

NEWSbits

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Cover Page
Upcoming Events

Page 1
* Irfanview - A Graphics Wonder
* Potpourri Meeting on February 18

Pages 2, 4, 6, 8
Article: CES

Page 3
*President's Corner

Page 4, 9
*Aphomism

Page 5/10
*Kim Komando—is It Harassment or Spam?

Page 7
*Genealogy 2010—Coming Soon: 1940 Census
* Sony DVDirect VRD-MC6

Page 8
Dummies Support

Page 9
*Article: D-Link Home Network Camera

Page 11
*CCUG-PC's Help Desk
*Meeting Pics

Page 12
*Chuckles Cartoon
*Websites of Month
*NewsFlash

Celebrated our 21st Anniversary!
1990-2011

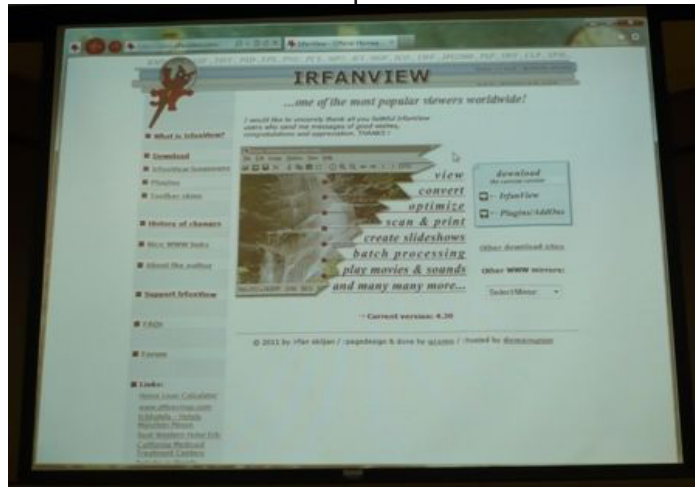


CCUG-PC Banner

Irfanview - A Graphics Wonder!

By Sue Wessing

The fourth and final CCUG-PC Quarterly General Meeting for 2011 noticeably was missing our president, Jerry Montalbano, who had a family commitment out of town. Sue Wessing showed a freeware graphics editing software Irfanview which can be downloaded at www.irfanview.com. The program enables photo editing, as well as taking clips of information from the Internet and cropping them easily without a large learning curve in the larger, sometime costly programs. Resizing, removing red eye in photos, straightening crooked photos, correcting color errors, gamma settings, brightness and contrast are only some of the easy to use features. Photos can be turned into a slide show easily also. The program also easily edits out unwanted sectors of photos such as dates and images. There are many plug-ins to the program available which enable more features, which see at <http://www.irfanview.com/plugins.htm>.



Supporting Our Troops



A popular Q & A session followed with members asking questions about Internet access programs such as ATT Universe and cable access. Harry Cancienne, Ray Paternostro and Sue Wessing fielded questions from the members.

Many prizes were awarded to the members. The following were winners:

Jim and Alice Diggs, Virginia McElroy, Mary and Harry Cancienne, Sue Wessing, Nita Conner, Lance, Elwood, Margaret Wynn, and grand prize

winner of the Microsoft Windows 7 "Inside Out" text book is Priscilla Scott. Congratulations to each prize winner.

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday, February 18th at 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM, so we hope to see you then.



Coming February 18 PotPourri

RoundTable

Join the CCUG-PC guys and gals this Saturday, February 18th at 10:30 AM when we present the ever-popular *CCUG-PC PotPourri Session*.

Discussions, discoveries and decisions—whatever shall we discuss? Well, everyone can be part of the group's popular "users helping users mission!"

Also, a "quick-look" demo is possible. Think "voice" control over typing.

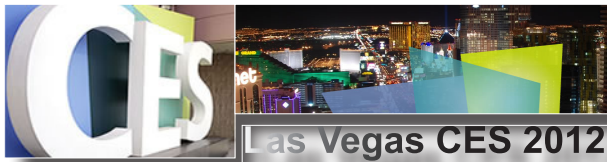
Where we meet . . .



St. Tammany Public Library (Slidell)

555 Robert Blvd. - (985-646-6470)

CCUG-PC will meet quarterly in Slidell for our general meeting events from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Meetings are open to the public and everyone is invited to participate. C'Ya!



Las Vegas – cheaper tablets, thinner laptops an array of SlickEdit TVs stood out at this year’s international consumer electronics show in Las Vegas.

More than 140,000 people gathered there recently for an event that’s growing despite the absence of Apple and most recently the decision by Microsoft to make this the last year participates.

Aside from the glitter which included Kelly Clarkson, 50 Cent, Will. I. Am, some very significant gadgets highlighted the show at CES. They included hundreds of manufacturers’ laptops, phone makers, Ultrabooks, LCD TV displays, a slew of digital cameras, computers, and other marvelous electronic toys.

Tablet Designs and Features

A wide array of dual and quad-core tablets debuted at this year’s CES. Many are “me too” Android devices, offering nice displays, good connectivity options, and hours of battery life—so let the pricing wars begin in that group. But there are a few that pushed the state of the art. The three biggest shifts from last year are the announcement of many systems with quad—core ARM CPUs, 4G connectivity, and Android 4 operating systems. These enhancements are important, but have little to do with designs of the device makers.

Sizes have settled in at roughly 5 inches for tiny tablets; about 7.5 to 8.5 inches for the mid size versions; and 10 inches for the full sized tablets. Stunning AMOLED displays are making their way to the smaller tablets--which makes them brilliantly clear and bright. They’re easy on the eyes for reading, even at the smaller size, and perfect for watching personal video.

Polymer batteries and the low power consumption of those power-sipping AMOLED displays make 8 or more hours of run time routine. In many cases, the differences are measured in a few ounces or a few millimeters. But some device makers are making strides in usability, including more options for attached and detached keyboards, and ruggedized designs that will work in environments where shocks and moisture might otherwise bring a quick end to handheld’s life.

At CES, there also was a lot of voice interactivity attempts. It may have just been the noise of the show floor, but these didn’t seem to be on par with Siri. One innovation that’s a negative: Some tablets offer a no-glasses 3-D

viewing experience. Some of these gadgets, and for the most part, resembled the plastic lens holograms available (you know the ones where if you look at it one way, you see the Empire State building, and if you hold it another you see the Statue of Liberty). The technology will have to go through a few iterations before it has the wow factor of 3-D produced with the aid of glasses.

Next, exhibited were some nice looking tablets from unknown brands. It looks like there may be as many “whitebox” tablet makers as there are whitebox PC makers.



Lenovo had a number of tablets to show, but the most impressive one was the IdeaTab S210. The CPU is a 1.5 GHz Qualcomm “Krait”, appears similar to the A15, and a successor to Qualcomm’s Scorpion architecture. The tablet runs Android 4.0, and has a battery life of 20 hours

in its clamshell configuration.

Fujitsu Android Tablet

The days of showing off electronic prototypes shoved into generic boxes are gone from the Consumer Electronic Show. The CES: Unveiled show provides press and analysts a

CES—continues on Page 4)



Great Magazines for novices, intermediate and advanced users. Smart Computing, PCToday (mobile) and CPU (advanced) magazines can keep users ahead of the technology game.

Want to know more? Log onto:

<http://tinyurl.com/28sjynn> (user groups) or smart-computing.com for more info about or subscription to these great magazines.



(Editor: It could be the second best choice to a user group membership)!





PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hi, CCUG-PC Members!

There's been an astounding "shift" with the cost increase of blank DVD's as a storage choice. In the past six months or more, I've seen the price doubled both online and in popular electronic outlets.

For example, not so distance in the past, a set of 100 for example (DVD-R/DVD+R) was going from price-ranges of \$17.99-\$19.99 always on sale at places like Office Depot and Office Max. Now, if you've been checking the papers the ads/sales have stopped and the prices are upwards of \$35-\$39 and more! So what can we infer from the cost escalating?

Although we can speculate that Hollywood's DVD roller-coaster is not quite bent on losing its DVD choice (especially as we can see Blu-Ray/HD overtaking the DVD's in popularity), other avenues are being examined. For instance, look at online downloads (legal, that is). Every online virtual store is getting into the electronic business of providing movies, audio, and other multi-media choices (Sales/Rentals/Viewing). Take *Amazon, Wal-Mart, BlockBuster, NetFlix, Redbox, CinemaNow, BigStar, eMol*, for example. To those who want to rent movies or buy them, the industry is hoping consumers stay away from less than legal usage of DVD's. Can we surmise that low cost (such as Redbox at \$1 rentals online/storewide) will discourage demand and thus a paradyn shift of sorts away from DVDs or the need to fill DVDs with YouTube captures, I-downloads and other

ARTICLE CONTRIBUTIONS

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huge videos which can fill discs quickly? Who is to know corporate thinking, but one thing for certain, it can't be demand that's the reason for a huge spike in the cost of DVD-R/+R storage.

While CD's are not as troubling in sales to consumers, it appears other reasons can be understood for escalation. While DVD+R DL (9.4GB dual-layer) discs never really caught on with consumer "blank discs" for the burner, they remained pricey and never really became commonplace as the single-layer 4.7GB discs. Now that the 4.7 is rising without demand (either folks are not enthralled in paying over double within months or shifting storage elsewhere), it's hard to foot the blame on "supply vs. demand economic model" theory. Simply speaking it appears discs are being priced away from consumers to substitute other storage capacity items; perhaps lower-cost flash-drives and hard drives/external drives, high-capacity solid-state drives and more?

Can these types of drives guarantee more long-term permanent storage while failure means complete loss of data and recordings and our cherished home-movies? Is the hardware still dictating what we're doing with the software/media, or is it the other way around? I can recall software, for example, hitting the stores while there were not yet video cards, memory, motherboards, etc. to be able to accommodate the new features supported by the software.

Finally, "players" are overtaking any "burners" for the TV (cheap DVD-players for under \$30) and Blu-Ray only as players and the shift in computers supporting Blu-Ray or set-top TV DVD players away from "burners" with the appearance of the converter DVR (cable/satellite) boxes. Imagine the once popular VCR recorder allowing us to record favorite shows, replaced by DVD-burners, replaced by DVR's and fewer personal long-term burners in the short-term. Whew!

Jerry Montalbano

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NOTICE!



Upcoming Date to Remember

**Saturday,
May 12, 2012**

**Meeting place: Slidell,
St. Tammany Public
Library**

chance to preview some of the newly announced products in a space that's a little more intimate than the Las Vegas Convention Center. The one constant across the gear we saw was an unparalleled attention to design along with (mostly) good utility.

True to form for CES were products that ranged from gear bags to high tech thermostats—complete with speakers, and everything in-between. The other trend that dominated/unveiled was either compatibility with or dependence on Apple technology. Many of the products were solely designed compatibility iProducts.

One other notable trend, products introduced here weren't particularly cheap. It's expected that trend will continue when the main show kicks into gear on Tuesday.

Thinking you'd like to move to Android tablets for your industrial application, but worried about a less than friendly environment? Fujitsu may have the answer. This 10.1" quad core tablet runs Android 3.2 weighs in at 597 grams and is water resistant. The tablet could be used by delivery drivers or others who need a tablet that can take a little abuse.



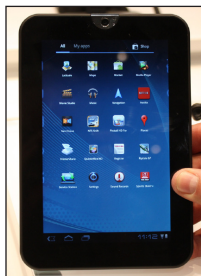
These tablets might also be just the ticket for teenagers and others who are hard on their toys. Fujitsu also includes a hand gesture recognition system that allows device operation without you actually touching the tablet.

These tablets might also be just the ticket for teenagers and others who are hard on their toys. Fujitsu also includes a hand gesture recognition system that allows device operation without you actually touching the tablet.

Toshiba

Toshiba had another waterproof tablet on display, similar to the Fujitsu Arrows that was seen at CES Unveiled. Like the Arrows, Toshiba's H2O-Proof tablet is safe up to a meter under water for half an hour. Unique from Fujitsu's slate, Toshiba demonstrated a proof-of-concept wireless power technology. With an antenna roughly the size of the tablet itself, Toshiba powered the device through about two inches of glass and water.

Toshiba Thinks Pocket-Size



If you're looking for a smaller tablet, the Toshiba Thrive 7 may be the answer. Released just before Christmas, the Thrive has a sharp 1280 x 800 display and case that's easier to hold than the brushed aluminum versions. It weighs in at .8 pounds and runs a dual-core chip.

(CES, continues on page 6)

Tips Help Stem Flow of E-Mail into Inbox

E-mail can be a useful tool, but the sheer volume can be overwhelming. This year around 349 billion e-mails will be sent worldwide, according to market research from Radicati group Inc.

That total is expected to grow to 507 billion by 2013. Here is how to stem the flow to your inbox:

- Be careful about **giving out your e-mail address**. When you fill out a form, subscribe to a magazine or enter a drawing, consider whether to provide your e-mail address. Some online "three giveaway" promotions are designed to harvest e-mail addresses for marketing lists.
- **Use a spam filter**. Many e-mail providers – including Gmail – come would built – in protections against unwanted advertising messages. If yours doesn't, you can buy third – party software. Based if you're getting spam on your work e-mail, ask your IT department for help
- Think carefully **before hitting "reply to all."** This option is a "a huge source of e-mail overload in almost every org organization," said Jonathan B. Spira, author of "Overload: How Too Much Information Is Hazardous to Your Organization." The more people you e-mail, the more e-mails you'll get back.
- **Unsubscribe**. Sure, it might have made sense at one time to sign up for the e-mail newsletter put your name on a certain mailing list. But you still reading those e-mails? If not, find the unsubscribe link, usually at the bottom of the message. Alternatively, Unsubscribe. Com offers a plug-in tool to help you get off lists.
- **Talk**. A phone call – or simply walking down the hall to the person's desk – can often be quicker and more effective than exchanging multiple e-mails.



Happy Mardi Gras from
CCUG-PC to you and yours!



Is it harassment or spam?

by Kim Komando

You know what it's like to feel harassed. There's someone who just won't leave you alone. It seems like they're always there with a snide comment or mean statement.

It can happen online too, through e-mail or social networks. You receive irritating messages repeatedly. When you send a reply asking the sender to stop, you begin to receive more e-mail.

Harassment is illegal, and there are steps you can take to make it stop. But how can you know if the behavior that is irritating you is technically harassment?

When it comes to electronic messages, the first question is to determine the origination of the e-mail. If it is harassment, there's a person at the other end who engages in bullying and possibly threatening behavior.

In many cases, what you're really dealing with is automated spam. Spam e-mails are most likely coming from one or more infected robot computers around the world. To make matters worse, when you respond to spam e-mail, you verify to the spam-bot that your e-mail account is active. That's why you start receiving even more spam. Frustrating, isn't it?

Spam e-mail has been a problem since the dawn of the Internet, and it only seems to get worse. Some security experts estimate that as much as 90 percent of the world's e-mail is spam.

First, report your problem to the abuse desk at your Internet Service Provider (ISP). Forward copies of the spam with the full e-mail headers. The header will provide the information they need to determine exactly where the spam is originating. Make it clear in the subject line that you're complaining about spam. This puts the ISP's spam-control experts in gear, and they start tweaking the service's anti-spam filters. That helps everyone.

Some of the offending e-mail may be coming from addresses of friends and family. This happens when a virus takes over their e-mail account. Contact them via another method

(phone, another e-mail account, in person) and tell them which account is affected. Instruct them to change their e-mail password and run a virus scan.

The Federal Trade Commission maintains a database of deceptive and junk e-mail. It does use the database to pursue law enforcement actions against the biggest spammers.

Send copies of the spam e-mail you've received to spam@uce.gov. Visit <http://www.ftc.gov> and fill out the online complaint form. This informs the FTC that the spammer hasn't honored your "remove me" requests.

To block unwanted junk e-mail, turn on your e-mail service's spam filter. Most services have decent spam fil-



ters these days. You may also choose to install a third-party Bayesian-style filter. These are filters that you "train" by teaching them what is good and what is bad. Bayesian filters are usually more effective than rules-based filters, which have a tendency to also block legitimate e-mail.

If you try all this and still can't block the spam, the only effective solution is to close the e-mail account and start over. Once you do successfully block a spammer or start over, be sure to take steps to protect your e-mail account so it won't happen again. Be careful about giving out your e-mail on websites. Spammers harvest public information to acquire many of their addresses.

I suggest setting up one or two disposable addresses that forward e-mail to your permanent account. Use these for the times that you do have to give out your e-mail address. If a disposable account starts filling up with spam, you can close it without affecting your permanent account. Your e-mail provider may even support e-mail aliases for this purpose.

That's my advice for controlling spam. But what if one or more individuals are actually personally harassing you?

As always, if you are being physically threatened, don't hesitate to call the police. If there is no immediate danger but the behavior is interfering with your life, you can get restraining orders or other legal protections. Don't hesitate to pursue these remedies.

(Spam - Komando, continues on page 10)

Aphomism:

Do you realize that in about 40 years,

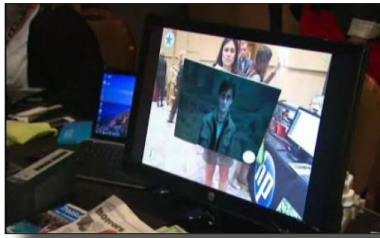


we'll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos? *(And rap music will be the Golden Oldies!)*



(CES, continued from page 4)

Aurasma starts as an app that runs on an iPhone (it also runs on Android; ironically, it doesn't run on webOS). Point the phone camera at a real-world image or object and Aurasma understands the context of the image and pulls up an accompanying video from its database of



over 500,000 videos. For example, a movie advertisement in a newspaper might elicit a movie trailer; a piece of art might conjure a video of the artist talking about it. Point it at a product, and a self-

help video might emerge (Aurasma showed a video demonstrating how to connect an HP ProCurve router). Point the camera at a building (or an image of a building) and get a visual tour. Users can also upload their own content from the application--images tagged to video.

OLE, OLED!

Samsung and LG have both released new OLED televisions. Of course, since LG released OLED, Samsung has released/announced "Super OLED". That's super better than plain-old OLED, we suppose. The OLED TV will be produced from a single pane of glass and uses Samsung's Super OLED technology to deliver the ultimate in picture quality and thinness. And it is super thin - just around 1/4" thin at it's smallest point. In all seriousness, there is an element to the "Super" designation in Super OLED. Samsung's version has apparently eliminated the need for a color filter as the OLED pixel unit comprises self-emitting RGB sub-pixels laid directly on the display panel.

Of course, the Samsung Super OLED TV is already a Best of Innovations Award Honoree at CES 2012, and why not - the new OLED TV marks the culmination of Samsung's latest engineering technologies, and may just usher in a new era of minimalistic design. While Samsung claims "unmatched vivid and true-to-life picture quality" and "significantly improved color accuracy" compared to conventional LED TVs, the more likely reality is that OLED is almost

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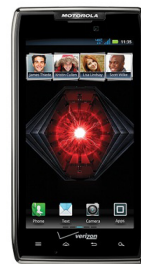
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"hyper-real" in its ability to portray more (and brighter) colors than LCD technology. Since light output on the Super OLED is controlled on a pixel-to-pixel basis, the truest blacks and purest whites can be achieved—in a way that is very similar to the way plasma works.

Of equally-important note, OLED (Samsung's flavor or any other) offers faster response times than LED, virtually eliminating motion blur even in the fastest-moving scenes. And, because Super OLED technology features self-emitting RGB sub-pixels which do not require a backlight, the TV weighs significantly less than even an LED backlit TV. The Samsung Super OLED display looks incredible—on or off. In fact, when powered on, the bright, vibrant picture illuminates the screen from edge to edge. But when turned off, the TV looks like a thinly-framed piece of luxurious floating glass. OLED TVs are going to be very popular on decorating television shows—not to mention actual upscale home decorators. When wall-hung, an OLED set more closely resembles a work of art than an electronic device.

Motorola DROID RAZR



Motorola has some fine phones spread over all the carriers, but one of the best is the DROID RAZR for Verizon. This is an excellent Android phone with a large display in a slim and lightweight case that makes it easy to slip into a pocket. At 1780 mAh capacity, the DROID RAZR even has one of the larger batteries in any cell phone. However, Motorola and Verizon Wireless just announced a new version of the DROID

RAZR that blows the original version's battery capacity out of the cell phone sea.

Would you believe that the new Motorola DROID RAZR Maxx will have a 3300 mAh battery? Not only is that completely astonishing, it is nearly twice the capacity of the battery in any other cell phone. The Samsung Vibrant for T-Mobile had a 1500 mAh battery, which was upgraded to a 1650 mAh battery for the Samsung Galaxy S 4G that launched about a year ago. I considered that a pretty nice upgrade, and have found the battery life of the Galaxy S 4G to be better than average. And that battery capacity is doubled in the new Motorola DROID RAZR Maxx.

Toshiba Portégé Z835

Get the chance to look at the Toshiba Portégé Z835 as well as the company's 14-inch ultrabook design. Both were ex-

(CES—Continues on Page 8)

Genealogy Bits & Bytes



by Sue Wessing
St. Bernard
Genealogical
Society, Inc.

Coming Soon – 1940 Census!

The United States censuses have been a valuable tool to genealogists! The U.S. government has been taking censuses since 1790. Every ten years enumerators go out to interview neighborhoods to get a count of people and where they are living. There are mistakes, but by comparing to other years and other records you can get much information on each person or family. Later years include their addresses. Occupation, family members, education, marriages, parents' birth location and languages spoken are included in many. Ancestry.com has a page where you can download free census forms so that you can read the column headings to better decipher them when you find originals. <http://www.ancestry.com/charts/census.aspx>

The U.S. government releases the census to the public exactly 72 years after it was taken. Currently the 1930 is the most recent one available. Most of the censuses are indexed now but the 1940 census is not indexed yet. Our organization was approached to do indexing by FamilySearch.org (free database by the Latter Day Saints organization). Ancestry.com will be indexing the census also, as well as many other organizations. More information can be obtained at the website: <http://www.1940census.net/>

St Bernard Genealogical Society, Inc. held its latest meeting on January 21st at the Slidell Library. An open Q & A session was held with members asking where to look next for their research. As always some computer related matters were discussed, from where to obtain online repair information on printers to the differences from HP Laser Jet and HP inkjet/Deskjet printers. (There is a difference!)

Most companies have websites for their equipment. www.google.com is the favorite search engine of this writer, you can find just about everything there. For genealogy type



in your ancestor's name (in quotes) and see what you come up with! Try adding the word genealogy to your query. Google books (look under the More tab at the top of the page) was

mentioned in the meeting as a source of many older, out of print publications containing genealo-

gy or information on where your ancestors lived. <http://books.google.com/bkshp?hl=en&tab=wp>

Google also has translating abilities for those researching in old records. Happy hunting!

For upcoming meetings and speaker - check our website www.ccugpc.org/sbgs/sbgs.htm for our schedule coming soon in 2012.



Suzanne Doole Wessing, President of
St. Bernard Genealogical Society, Inc.

E-mail: suewessing@gmail.com



Sony DVDirect VRD-MC6



Analog technologies have moving to digital for years--it's a fact. Further, you're probably in anxiety knowing that your entire VHS collection will be dissipating over the course of time.

There are solutions around that can help you get around the fear of VHS fades. (and honestly, technology falls in segments such as records, tapes, VCR diskettes, and at some point, DVD's). But digressing, a capture card installation and converting to digital format from mylar tapes is complex to many.

An alternative is the Sony DVDirect VRD-MC6 external USB, 16x, dual-layer (and less for the VRD-MC5 model being reduced currently) which is perhaps one of the easiest way to convert your beloved VHS collection, camcorder videos, and digital camera photos into DVD format, with one click of a button (is it just that easy?). Although the VRD-MC6 has been around a short while, it's still functionable to the masses who still need the transference capability. One of the surprises is that it is done without using a PC, and amazingly, you can see what's being recorded on its 2.7-inch LCD screen. Award-winning, it is similar to its predecessor, the VRD-MC1 of 2006 (at a price of \$299), though this latest model is more advanced with technology industry support.

Many readers would be perplexed by what the DVDirect could do having first heard or even having not seen the device. It's quite indistinguishable and doesn't quite resemble any conventional external optical drive. It lays flatly, similar to a standalone DVD player. In fact, it might be mistaken for a portable DVD player with its 2.7-inch LCD screen situated in the center allowing you to preview video or up to 6 digital photos simultaneously. Sony has actually made the VRD-MC6's screen over half an inch bigger than the VRD-MC1's.

This makes it similar in size to the electronic viewfinders found in the back of point-and-shoot digital cameras—ex-

(DVDirect—Continues on Page 10)



(CES, continued from Page 6)

tremely lightweight, with attractive brushed aluminum exteriors. Unfortunately, their looks are deceiving. This slim form factor comes with a huge amount of flex on the screen and keyboard, giving the whole chassis a very cheap feel. Hopefully, this problem is addressed as manufacturers refine their designs.



Roccat's Kave 5.1 Headset

Roccat, maker of a cool Kone+ 6000dpi sensed mouse with "Easy-shift+" (with 22 programmable functions) and also the Isku gaming keyboard (\$89) with thumb-customizable tactile keys are great, but the Kave 5.1 Headset is equally as awesome and will retail at \$190. It features four 40mm drivers built into the headset. The Kave has vibration feedback capabilities, a mic muted LED indicator and a 10-



step headband adjustment strap. The headset felt comfortable while wearing with a strong a sturdy feel in the hand. One thing that's noted was that the ear muffs does not lay flat against one's chest when the headset was pulled off the head and worn around the neck. An in-line control box provides adjustment of each sound channel as well as a mute button and volume dial. Roccat expects that products should start popping up soon on Amazon, Newegg, TigerDirect and Best Buy with the full line-up online by this month or March (www.roccat.org/Products/). Price is not yet determined but world-wide about \$99 U.S.

Samsung Baby Monitor Camera


From watching the baby, to seeing who's at the front door, to monitoring properties when you're away, you can find tons of applications for internet-connected cameras. In business, the applications vary just as widely, from security to staff or facilities monitoring. Samsung's latest set of cameras, dubbed Wi-Fi IP SmartCam&trade, advance ease of use, offering one touch configuration. And at \$149, these cameras offer the sort of specs expected for WiFi capable cameras at an affordable price. The camera offers high-resolution video recording (640x480 / 30fps / H.264) and can record events in the dark through the use of non-visible infrared LEDs (up to 15 feet).



A baby monitor version (shown here), can easily be mounted on its swivel, or moved to wherever your child happens to be.

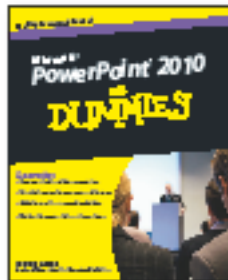
Untouched!

As you can surmise, we've hardly touched the surface of the thousands of products and services available at the latest CES 2012 show in Vegas because of newsletter space. Other great products included the *Samsung 13-15 in Series 9 AIO Ultraportables*, the *Go Pano Panoramic Cam*, the *Samsung Galaxy Note*, the *Gadmei E8-3D Tablet*, the *Galaxy Note hybrid phone-tablet*, *LACIE Thunderbold external Drive*, *Powerbag Power Tote*, *PowerTech Slim Receptacle*, and for the serious gamer, the *Playstation VITA!*

Finally as you know, they're all toys that we can't do without, yet to many of us, affordability may be a factor which could state: "What's shown in Vegas, stays in Vegas!—At least until we can buy them!" 

CCUG-PC now has Dummies Support!

From Windows to Word, PCs to PowerPoint, And everything in between, *Dummies* has a Book for all your computing needs *at 20% off!*



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D-Link Home Network Camera

By Elaine Pitre



I recently heard about a camera that you can home install and is viewable from your Smartphone. I will say this intrigued me, as my husband is disabled. As a caregiver, I thought this may be a good option for me to examine further.

I purchased the D-Link Wireless N Day/Night Home Network Camera (Model DCS-932L for \$80-\$100.00 at Office Depot.com/Office Depot). It is available at other stores and online as well (Best Buy/Amazon.com). The box states "Easy 3-step installation." Quite honestly, it was 1-2-3 with the step-by-step guide. Connect the included standard Ethernet cable to the network cable on the 932L and attach it to the router. The unit has a 5-meter (approximately 15 feet) illumination distance for viewing. The camera comes with built-in infrared LEDs that allow for continuous monitoring even in complete darkness.

Attach the power cord and connect to an electrical outlet. Power is confirmed when the green LED light is on. Next, insert the driver CD and follow instructions for connecting your computer and 932L for viewing and managing the camera.



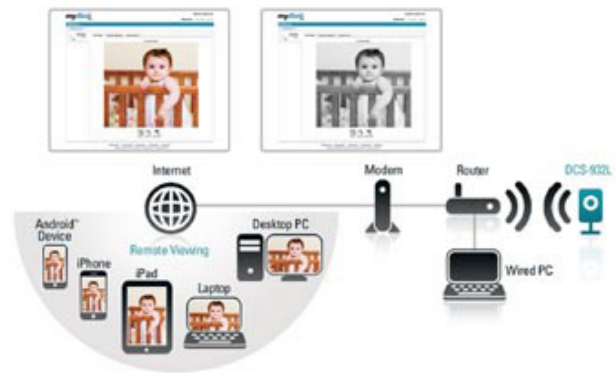
Once you have completed the installation process and the camera is working properly, it can be disconnected from the router. At this point, you can place your camera where you would like, as long as you have a power plug outlet.

The day/night viewing works very well. Although I thought this camera viewed in color, I soon determined that this one shows in black and white. I am guessing the lighting may not be enough in my home for color.

This model gives you e-mail alerts, motion detection, audio and night viewing. The only problem I encountered was setting up the e-mail alerts. I called D-Link several times for this problem. Their support system is very good, but be prepared to wait on the phone for 10-20 minutes. Sometimes they answer right away. I could never get my Hotmail account to connect and finally had to use Gmail. It then went right through without any issues.

The e-mail alerts are great if you are away from home and request to know if some unknown problem exists

in your home. I don't recommend leaving it on all the time, as it overloads your e-mail box with notifications.



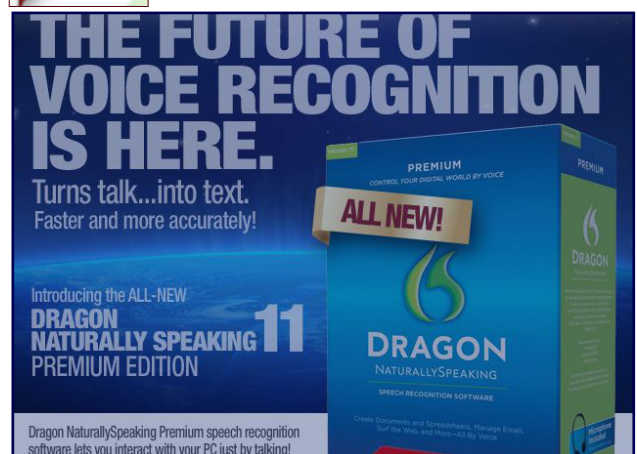
The DCS-932L is ready to be viewed over the Internet in just three simple steps

An app exists for the iPhone, iPad, tablets or Android wireless/3G devices. You can download the free mydlink app to your phone. Once done, you can view the area where the camera is installed at any time or anyplace that you might wish to open this app.

There are many reasons to purchase this camera; mine was to keep an eye on my husband. Others may want to see what their pets are doing, perhaps checking on the babysitter, housekeeper, as well as many other possible uses. All in all, I give this camera a thumbs up. It does what it claims it can do. **EP**



Upcoming Presentation . . .
Dragon Naturally Speaking
Voice Recognition software.



Mr. Grumpa

Aphorism:

"I've reached the age where the happy hour is a nap."



(Spam - Komando, continued from page 5)

In situations of e-mail cyber-bullying, you can control the electronic contact. Simply list the sender's e-mail address as junk mail. Some web-mail services allow you to block e-mail addresses directly. In this case, you won't even have to deal with disposing of the messages.

The same approach works on social networks. Facebook, for example, lets you block other users. Click the downward triangle in the upper-right portion of the screen and select Privacy Settings.

Go to the Block List section and click Manage Block Lists. Enter the name of the harassing individual and click Block. You'll never see them again.

Alternatively, simply click the gear menu in the top right side of the timeline you'd like to report. Choose the Report/Block option to report the account to Facebook.



(DVDirect-Sony, continued from page 7)

cept the quality of the DVDirect's screen, however, is much better and it's possible that Sony at some point may issue a screen twice as large, with LCD prices having dropped. The one-touch, big red button allows you to record photos or videos easily. The arrow keys help navigate the menu, which you can get to by pressing the Return button.

The VRD-MC6 is a fine tool for capturing video from a camcorder, indeed, but its strength lies in converting old VHS tapes into DVDs. You'll need a non-packaged, inexpensive A/V cable—either a red, white, and yellow or S-Video cable—to connect the DVDirect to your VCR/DVR. Pressing the Play button on your VCR, the VRD-MC6 will automatically stream video onto its own LCD screen. You can record or stop recording at any point during the feed. Also, an automatic timer can be set-up in the menu screen. The process is similar with a camcorder, though you will need to buy an additional cable (FireWire or USB) for data transfer.

This unit also supports high-definition camcorders such as the Sony HDR-HC3 HDV 1080i Handycam, which uses Sony's proprietary AVC HD format. It doesn't support other HD camcorder formats, though. You can record up to 95 minutes of HD video on a single DVD2 for playback on compatible Blu-ray Disc players and PlayStation 3 consoles as well. (One thing learned is that DVD media containing AVCHD <Hi-Def Blu-Ray AVC/H.264> footage should not be used with DVD players or recorders, as the DVD player/recorder may fail to eject the media and may erase its content without warning. DVD media containing AVCHD footage may be played on a compatible Blu-ray Disc player/recorder, PC with supplied software or Playstation 3 devices).

The selection menu has grown since the previous versions, so there are several things you can do to enhance the DVD experience. First, make sure you pick the right quality mode. You can choose from five quality recording modes (HP, HSP, SP, LP, SLP) that range in recording time from 1 hour in the HP (high-quality play) mode to 6 hours in SLP (super long play) mode. For maximizing DVD space without compromising video quality, I suggest using the SP mode (2 hours). Bear in mind, these times are for 4.7GB single-layer DVDs; the amount of content you can load doubles with 8.4GB dual-layer DVDs (or up to 12 hours of video).

Sony adds four basic title menus with different colors and styles that you can choose from, although you can't add transitions, special effects, or anything fancy. This is on-the-fly recording—you'll have to use professional video-editing tools on a PC for sophisticated tasks. Speaking of PCs, Sony removed the DVDirect's capability to connect to a PC and a USB printer, which it used in previous versions, so it's now a standalone device. That also means you can't use it as an external USB DVD burner for your PC. The lone USB port is for connecting USB camcorders only and supports USB DV/Video. As with previous versions, you can't connect this device to your TV because it lacks video output ports, and you can't play a DVD from, say, Blockbuster or Netflix on the LCD screen—not that you'd want to, anyway. However, it does have Audio support with Encoding by Dolby Digital (2 channel) & 5.1 Surround Sound.

The VRD-MC6 has three multimedia card slots that support Memory Stick/Pro & Duo, MS, SD, SDHD, xD, and CompactFlash formats. You can view your photos as thumbnails on the LCD screen, with up to six thumbnails per screen, or one at a time if you want larger images. You can then pick and choose which ones to burn onto a DVD, or just burn everything from the flash card. Granted, it does have a memory maximum size of 2000 photos. Creating a slide show that works with a DVD player and incorporates an MP3 musical track is as easy as clicking the selection on the menu. After the burn is done, you can preview the finished product on the LCD screen. One pet peeve from some is that the VRD-MC6 doesn't burn CD formats, so you'll have to use DVD media even if you want to burn only several photos.

Sony doesn't provide any specifications for the DVD drive used in the VRD-MC6 because you can't connect it to a PC anyway, so it's really only one 4x speed—which burns at a good clip. You might be able to dub 1 hour in 15 minutes or 2 hours' worth of camcorder footage, with a number of 5-10-15 minute chapters and a title menu, in 25 minutes. Burning 120 photos from an SD card, with slide show and music, takes roughly 10 minutes. There's even stop-timer recording. Additionally, you can save up to 2,000-2 Megapixel/MP digital photos on a single DVD as well as record them as slideshows or individual files and the MC6 will even "span" multiple DVDs as necessary. As stated earlier, it doesn't come with any cables as the previous versions did, and it doesn't bundle burning software like Nero 10.0

(DVDirect-Sony, concludes on page 12)

Q. I cannot get Windows 7 to read from or write to my Optical Drive. Help!

A. This problem can have a number of causes in Vista/Win7. The media in the drive may be corrupt, or you may be trying to write to a non-writeable disc. If the issue was just to write to it, the problem could be a full drive.



However, since it's both read and write issues here, firstly check the media, and restart your computer. If the problem continues, try the Microsoft Fixit program at http://support.microsoft.com/mats/cd_dvd_drive_problems, which can correct a number of problems automatically. If that fails, Microsoft offers additional tips on repairing optical drive problems at http://support.microsoft.com/mats/cd_dvd_drive_problems/.

Q. I'm interested in slideshow programs. I currently use the Windows Movie Maker that came bundled on my computer, but I'm looking for a program with more capabilities such as different transitions, ability to use music from a CD or my computer, more flexibility in titles with tile pages, credits and CD and/or DVD burning. There seem to be many to choose from, Which is the best?

A. Windows Movie Maker is designed primarily for simple video editing, and the program lacks some of the extended features you are asking for in a slide show program. One decent slideshow photo program is ProShow Gold 4.5 (www.photodex.com, \$70, free trial version available and a review). if you wish to compare various slideshow programs and features (<http://photo-slideshow-software-review.toptenreviews.com/proshow-review.html>).

With ProShow, you can use the program to create a virtual album for sharing pictures of trips, celebrations, special events and the like. Quite suitable for creating business presentations as well.

The program supports more than 70 file formats, and the slide shows can be created in a standard 4:3, wide-screen 16:9, or custom aspect ratios. The shows can include video

and/or audio clips, and the audio can be imported directly from your CDs. More than 230 transitions are provided, and transparency effects allow even more creativity. Multiple title formats are available as well as menu creation.

ProShow Gold 4.5 is a full-featured program that will require some learning-curve time for all but the simplest shows with its power and features, but it will be worth it when you wow your family and friends with your professional-grade productions.

Finally, if you like a web-base slideshow for your website, a good choice is *SlideShow Pro* (<http://slideshow-pro.net/>). With it, you can publish dynamic photos and video, as well as Flash-supported.

Q. I have a Digitrex DSC3000 digital camera and need more memory for it. Where can I get it?

A. The Apex Digitrex DSC3000 digital camera can use, in addition to its internal memory (8MB), although its expandable with SD/MMC type memory cards. These memory cards are available in capacities up to 32GB, allowing you to hold many thousands of pictures in your camera. However, it's a 5-7 yr. old camera and you've been closer to the low "GB's" like 4GB. You should be able to find the memory cards at local Best Buy, Circuit City, WalMart, photo stores and others. Bring your camera along to insure you get the correct type of card.



Meeting Pics

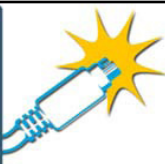


Garland Hilton (L) and **Joseph Tosh** study attentively and audience concentrate

Members (R) gathering useful Irfanview info include **"Mac"** and **Virginia McElroy (Center)**



Ray Paternostro illustrates to group pensively, while **Harry Cancienne** "marvels" and **Sue Wessing** continues her photography assignment



Yahoo Online & Facebook

Help from CCUG-PC



Any of you who haven't joined the CCUG-PC Yahoo and facebook Online Groups are doing yourself and your PC a disservice.

With all the things that are packed into a limited time frame for the monthly meetings we can't possibly answer all your questions fully or tell you: the latest news and virus alerts, software bugs and patches, scams, trojans, spyware, new technology, work-arounds, new software, great sites for pc resources, hardware and software bargains, the many MS bulletins that come out each month and more.

There's no time limit on our CCUG-PC Online Groups. We have many members from around the world who will take time needed to get your questions answered and your problems solved. You can post anything PC-related and if it needs a reply, check back at your convenience to see if anyone has your answer. This is an excellent free support community and you can do it from work or home!

Buster Matthews, Yahoo Group CCUG-PC Online Moderator
Worldwide CCUG-PC Yahoo Club:
Yahoo: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ccugpconline/>
Facebook: <http://tinyurl.com/3mtox6h>



(DVDirect-Sony, concludes from page 12)

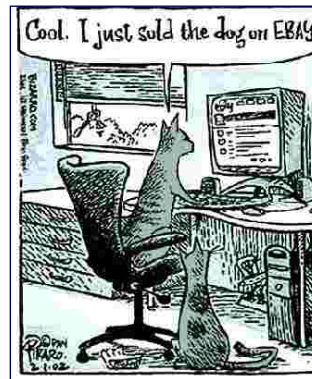
(which is a moot point since, as mentioned, you can't connect this to a PC). It is also 1080/24p Input, composite video and iLink connection-capable as well.

The Sony DVDirect VRD-MC6 is the easiest way to transfer video from a VCR/DVR or a camcorder, or photos from a camera, to a DVD, taking only a matter of minutes to do it. It lacks some functions the previous versions had, such as a USB port that connects to a PC or printer. Also, the accessories aren't as impressive without the data cables and software bundle that the previous iteration had. But that's how Sony was able to bring the price down to \$179 (eBay and online for about \$140 with used/reconditioned for \$99), from the VRD-MC1's list price of \$299, and it's a tremendous bargain considering what you can do with it. If



CCUG-PC CHUCKLES

"Laugh til' you chuckle"



Fondness for the family dog

websites of the MONTH

<http://curetogether.com>



You'll learn from people going through the same thing. It'll help you find the best treatments, and feel better faster--even discover others experiencing similar health issues. Imagine patients around the world coming together to share quantitative information on over 500 medical conditions. They talk about sensitive symptoms and compare which treatments work best for them. They track their health. New research discoveries are made based on the patient-contributed data. This is happening at CureTogether, and we believe it can have a massive global.

<http://PatientsLikeMe.com>



PatientsLikeMe is committed to putting patients first. They do this by providing a better, more *effective way for you to share your real-world health experiences* in

order to help yourself, other patients like you and organizations that focus on your conditions.

Conceptualized and built a health data-sharing platform that believes it can transform the way patients manage their own conditions, change the way industry conducts research and improve patient care.

