

Pac Bell Wireless Presentation Thursday, August 10th

Robert Blakely, Account Executive at Pacific Bell Wireless will also show us the Promotions available for August 2000 and present phones which can receive emails from a computer. They can also send out text messaging from phone to phone. They can also hook up to a Laptop Computer and receive faxes and emails, or send faxes and emails.

They are not going to have WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) available on our system until the end of the year. They will be fashionably late, however, they claim they will be the best dressed! They say their WEB Browsing phones and system will be the best in the market. They use GSM (Global Systems for Mobile communications) which is the most widely used digital technology for wireless communications in the entire world! It is what all of Europe & Asia uses and is the most proven of all technologies.

Meetings

Thursday, August 10th
Pac Bell's
Web Browsing Phones

Wednesday, August 23rd
Napster
&
WorldShare

The Napster Conundrum

It's Free, It's Easy, It's Wrong

By Steve Bass, PIBMUG

I'm writing while listening to Dave Brubeck. Not unusual but this is one of Brubeck's long out of production cuts, a song I've been searching for on CD for a couple of years. You guessed it: I found it on Napster. It was free.

Another? "High Wire," a just released cut from a Rob Brown and Sunny Wilkinson CD that wasn't available at cdrom.com or Barnes and Noble, my usual haunts. Right. It was already on Napster.

Napster works by connecting you to other people wanting to download MP3 music. Once connected, you search on, say, "Brubeck" and Napster's servers find everyone logged on with music that has "Brubeck" in the listing. You can limit the search to a reasonable number of hits-100 is the default-or ask for 900 (and sometime you get your wish, filling the screen with songs). Once the search is complete, a click on the title starts a download; click on the sender's name and he or she is added to your Hot List, providing a way of finding them in subsequent sessions.

So yes, I'm using Napster, feeling conflict and guilt, and collecting songs. I logged on last month and it wasn't for research or a future article. I just had to see it for myself. Free music, all you can download, all perfectly anonymous.

And entirely illegal.

Gimmie Some More

The problem is just that: the music is free, as much of it as I want, and stunningly easy to get. With a high-speed connection, I can pop a 5MB song onto my PC in less than 30 seconds. Hell, it takes me that long to turn on

the amp and CD-ROM player on my home audio system. In about seven minutes I can download and start listening to the equivalent of an entire long playing record, about 55MBs. And it's ever so tempting to dip in and grab another few songs.

Scour Your i-drive for Gnutella

Want more? While less valuable than Napster, there's Scour.com, an Internet app that supplies music, videos, and images. Scour works with i-drive.com, a site that supplies users unlimited-and free—online storage space.

The story is that things get even more outrageous with Gnutella, a free program that provides anything you want. Search on Word and you'll get the program. Music? Easy. Porno? No sweat. But that's nonsense so let's dispense with Gnutella right away. First, Gnutella is more difficult to use than Napster or Scour.

Once you master Gnutella and start searching for items, you'll find more junk and x-rated sites than you can possibly imagine. For example, a search on Wordstar (stop laughing) brought up wordstar.html, a file with an x-rated URL embedded inside. Same thing happened with a search for most popular programs. In a way it's a lot like unmoderated newsgroups with unfiltered files and messages.

Worse, Gnutella is probably the easiest way to pick up a virus or have your system examined by an experienced hacker. You can safely get a taste of what Gnutella's capable of by searching at CapnBry's site. <http://capnbry.dyndns.org/gnutella/gs.php> If you want Gnutella, get it at <http://gnutella.wego.com>

The Napster Connection

On the other hand, Napster's files are 100 percent MP3s with no worries about viruses. The program's commercial enough with a relatively easy interface so you'll get the knack in a few minutes. If you use a personal firewall—I'm using ZoneLabs free Zone Alert (zonelabs.com) and feeling comfortable with it—you'll be safe against intruders.

Of course, there are a few downsides to Napster. Not all the music is complete, and not all of it is good quality. Some Napster users are conscientious and make it clear in the song's title that the song was cut short. Often a cut doesn't get ripped-transferred from the CD to the hard drive-properly and the music is distorted.

When you log on to Napster, you fill in your connection speed. Unfortunately, not everyone tells the truth. So you might find yourself downloading from someone using a 56k modem, making your high-speed access valueless. Or if you've decided to share one of your folders filled with music, slow connectors may start grabbing songs and you might feel guilty disconnecting them before they get anything downloaded.

Knock Knock, it's the Net Cops

In mid-June, the Recording Industry Association of America, a trade association, and a handful of record labels sued Napster, alleging it's contributing to massive copyright infringement because of its members trading songs through the service.

Nobody's going to catch you, so don't worry.

The biggest bugaboo you'll face is ethical. My concern is for the songwriter and performer, the two groups who are generally stuck holding the unsavory end of the stick. So not only do they get screwed by the record producers, now the customer gets a chance to chisel them out of their royalties.

The Process of Denial

Some people I've talked with justify using Napster thinking it will force the record industry to pay attention and change their greedy ways. Maybe it will. I know I'd gladly pay a buck or two for each cut I want, provided I'm not stuck with the entire CD.

What I want is the ability, as with Napster, to check out and listen to the entire song, not a 15 second sample. For instance, I heard about four minutes of "The Time of the Barracudas," a Gil Evans and Miles Davis cut on the radio. I liked what I heard. After I downloaded the entire song on Napster, I realized it wasn't something I wanted to listen to again. I deleted it, just as I would with shareware I couldn't use. Had I purchased the \$16 CD, I would've been stuck with it.

And what's the business plan for the 19 year old behind Napster? The program's free and there's no advertising on Napster-no banner ads, no cookies, and no intrusions on our privacy. My guess? The kid's going to sell it to one of the big record companies. So the question we're faced with is whether Napster is a rogue, a way to let everyone pirate music from the Internet. Or is Napster a change agent, pushing the industry towards reform.

Me? I've gotta go. There are a couple of Herbie Hancock cuts I'm trying to find.

HERE'S HOW: NAPSTER

Limiting uploads: Maintain control of who's able to take files from your shared music directory. One way is to limit the number of downloads to one song per person.

Check your sharing folder: It's critical you pay attention to the folder you're sharing with other Napster users. It's easy to inadvertently check the box to share the entire drive.

Security Tip: When you first begin using Napster, don't share any songs. In Napster's configuration, set the number of files to share to zero.

Don't Share at All: The safest way to use Napster is don't allow anyone to get at your files. That way you're completely safe from intruders.

Limit your Downloads: Don't try to download too many songs at once. You'll run out of bandwidth and may get knocked offline. Think about it: Your one connection will divide the bandwidth among all the songs you're downloading because each song is coming from a different user. It's better to grab a few songs; they'll download more quickly and if you are disconnected, you'll lose only a few songs.

Dump partial songs: Get rid of incomplete partial files. Check out the file before you allow it to be copied to the next person. Better, set Napster to delete incomplete files.

Be Polite: Check if others are downloading files from your drive before you log off. Use Napster's Chat feature to warn people just starting a download if you're planning on logging off.

Hotlist Tip: As you search, watch for people on the list with multiple selections of your favorite author. Put them on your Hotlist and ignore users with just one selection. Protect Yourself: Use Zone Lab's free firewall, Zone Alert. It will stop outsiders from doing any harm. (www.zonelabs.com).

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World Magazine, frequently writes for Forbes ASAP, Working Woman, and Family Circle, and is the president of the Pasadena IBM Users Group. He can be reached at stevebass@earthlink.net.

PhotoShop's MASK Tool

submitted by Barbara Cott

This allows you to block out background text. It's actually a very easy process that takes about 15 seconds to start but seems really long here because every detail is included since I don't know how much anyone knows!

Have your selected picture open in Photoshop. On the work area, do the following:

1. Go to the LAYERS palette. (If you are using default settings for 5.5 IBM, it is the bottom palette on the right hand side of your screen. The selection tabs in that palette should be LAYERS, CHANNELS, PATHS, HISTORY, ACTIONS, with the layers tab in the left side of the palette box.
2. Click the LAYERS tab and that should show you how many layers you have in your artwork. If it's a simple photo you have just opened, it should only have one layer, unless you have added other layers to work with.
3. The LAYERS palette box should have (from top to boom under the LAYERS tab) the following:
 - a. A box at top left giving you options for light, hue, burn, etc. for that particular layer. Generally set at NORMAL;
 - b. A box labeled OPACITY immediately to the right. This defines how "opaque" your layer is (i.e., different levels of transparency). If you click 100% means the layer is at full opacity. 25% means it's only 25% opacity (i.e., it's 75% transparent).

c. The actual LAYER itself. A mini picture of that layer's contents is shown, as well as the name of the layer (typically LAYER 1, 2, 3, etc.) If you have more than one layer, the layer you are actually working on is color highlighted. There is an eyeball icon next to the layer which shows whether the layer is visible in the picture or not. (If you click on the eyeball, the layer disappears ... click again, it appears).

d. Here's the important stuff for our purposes: At the very bottom right of the layers palette you will see 3 small icons, a square with a circle inside of it which is the shortcut to ADD LAYER MASK, next to that is a small square with what looks like a corner pulled up slightly which is the shortcut to ADD A NEW LAYER, and last is a tiny trashcan to which you can drag a layer to shortcut DELETE it.

4. Highlight the layer you want to work with.

5. CLICK on the LAYER MASK icon (described in step 3d above).

a. If LAYER MASK is grayed out: Here's the tricky part. If your picture only has single layer labeled "background" the LAYER MASK ICON will typically be grayed out a bit and you cannot select it.

b. The way I work around this (and there are probably other ways) is I first click the NEW LAYER ICON (described in step 3d above). This adds a new layer that will be your new background and should be completely transparent.

c. Now highlight your original layer you want to work with and using your mouse pointed drag it down to the NEW LAYER icon. (This is a quick way to duplicate your layer).

d. Now you should have the following layers: at the bottom is your original "background" layer, then a transparent "layer 1" and finally on top should be "layer 2" which is the duplicate layer of your picture.

e. Simply click the eyeball icon to the left of your original "background" layer and it will be invisible (or you can actually delete this layer, your choice).

f. Now you are ready to start working with the MASK. Highlight the layer you want to work on and click the **ADD LAYER MASK**.

6. Now in your layer box you should have the original picture of what your layer looks like, as well as a white box, which is called your LAYER MASK. The layer mask palette is black and white and does exactly what the name implies ... it MASKS part of your picture so it cannot be seen. Anything showing WHITE on the layer mask will be completely visible. Anything painted BLACK on the layer mask will become invisible on the picture. We are going to paint the background black so it disappears and leave the foreground white so only that will be viewable. (Warning: If you click on the small picture of your layer, anything you paint will be added to the actual CANVAS, so don't do that. Make sure to click on the white box so you are painting the layer mask.)

7. Now select the paintbrush and brush size of your choice and paint away that background. (Another quick tip, if you have a lot of background, use the shift+lasso tool and outline your selection, then select inverse under the select menu at the top of your screen and then simply dump the black fill bucket on that part of the picture you want made invisible. If you make a mistake and accidentally take off too much of the foreground, simply switch your paint color to white and repaint it. It will reappear.

8. Last hint: Be sure to always use the PAINTBRUSH or bucket option on your layer mask, not the eraser tool. If you actually ERASE your image you can't use the white paint to get it back. Also, if you need to do work on the actual artwork, then remember to click on the small picture in the layer, NOT the white box, or your work will only appear on the mask and won't work as you expect!

MOORPARK COLLEGE CAREER SERVICES CENTER New Internship Opportunities

Work as an intern in Dr. Laura's new TV Show! Students will assist in all areas of TV production including research, talent, script departments; control booth and viewer services, and with producers. It will be treated as a real job in TV! Students must be enthusiastic and hard-working, and be enrolled for school credit. This is an unpaid internship. For more info, come to Campus Center, 805-378-1538.

CD-R in Win2K

submitted by Dennis Atherton

Question: My boss has a Sony CD-RW in his system. He had been running in Win2k for about a week before we noticed he could not write to his CD-R. We made the mistake of loading the Adaptec crud that came with the system. It corrupted his kernel, and he ended up having to wipe and spend the day re-installing everything (tons of development stuff). We went to the Adaptec site and read/downloaded what Windows 2000 stuff we could find. Once again, he is stuck with a corrupt kernel.

Has anyone ever successfully recovered from this kind of disaster? (He really does not have a second day to waste!) Does anyone else make software available for the Sony CD-RW drive? Adaptec's 'don't even think of calling us to ask if you're running Windows 2000' attitude is intolerable! TIA!

Answer: Greetings from Adaptec,

At present, Windows 2000 is supported only by Easy CD Creator version 4.02x and Direct CD version 3.01x. Is your W2K OS an upgrade from NT or Windows 98 or is it a full version install? We recommend using the Easy CD Creator Deluxe 4.02 on a full version install of Windows 2000 Professional, rather than the Server or Advanced Server version. The beta versions of Windows 2000 are not supported. Also, when you are using Windows 2000, make sure you are logged on as the Administrator, not as a User with administrator rights. We suggest that you uninstall all the Adaptec software on your system. Then rename the file CDR4VSD.SYS to .old.

Next, we recommend that you reinstall ONLY Easy CD Creator. Then upgrade Easy CD Creator to version 4.02. You can find this update at <http://www.adaptec.com/support/files/cdrupdates.html>. You will want to apply the file: "english402dlx.exe". Then, regarding Direct CD, simply download and apply "dcd_301_up.exe". You do not need to install Direct CD from the Adaptec CD. This download will install the correct full version of Direct CD as well as check to be sure that you have Easy CD Creator installed on your system.

Finally, there is yet another update that became available. However it is important that your versions of Easy CD Creator and Direct CD be at a specific number in order for this patch to function properly.

You should currently be running Easy CD Creator version 4.02 and Direct CD version 3.01. Once you are running the versions recommended above, you can apply the latest update. The 4.02c update patch has been posted to the web site at: <http://www.adaptec.com/support/advisor/cdrupdates/ecdc402dcd301recupd.html>.

Select "Easy CD Creator" and then select "Version 4.02". The file name you will want to download is "ecdc402-dcd301_upv402c.exe" You can also read about the bug fixes in this patch.

If you would like to be automatically notified when we release a patch, or upgrade, please subscribe to our newsletter at <http://www.cdrcentral.com/>

DSL Connection Info

submitted by Dennis Atherton

DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) is a "Leased Line". That means you have a CIR (Committed Information Rate), a set bandwidth, that is yours and yours ALONE. You get this at a higher cost however. The cheapest being a service commonly referred to as DSL-Lite. For roughly \$39/month, you get: 384/mbps downloading, 128/mbps uploading.

At \$49/month ADSL is a pretty good deal for 1500 down / 684 up. You must be close to your POP. You usually see those speeds at a price of \$89.

"How far" you are from the CO/DSLAM unfortunately isn't known until a wire is pulled. The locator services at places like www.dslreports.com just calculate a map distance that will almost always be less than the actual wire distance. The underestimation can be as great as 100%. Just recently provisioned DSL for a site that was 10K feet map distance — the wire distance was 15,200 feet and fell outside the distance that Covad (in this instance) would support. The pricing differences are in many cases due to the fact that Company A is providing 640K ADSL and Company B is providing 640K RADSL. The former is closer to the concept of CIR, while the rate-adaptive variant is a YMMV maximum — the key phrase is "...UP TO to yada Kbps"

Try <http://www.2wire.com>. It will tell you exactly how far you are away from the switch. Also give you providers who cover your area.

Here's another great website for folks interested in DSL: <http://www.dslreports.com>. Lots of consumer input, equipment reviews, etc.

Need Help?

Dennis Atherton

hardware - any, networking , WIN95 setups
dennis_atherton@yahoo.com 7-11 evenings

Steve Carter

OS/2 - scarter@vcnet.com 805-598-8455 til 9 pm

Barbara Cott desktop publishing, Excel, Photoshop, web pages
bobbie@wgn.net 805-581-2495 weekends

Howard Engel

Word 6, programming in PASCAL or ADA
engelh@gte.net 805-523-7602 9 am - 10 pm

Will Fiske

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after 6 pm

Roger Freeman

online researching

update1@ez2.net 805-579-8426 before 10

Spencer Hartman Digital Research DOS 6, Novell DOS 7.0 WordPerfect 6.1 for DOS, batch files
805-522-7212 if no answer, lv msg 10 am - 10 pm

Gordon Huff modems, Telix, FDISK

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Lucy Lediaev Basic Windows & Office, Basic HTML & graphics concepts

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Dee Tillman

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Gaylord Trubey

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Dick Uhlman

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805-583-2174 & 805-583-2804 5pm - 8pm

Karleen Volz

BASIC questions, DOS WIN 3.11, WIN 95 WIN NT,
basic hardware questions

kvolz@juno.com 7pm - 9:30pm & weekends

Simi Valley Computer User Group is a non-profit special interest group for the benefit of anyone interested in learning more about computers and how to use them. Meetings are held twice a month. The General Meeting meets at 7:30 pm on the second Thursday of each month, the Hardware / Software Meeting is held at the same time on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The meetings are held at the Simi Valley Public Library, in the Community Room.

If you need further information about the meetings, call Barbara Cott at 805-581-2495. Further information can be found at www.svcug.org or send email to info@svcug.org. Visitors are welcome to come and see what our group is all about without obligation to join. However, if you find our meetings to be beneficial to you, we hope you will join and support our group. Dues are \$24 per year or \$13 for 6 months.

It has to say this: Simi Valley Computer User Group (SVCUG), consisting of its officers and membership, is not affiliated with any computer hardware or software manufacturers. Articles contained in this publication may not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of SVCUG. SVCUG makes no warranty of the suitability or inability to use any product or service.

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Small member ads are free.

(business card size)

1/4 page - \$25/mo

1/2 page - \$50/month

full page - \$100/month.

Send your camera ready art to Editor at

bobbie@wgn.net.

Membership Rates

\$24/year or \$13/6 months.

Includes user group pricing, expert computer

Q&A, newsletter (mailed/online),

BBS, email address, raffle.

For membership information,

email Howard Engel, Treasurer

engelh@gte.net

Local Computer User Groups

Appleholics Anonymous

Chuck Baca 805-650-7503
Tony Pizza 805-482-3453
2nd Sat 9:30 am
3169 Telegraph Road. Ventura

Conejo Valley Genealogical Society

Albert Richardson, Chairman (NEW)
(805) 492-2029
bf140@gte.net

CVMUG (Mac club)

Susie Herrera 805-484-2259
sherrera@vcnet.com
General Meeting: 1st Thursday, 7 pm
Novice SIG: 4th Monday
Internet SIG: Quarterly
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Camarillo

Commodore 64/128 Users

Loyd Couch: 805-483-9200
BBS: 805-382-1125
General Meetings: 1st Sat., 10 am
Cal Fed Bank, 430 Arneill Road, Camarillo
Tech Meeting: 2nd Sat, 10 am
Boys-Girls Club, 126 E. 7th Street, Oxnard

Channel Islands PC Group

Toby Scott, 805-981-1212
Website: www.cipcug.org
General Meeting: 1st Sat, 9 am Camarillo Airport
OS/2 Corner: 2nd Sat, 9:30 am

Gold Coast CUE of Ventura County

Tim Rainville, 805-525-3873 rainvilt@vcss.k12.ca.us
Days vary, 4 pm
Camarillo area or local school

Leisure Village Club

Neil Iven, 805-383-0016 niven1@juno.com
1st Friday, 10am Camarillo
1st Monday, MAC group
2nd Friday, Communications
3rd Wednesday, Novice

Simi Conejo Linux User Group

Website: Valleywww.psilord.com/sclug
Meets every other Saturday at 6 pm at
Nortel, 4100 Guardian Street, Simi

MacValley Users Group

Daphne Gruberman (818) 998-7025
1st Wednesday
Wilkinson Senior Center
8956 Vanalden Street
Northridge

Simi Valley Computer User Group

Barbara Cott 805-581-2495 bobbie@wgn.net
Website: www.svcug.org
Main meeting: 2nd Thurs 7:30 pm
Hardware/Software Meeting: 4th Wed, 7:30 pm
Simi Valley Library

Thousand Oaks

Personal Computer Club

Harry Isaman 805-405-8323
Website: www.vcnet.com/topcc/
4th Thurs: 6:30pm Jan-Oct
3rd Thurs: 6:30 Nov-Dec
Goebbel Sr Ctr or T.O. Library

TUGNET

Website: www.tugnet.org
meets every Tues, 7pm
Granada Pavilion
11128 Balboa.
Granada Hills.

Ventura Beginners PC Users' Group

Howard Wilson
805-647-0360
3rd Sat, 10 am
Club House
BenaVentura Mobile Home Estate
11407 Darling Road

Ventura

Windows Publisher User Group

Bob Tracy 482-7092
bobtracy@vcnet.com
3rd Tuesdays, 7 pm
Cal Fed Bank Bldg
430 Arneill Road
Camarillo

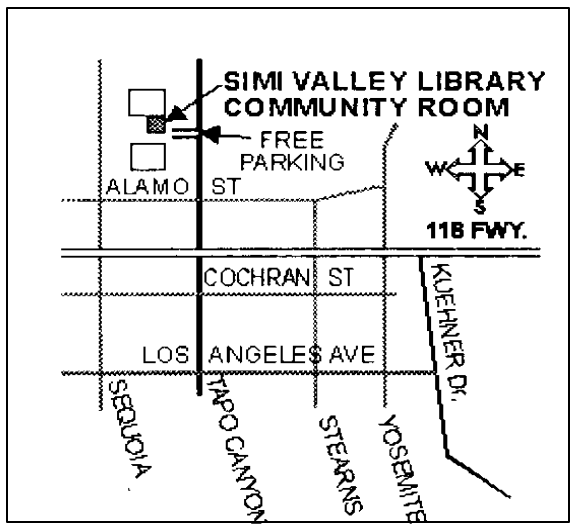


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Simi Valley Computer User Group

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Meetings

Thursday, August 10th
Pac Bell's
Web Browsing Phones

Wednesday, August 23rd
Napster &
Free Internet Connections