recent version of AIM. The PCUGchat is an AOL chat held on Sunday evening from 9:30-10:30PM EST in a private room. It is an off-shoot of the former AOL User Group Forum. The theme of the PCUGchat is anything AOL, PC or Computer User Group (PC or MAC) related. Many of our chat members are User Group officers and members of their own respective Computer User Groups across the USA. Occasionally, we have set topics and special guest speakers.

Essentially we are an on-line PC Users Group and a virtual community. Subscribers of this list will receive a chat reminder notice and other theme-related tidbits of information. In addition, PCUGchat listserv members will be able to post questions and interact with other members in e-mail. The listserv will be moderated by me and by my two chat room co-hosts. Please e-mail me if you have any questions and would like to subscribe to the listserv and/or join us on-line for the Sunday chat. Or, you may go to the link below and subscribe yourself. **Please spread the word!**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PCUGchat/join>

Regards,
Sandy Coulter
MsCoulter@aol.com



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



WANT TO JOIN THE GROUP? HERE'S HOW!

Bring your completed application and a check payable to RPCUG to a meeting or mail your application and check to:
RPCUG at 169 South Main Street, Suite 384, New City, NY 10956-3358. (PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION)

Name

E-mail Address

Address

Spouse's Name (if joint membership)

Day Phone:

Spouse's E-mail address

Evening Phone:

Children's Names (for Family Membership)

INDIVIDUAL \$ 35	JOINT \$ 40	FAMILY \$ 45	STUDENT \$ 15	CORPORATE SPONSOR \$ 100	RENEWAL: Member # _____
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