IN THIS ISSUE

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About two years ago, I upgraded my traditional cell phone to a (then) state of the art Nokia smart phone running the latest version of the Symbian operating system. With that smart phone I had 3G Internet speeds, could read my e-mail, watch YouTube videos, browse websites, and download any of the hundreds of Symbian apps then available.

Now the Symbian operating system is functionally obsolete as Nokia, the primary user (and effective owner) of Symbian, has virtually killed it, entering into a billion dollar deal with Microsoft to produce Windows smart phones. Knowing that I was eligible for an upgrade from my cell phone provider, I wandered into a company owned store and perused the offerings. My carrier had a wide selection of smartphones using Google's Android operating system, and a handful of smart phones with the latest mobile version of Windows; I did not see any Apple powered devices. After thoroughly reviewing the specifications, price, and performance of each, and reading the online reviews using my now obsolescent smart phone, I selected an Android smart phone. This new Android phone will be my constant companion for the next two years, so I had better learn to like it.

According to Wikipedia, "Android is a Linux-based operating system for mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. It is developed by the Open Handset Alliance, led by Google, and other companies. … The Open Handset Alliance, a consortium of 86 hardware, software, and telecommunication companies devoted to advancing open standards for mobile devices. Google releases the Android code as open-source, under the Apache License. The Android Open Source Project (AOSP) is tasked with the maintenance and further development of Android." Also according to Wikipedia, "Android was listed as the best-selling smartphone platform worldwide …with over 300 million Android devices in use by February 2012. According to Google's Andy Rubin, as of December 2011, there were over 700,000 Android devices activated every day."

As I type this, the latest stable release of Android is version 4.04, but tweaks, updates, and improvements are frequently released. Even though the latest stable version of Android is 4.04, which has been proven to function well on almost all smart phones and tablets, there are some older Android devices that may have problems with the newer version. It should also be noted that while almost all newer Android devices can run the 4.04 with no significant problems, several of the cell phone companies and tablet makers make it difficult to upgrade to newer versions, possibly requiring that it can only be downloaded and installed when explicitly approved by the carrier or manufacturer of the device. While there are online instructions on how to upgrade to the latest versions of Android prior to the official release and approval of the carrier, those who choose to do so may find that their carrier may not be able to support their smart phones that have had unauthorized upgrades.

With a worldwide installed base in excess of 300 million Android devices, and hundreds of thousands more being

added on a daily basis, there is a huge market for what are called "apps" (applications) that can run on Android devices. Most of the Android apps are written in a form of Java, and can be downloaded through Google Play (play.google.com) or from third-party sources. By the end of 2011, there were more than 500,000 Android apps available (source: Wikipedia), with over 10 billion downloads from Google's Android Market (now Google Play). With so many Android apps to choose from, it would be very helpful to have a resource that has reviewed and evaluated many of them; my personal favorite is Gizmo's <http://TechSupportAlert.com>.

Gizmo's <http://TechSupportAlert.com> is best known as a source of reviews and evaluations for PC software, but also includes extensive listings for Linux and Android. Many of the Android apps are purely commercial in nature, and are for sale, but Gizmo has compiled what many believe to be the canonical list of free Android apps at <http://techsupportalert.com/best-free-android-apps.htm>. Acknowledging that there are a lot of paid apps available, and that often there are excellent quality free competitors, Gizmo states, "To help you get the best of the free ones, we have selected some gems in each category and added them here in a convenient list with clear and brief descriptions of each application item." Gizmo also offers simple instructions on how to download and install any of the apps that are listed, either through links on his website, or through the use of the QR Code or barcode scanner integrated with the cameras on most newer Android devices which will connect directly to Google Play for download.

Gizmo's "Best Free Android Apps" <http://techsupportalert.com/best-free-android-apps.htm> is departmentalized into 12 sections or chapters, each containing a comprehensive listing, evaluations, and quality rankings of the apps. The thousands of apps reviewed and rated can be found under the headings: Introduction / What's New; Home and Office; Image Tools; Multimedia; Disk and File Tools; Desktop and System; Security and Privacy; Internet and e-mail; Phone & Messaging; Network, Website & Server; Education; and Games.

With such a broad base of users and devices, Android devices and users have become increasing targets for a variety of Android specific viruses and malware. Section 7 of Gizmo's listing is "Best Free Security and Privacy for Android" where recommendations are displayed for the best free anti-malware utilities, apps protection, password managers, and (lost or stolen) device trackers. The ratings and evaluations for each free app listed are compiled from a "community" of up to 1500 users who routinely test and assess the software. According to the "community" the top rated free anti-virus and malware product is Lookout Security and Antivirus, which has been downloaded over 15 million times from Google play. While a premium (paid) version of Lookout is available with additional features, the free version would likely be adequate for most users. Lookout provides protection from malware, backup of critical software, and a method of locating a lost phone. The paid version of Lookout adds a safe browsing and privacy feature to the basic service.

In a more practical way, many Android apps can be used to assist the

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user while shopping to save money in a variety of ways. While not necessarily listed by Gizmo, the Google Play store (listed on some devices simply as "Play Store") has a lot of free apps that many users would find extremely helpful; users may need to use the Google Play search function, but the results may be personally very beneficial. Many of the major supermarket chains offer free apps that can display sale items and other useful information. The supermarket apps may even be used to create and display e-coupons! For example, Kroger is one of our major local supermarket chains, and Kroger offers a free app. The Kroger app interactively displays the local ads, a store locator, a listing of current Kroger Rewards (such as the current gasoline discounts available at many of the Kroger gas stations), and customizable e-coupons. Right now, my Kroger app lists about 200 selectable e-coupons that are digitally added to a Kroger key tag or affinity card. At the checkout, when the Kroger key tag is used, any e-coupons are automatically deducted at the register without the use of paper coupons. New coupons are frequently added, and old expired coupons are automatically deleted; it is up to the user to periodically review any new offerings, and select those of interest. The coupons and weekly ad can interactively be used to create a digital shopping list viewable on the Android device.

Some other apps that I frequently use are from UPS, FedEx, and the Post Office (USPS). These apps can all be used to track items in real-time, arrange for shipments and postage, and perform many of the other related tasks. I have also downloaded free apps from Google Play for my local radio and TV stations,

local and national newspapers, and other free information sources. With the free, fully customizable, iHeartRadio app, listeners can listen to over 800 ClearChannel radio stations from about 150 cities, including my weekly radio show on KLVI (Mondays, 6pm Central time). Other apps are available for major department and discount stores including Target, Macy's, Kohl's, Walmart, Sam's Club, BestBuy, and many others. Online stores such as Amazon, Newegg, TigerDirect, Overstock, and others also have free apps. Many of these retail store apps, both for physical and virtual stores, offer an interesting service where the user can utilize the camera in his Android device to scan a barcode or UPC to get information on a product; some apps such as Amazon's, can be used to scan a barcode in a competitor's store, and display Amazon's discounted prices. One of my favorites is the Google Shopper app, which (according to Google), "… recognizes products by cover art, barcode, voice and text search. You can find local and online prices, reviews, specifications, videos, and more to help you make the best purchasing decision."

With over a half-million Android apps to choose from, including Gizmo's list of recommendations for free software, as well as the massive listings on Google Play and other sources, a modern Android powered smart device may be a good choice.

WEBSITES:
<https://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-android-apps.htm>.
<https://play.google.com/store/apps>.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Android_%28operating_system%29>.

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Free APPS for the iPhone and iPad By Ira Wilsker

A few weeks ago, I wrote about some websites that evaluate and rate free Android apps *[Editor's note: See preceding article]* <http://tinyurl. com/d9mjm6j>. Since that column was published in the Examiner, I have received numerous requests from readers asking for a similar column on iPhone apps. Below is my response to those requests.

My perennial choice for locating recommended applications (apps) for any operating system is Gizmo's Freeware <http://techsupportalert.com>, which is best known for its canonical lists of free PC software and ratings, but Gizmo has also diversified into other operating systems, including iPhone and Android. If I were to want to find ratings and evaluations of free iPhone apps, techsupportalert.com would be the site that I would first reference, at <http://techsupportalert.com/best-free-iphone-apps.htm>. For those who may not be aware, Gizmo's website contains the continuously updated software evaluations of a massive community of volunteer geeks and nerds, from which the ratings, evaluations, and recommendations are derived. For the iPhone, the Gizmo community has recommended about 100 of the best free iPhone apps, each one being considered the best in its class of applications.

Gizmo lists 20 categories of iPhone apps, including business, education, entertainment, books, news, games, healthcare, lifestyle, reference, social networking, travel, weather, and several other categories. Under each category is the recommended apps for that genre, each of which has been tested and top-rated by the Gizmo community.

I tried several of Gizmo's recommended apps for the iPhone (many of which will also run on an iPad), and found several of special interest. A recently upgraded (Version 2.9. dated May 21, 2012) free iPhone app from NASA, which will also run on the iPod Touch and iPad, was very interesting. Provided by the NASA Ames Research Center, this app included the latest news and features from NASA, weather forecasts and satellite sighting opportunities, user selectable NASA real-time feeds, and the capability to print from the app. What was especially interesting and attractive in this NASA app was the thousands of high resolution images from NASA, as well as videos, and other educational and entertaining content <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/nasa-app/id334325516>. Another iPhone app that I have used several times is the free version of TeamViewer <http:// itunes.apple.com/us/app/teamviewer/ id357069581>. TeamViewer allows for secure remote access and control of another device, such as a computer, from an iPhone or iPad. An appropriate version of TeamViewer must be installed on both devices, and the device acting as the host will generate a unique access code, which must be entered on the remote device in order to create a connection over the Internet. Once the remote device, such as an iPhone or

iPad is connected to the host device, it effectively can control the host device, as if the user was on the host device. There is a full image of the screen of the host device, and the remote pointing tool (finger or mouse) appears on the host device, allowing access to anything on the host device, just as if the user was sitting in front of the host! TeamViewer is very popular, with over 100 million copies downloaded for a variety of devices and operating systems.

Since the number of available apps for the iPhone and iPad have been rapidly increasing, as the number of iPhone and iPad users has been exploding, it is inevitable that there must be some method of determining the best of the newly released or upgraded apps for these devices. Gizmo accommodates those users with its "iPhone Apps of the Week" listing at <http://techsupportalert.com/ipaotw>. Each week a member of the Gizmo community reviews the best of newly released or upgraded free iPhone software (again, most also run on iPads). Among some of the current reviews of the week are a password manager, news resources (including the satirical "Onion News network"), shopping apps, and other fun and useful apps. One that I found especially interesting was "Put Those Fat Fingers to Work" <http://techsupportalert.com/content/put-those-fat-fingers-work.htm>, an app that helps the user find bargains on eBay by finding listings that other users may miss due to the seller incorrectly spelling the name or description of the item. According to Gizmo, "The app Fat Fingers searches eBay not only for the product you want, but uses countless misspellings of the product as well." If the item desired is misspelled by the person listing that item, it is likely that other potential buyers may not find that particular listing, lowering the competition in buying that item, which may result in a bargain.

Another website that evaluates and lists iPhone software (as well as other technical products and services) is MakeUseOf, which has a large and loyal following. The MakeUseOf listing of recommended iPhone apps is online at <http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/best-iphone-apps>, and consists of well over 100 recommended iPhone apps, listed in a dozen categories. The categories of iPhone apps listed by MakeUseOf includes Audio, Browsers, Drawing, Finance, Games, Health, Movies, Navigation, Photography, Productivity, Reading, Social, Travel, and Others. Under each category is a list of recommended software along with a link to a full review, and a download link. While most of the recommended apps are free, a few are paid apps, and the price is clearly disclosed in the listings.

Many users simply use the default web browser provided by the manufacturer of the device, but there are several excellent free iPhone and iPad web browsers that may offer more speed and functionality than the browser provided by Apple or the device maker. One of my personal favorites is Opera <http://itunes.apple.com/eg/app/opera-mini-web-browser/id363729560>, which is arguably the fastest browser available, and (according to Opera) the world's most popular mobile browser. Opera uses a cloud-assisted technology that claims to compress the web data as much as 90% before downloading, enabling web pages to load as much as six times faster (according to Opera)

than its competing browsers, while reducing data usage by up to 90%. Opera also offers a Speed Dial feature where the user's commonly visited websites can be opened with a single click or touch. Other features of Opera include visual tabs which display thumbnails of open web pages, and a synch utility to synchronize bookmarks between the iPhone or iPad, and the Opera installed on a computer or other device.

One of the recommended free navigation apps recommended by MakeUseOf is the latest (June 7, 2012) version of MapQuest <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/mapquest-4-mobile/id316126557>. MapQuest, currently owned by AOL, was one of the first Internet mapping utilities, and this new free iPhone version is a powerful mapping utility that includes live voice driving directions, displays cheapest gas prices, displays many of the live traffic cameras allowing the user to see what is ahead, live traffic reports (updated every five minutes), simple search for nearby gas stations and restaurants, customizable avatars, walking directions, and more. AOL claims that this MapQuest is among the most popular navigation apps with over 7 million downloads. According to AOL, "MapQuest is truly a free product — there is no trial period, subscription or upgrade necessary. You get all these capabilities absolutely free!"

Another very popular free app recommended by MakeUseOf is Trapster, which is also a very controversial app. With over 14 million registered users, Trapster alerts the user to likely speed trap locations, red light and speed cameras, highway accidents, and road hazards. Data is gathered and disseminated in real-

time by its "crowdsourced" users, providing what Trapster claims is the world's most accurate real-time road conditions. Trapster includes (for free) the same commercially available NAVTEQ Live Traffic reports and alerts utilized by many of the expensive GPS units. Trapster offers a "Search & Routing" feature which offers local search capabilities, along with driving directions, as well as a "Patrol™" feature which alerts the user that other Trapster users have "patrolled" the road ahead, indicating that it is clear of traps, as indicated by a blue line displayed on your route. I tried Trapster, and it is not perfect, in terms of Beaumont traffic alerts; in many cases, Trapster users have incorrectly reported in real-time that the traffic light mounted cameras used by the city to monitor traffic congestion at many major intersections are red-light cameras, which they are not.

The battle is on as to which operating system, Apple's iOS used by iPhones and iPads, or Google's Android, the most widely used operating system on smartphones and non-Apple tablets, offers the largest selection of apps. Many, if not most, of the apps listed are available for both Apple and Android devices. The field will shortly become much more crowded now that Microsoft is heavily promoting its new version of Windows for smartphones, tablets, and PCs, and is now offering its own app store, with thousands of available apps. Whatever operating system is used by your smart device, there are likely hundreds of free apps that you might find both beneficial and useful.

WEBSITES:

<https://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-iphone-apps.htm>.

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/nasa-app/id334325516>.

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/teamviewer/id357069581>.

<https://www.techsupportalert.com/ipaotw>.

<https://www.techsupportalert.com/content/put-those-fat-fingers-work.htm>.

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/best-iphone-apps>.

<http://itunes.apple.com/eg/app/opera-mini-web-browser/id363729560>.

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/mapquest-4-mobile/id316126557>.

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/trapster-speed-trap-alerts/id290629277>.

<http://tinyurl.com/d9mjm6j>. (Examiner column - Best Free Android Apps)>

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**Software Review—
Roxio Creator
By Mark Mattson**

It's been a while since this program suite was last reviewed in these pages. In fact, it was when the software was known as Easy Media Creator, and version 7.5 was the subject of the review. This was around 2005, and Gene Meeks did a great job with that review.

Fast forward to the present. This review will introduce you to Roxio Creator 2012, the latest and greatest in this long-running suite line.

Long running indeed — the first version of this software was bundled with my very first CD-R burner, which I bought in 1994. I have tried several other burning applications over the years, but always come back to this one, as it's an old and trusted friend.

Originally owned and sold by Adaptec, it has had a couple owners over the years, the most recent of which is Corel (as of late 2011).

Please note that there are two versions of Creator available: the standard (reviewed here) and the PRO version. The PRO version offers all the features of the standard edition, and adds additional features to enhance your projects even more. You can find out more about that version on the Roxio website at <http://www.roxio.com>.

As the software has evolved, so has the size of the package. The version I used in 1994 came on a single CD-ROM disc. Subsequent versions grew to two CDs, and then moved to DVD discs when the capacity limits of CDs were reached. Indeed, Creator 2012 is so large, the download files were two 1GB archives. As the version I obtained for review came as an electronic download, I cannot tell you if the physical boxed version comes on one or two DVDs. No matter what, the package is large. If you have a slow Internet connection, you may want to opt for physical delivery.

Installation can take a bit of time to perform, especially if your machine is slower. On a dual-core 2.6 GHz system running Windows 7 here, it took about 20 minutes to install the applications package, and an additional 15 minutes for the Content files (backgrounds, music tracks, etc.). Installation is not difficult. Just answer a few questions

in the Installer, and you're off and running.

So what can you do with the software?

The most basic feature of the package allows you to burn data, pictures, audio files and documents (or any other files you have on your system) to removable optical media, such as CDs, DVDs and now Blu-Ray discs. This allows you to free up hard drive space, especially if you have smaller drives in your machine. Rather than taking up space on your drives, the data can be stored on removable discs, and restored when needed.

But you can do so much more with it than just offloading files to discs.

There are basic file backup and recovery tools included in the package, giving you the ability to save your important files to disc, and restore them when needed. Please note however, that this is NOT a full-featured system backup application. For those functions, you would need the PRO version, or an external application.

With the explosion of mobile devices into the digital lifestyle, you can share and produce content for iPod, iPad, iPhone and other supported devices without the need for an external program. You can convert from one file format to another, and then output it to your selected device.

If you enjoy listening to music, you can create compilations of your favorite tracks, convert files to digital audio, and burn them to disc…or again, output to your mobile device.

Do you like to share your home movies with others, or create unique video content to share? You can do so with Creator 2012 as well. Capture video streams, convert them to DivX or DVD movies, or even to 3D features. If you want to (or need to) produce Hi-def video, you have that ability also, using the optional Blu-ray plug-in available from the Roxio store (this plug-in is part of the PRO package, and therefore only needs to be bought if you buy the standard version). NOTE: If you just need to burn data to Blu-ray discs, you do not need the plug-in. Blu-ray burning is available as an option when creating data discs. But to burn movies to Blu-ray, you DO need the plug-in.

Working with photos? There is an assortment of features in the suite for you as well. You can create slide shows complete with music to share, do basic image editing and enhancements, and so much more. When you're done, you can output them to DVD to watch on your TV, share with others, or even upload them to Facebook (as you can also do with your video projects to upload to YouTube).

Do you like to record television programs on a TiVo unit? There is now support for these devices included in the suite. You can record your programs to disc, or even transfer them to mobile devices to take on the road with you.

Once you have your project completed and ready to share, dress up those boring looking DVDs and CDs with a custom label that you can create using the included application designed just for that purpose. Add your photos, backgrounds and text to complete your project.

There are many more features to the software; you can find a complete list on the Roxio website.

With all this horsepower under the hood of the software, the system you run it on needs to be capable of running it as well. If not, then you will be unable

to perform some of the tasks you may want or need to.

The following list is taken from the Roxio website. Please note that updates to the programs may add new requirements not listed here.

Minimum System Requirements:

* Microsoft® 7 Home Premium, Professional or Ultimate (32- or 64-bit), Microsoft® Windows Vista SP2 (32- or 64-bit), Windows® XP SP3 (32-bit), Windows® XP SP2 (64-bit).

* For data burning and copy, audio capture and editing: Intel® 1.6GHz Pentium 4 processor or AMD equivalent, 512MB RAM for windows XP and 1GB RAM for Windows Vista and Windows 7. For video editing and conversion and DVD playback Intel Pentium 4 2GHz processor or AMD equivalent and 1GB RAM. Multi-core processor with at least 2GB RAM recommended

* 1024x768 DirectX 9.0c compatible graphics card with at least 16-bit color setting, sound card, DVD-ROM drive

* ATI Stream® and CUDA acceleration only available with AMD ATI Stream and NVIDIA® CUDA enabled graphics cards

* Hard drive with at least 3GB free space for the installation process. DVD and BD copy, video editing and authoring may require large amount of free disk space, up to 10's of GB

* Windows Media Player version 10, 11 or 12

* Internet Explorer 7, 8 or 9

* Internet connection required for installation, registration, product updates and some features. Any Internet charges are the user's Responsibility.

* QuickTime® player version 7 required for some functionality

* iTunes® version 8 for some functionality

* TiVo® requires a TiVo® Series2, Series3, TiVo HD DVR or other TiVoToGo compatible DVR connected to your home network and TiVo Desktop. Does not work with DirecTV® provided TiVo DVRs. See www.tivo.com for more information.

* For video capture: OHCI compliant IEEE 1394 FireWire card for use with DV camera or Roxio Video Capture USB for analog sources

* Blu-ray authoring requires an additional plug-in which can be purchased at <http://www.roxio.com>.

* Setting up of media access server capability requires and always on PC connected to a wired network

3D

* 3D glasses and other 3D hardware are the user's responsibility

* 3D video input formats: over/under full and half height, side-by-side full and half width, anaglyph red/cyan, RealD, Fuji FinePix REAL 3D

* 3D video output formats: anaglyph red/cyan, side-by-side and full and half-width, over/under full and half height, RealD

Input Formats:

* Video: AVI, DV, HDV, DV-AVI, MKV, MPEG-1/2/4, MPEG2-HD, DVD-Video, IFO/VOB, XviD, DVR-MS, TiVo, ASF, MOV, WMV, QuickTime, 3GP, MPEG2 Transport Stream, AVC (H.264), AVCHD

* Audio: Audio CD, MP3, WAV, WMA, Dolby® Digital AC-3, AAC, Ogg Vorbis, FLAC, M4A, MP4, Playlists (WPL, ASX, M3U, PLS, XSPF)

* Image: MPO, JPG, PNG, TIFF, BMP, GIF

Output Formats:

* Video: AVI, DV-AVI, HDV, MPEG-1/2/4, MPEG2-HD, , WMV, WMV HD, AVC (H.264), MP4, 3GP

* Audio: MP3, WAV, WMA, Dolby Digital AC-3, Ogg Vorbis, FLAC, MPEG-1/2, M4A, M4B AAC, Playlists (M3U, PLS, XSPF, WPL)
* Image: JPG, PNG, TIFF, BMP, GIF
* Video disc formats: DVD, Video CD(VCD), Super Video CD (SVCD), Mini DVD

Recordable Formats:
* CD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, DVD-R/RW, DVD-R DL, DVD+R DL, DVD-RAM, BD-R/RE, BD-R/RE DL
* Disc image formats: read ISO, C2D, BIN/CUE and GI; write ISO and GI

As can be seen from the above list, it takes quite a bit to enable execution of certain operations. If your machine is more than three years old, it MAY not have enough under the hood to run parts of the suite. Such is my case and my two 'antique' machines. To do this review, I had to put it on my wife's newly built computer, which definitely meets the specs.

Most of what I have used the suite for has been to offload files from my systems, and burn it to disc for archival storage. Starting out in the 80's with CDs, it progressed to DVDs into the 90's and beyond, and now to Blu-ray discs, for increased storage capacity. Being that Tanya and I are both photographers, the 25 and 50 GB capacities of Blu-ray media will be important as we migrate image files to disc for a secondary backup of our work. At present, to burn both our image libraries to DVD would mean burning about 200 4.7GB DVD discs. Using Blu-ray, this is cut down to around 50 BD-R discs (25 GB capacity each).

Before doing the archiving, however, I need to investigate the system further. Burning a test BD-R disc took about 1.5 hours for a full 25 GB disc, and an additional 45 minutes for verification. The writer was only burning at 1x speed, while the discs I used were rated for 6x recording. Evidently I need to upgrade the burner's firmware, or check the settings in the software.

Another area of investigation concerns the creation of DVD movies. During testing, I noticed some audio dropouts during playback of the compilations I assembled into a DVD movie. Referring to the Roxio forums brought forth some tips and tricks to try to resolve this. After applying some of those recommendations, I now have the dropouts minimized, but they still occur randomly. I will need to further test this, using different media, and perhaps trying the DVDs on different players than my own home machine.

Overall, the Creator 2012 suite is a powerful, highly useful package. There is not much you CAN'T do with it, and a lot you CAN. This package has matured as the years have gone by into one that no serious media creator should be without. Even though aimed at the home market, many small businesses looking to create rich media presentations and projects will find the power of this software to more than meet their needs.

For further details on this version, or the PRO version, please go to the Roxio website at <http://www.roxio.com>. Roxio Creator 2012 is selling for $79.99 after a $20 mail-in rebate. The rebate also applies to the PRO version, if you decide to purchase the added power and features it offers. If you own Creator 2011, you qualify for a special upgrade price of $69.99. However, you can't upgrade at this price from an older version. Remember, you can get delivery via electronic download, or a physical box. If your Internet

connection is not a broadband one, opt for the box delivery. It will save you hours of downloading.

Would I recommend this package? Definitely YES. It has been a steady and reliable friend for almost 20 years, and not many others can come close to the features it offers.

Mark Mattson is the Editor of "Computer Users of Erie, PA." Article is from the June 2012 issue of "Horizons." Web: <http://www.cuerie. com>. E-mail: <cuerie1 (at) verizon. net>.

**Of Interest Links (OIL)
Fred Acerri**

Ancient Jugs Hold the Secret to Practical Mathematics in Biblical Times
<http://tinyurl.com/7qaars2>.
Study finds new evidence supporting theory of extraterrestrial impact
<http://tinyurl.com/7lkqvkh>.
Experiment Shows that Light Defies the Principles of Classical Physics
<http://tinyurl.com/d5y34aa>.
Scientists Find that Nanoparticles Can Have a Serious Impact on Health
<http://tinyurl.com/cypo7tc>.
Wolfram alpha resources
<http://www.wolframalpha.com/resources/>.

Reasons for Moving Up to Windows 7
By Phil Sorrentino

Before we discuss the reasons for moving to a new Operating System (OS), we should consider why we would want to change the OS. After all, the OS is at the very heart of our computer's operation. If we are happy with the current operation, why change things, which could possibly lead to unknown problems. (The devil you know may be far friendlier than the devil that you don't know.) I think the reason is basically because technology does not stand still. Technology constantly improves and therefore changes. Don't we expect turn signals, power steering, power brakes, air conditioning, and even entertainment systems in our modern cars? Technologies change rapidly in their early stages and then slower as they mature. Automotive technology has changed quite a bit over the last 120 or so years, and is fairly mature now. (Think about all the automotive User Interfaces that have changed over time. Where is the high-beam lights control? It's not on the floor any more, is it.) Home computers are only about 30 years old. One might say they are still in the early, rapidly changing, years. But, unlike autos in the 50s (remember planned obsolescence?). I think the change from XP to Windows 7 is not just change for change sake. There are some very substantial improvements in the Windows 7 OS. Many of the reasons for change are "under the hood," like improved security, and simpler networking. These may be hard to appreciate, because they are not on the surface and obvious; but they are

definitely present and useful. Obviously, the thing that is most noticeable is the User Interface. But it is not just a new overall look, new wallpaper, and a different color for the Taskbar.

Speaking of the Taskbar, the Taskbar is one of the major User Interface components that has been improved. The new Taskbar takes on qualities of the "Quick Launch area" that was available in XP, but not really promoted. The Taskbar not only helps you launch your applications, but it lets you easily view all of the open applications and allows you to move between windows and applications effortlessly. In addition to showing the applications that you currently have open, the new Windows 7 Taskbar supports "pinned" shortcuts to your most commonly used applications (and even websites). Click a shortcut when the app is running, and it brings the most recently used window to the foreground. Click the same shortcut when the app is closed, and it will launch the app.

Another Windows 7 enhancement comes in the form of Jump Lists. Jump Lists put frequently used files in a convenient menu that is a simple click away from the icon on the Taskbar or on the Start Menu. Apps that support Jump Lists will display the list when you right click on the shortcut, or when you left-click and drag the mouse up away from the Taskbar.

Windows Explorer has been enhanced in Windows 7. Anyone who has taken any of my classes knows, by now, that the Windows Explorer is the "keys to the kingdom." The improvements to Windows Explorer make the left-column of the Windows Explorer window the quickest way to navigate to any folder on your hard drive or network. "Libraries" is another new Explorer feature. Libraries are simply data repositories that can store content that is of a similar nature, but located in different places on the computer, across a network, or in the cloud. Libraries are handy for organizing and collecting files in one place because they appear to be, and can be used as, normal folders for most applications. Libraries become especially useful when you integrate them with your commonly used folders, network shares, and cloud services. For example, let's say that both you and your spouse are users on your computer and suppose your music is stored in your Music folder, and your spouse's music is stored in another Music folder. And further let's say that you have some music stored on a second networked computer. If you wanted to play all of your music you could point your music software to all of the folders (if that was allowed), or you could create a Music Library that would contain the locations of all of your music folders and then point your software to the Music Library.

Another area of improvement is the use of Ribbons in the Windows 7 Accessory Applets. This may not seem like an improvement for those of you who preferred the traditional menus, but I think the more you use the Ribbons, the better you will like them; they do allow more information to be on the screen at one time without obscuring the work in progress.

Networking is another improved area. Windows 7 makes the home networking experience easier, faster and ultimately safer. Networking, in Windows 7, has been improved and made easier by the introduction of the "HomeGroup." The "WorkGroup" form

of networking is still supported, but if all the computers in your network are using Windows 7 you can take advantage of the HomeGroup. A HomeGroup is easily set up by going to Control Panel – Networking and Sharing Center, and selecting "Choose homegroup and sharing options." Once you've created a HomeGroup, sharing files is as easy as right-clicking on a folder or file, clicking Share With, and selecting the options you want. When you want to share any of your files, or folders, or printers, on a network, you just Join the HomeGroup. Joining a HomeGroup is as easy as entering the HomeGroup password that you get from a computer that is already part of the HomeGroup that you wish to join. There are no permissions, or "network shares" to set up.

One surprise, when upgrading from XP or Vista to Windows 7, is that Microsoft has removed functionality from Windows. Windows Movie Maker, Windows Photo Gallery, and Windows Mail are no longer part of the initially installed OS. Instead, they are part of a separate, optional download called Windows Live Essentials.

Whether you're upgrading from XP or Vista, Windows 7 offers great improvements in usability and security. For anyone who regularly keeps many windows open at one time, the new Taskbar is worth the effort to upgrade alone. For XP users, the security improvements are equally worth the effort to upgrade. Windows 7 is the best version of Windows that has been released, and is a worthy successor. Whether you're an average or a power user, Windows 7 is well worth the expense and effort, either for an upgrade to your current machine or to have on your next new machine. Now what about Windows 8? Stay tuned.

Phil Sorrentino is past president of Sarasota PCUG, Florida. Article is from the May 2012 issue, "Sarasota Monitor." Web: <www.spcug.org>. E-mail: <pcugedit@verizon.net>.

Agloves
By George Harding

Many of today's mobile devices are operated by hand or finger gestures made by touching the screen.

Smartphones have icons on the screen that must by pressed to operate. Multiple screens are accessed by swiping left or right. Tabular data is accessed by swiping or dragging up, down, left or right.

The screens that allow this type of action are almost all capacitive in nature. The bioelectricity in your hands and fingers are what make the screens move in the desired direction. Body heat is not involved in "moving," just the small electric charge your body accumulates.

One problem with this method is that moisture on your fingers tends to leave a deposit on the screen, so that repeated operation may result in some portions of the screen being slightly marred. The deposits can be removed with a clean moist cloth or other methods.

I watched a fellow typing on his tablet on the pseudo keyboard presented on the screen. I noticed that his screen was marked by fingermarks at the keys on which he was typing.

Agloves allow you to operate normally without leaving any deposits

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SEMCO Meeting Pictures

At SIG-Computing Linda Daichendt, Executive Director of the Mobile Technology Association of Michigan, talks about the mobile explosion.

SEMCO Meeting Pictures

(Above) Richard Jackson introduces a speaker. (Below) At SIG-Techniques, Warner Mach discusses the status of the SIG-Programming group.

BOARD MEETING
6/10/2012
Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present
President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Secretary Carol Sanzi, SIG-Advice Chairman Franz Breidenich, Publications Committee Chairman Warner Mach, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Brian Brodsky. The board meeting was called to order at 12:18 p.m.

Old Business
None

New Business
None

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn at 12:22. Brian Brodsky seconded the motion and it was carried.

Upcoming Events:

APCUG/CAMUG 2012 Regional Computer Conf.
Will be held Fri., July 13; 12:30 P.M. through Sat., July 14; 5:00 P.M. at:
Walsh University
2020 East Maple St.
North Canton, OH 44720
<http://tinyurl.com/APCUG-CAMUG-Regional>.

JUNE REFRESHMENT DONORS
Coordinator: Richard Jackson
Donors:
Brian Brodsky
Warner Mach
Ken Philips
Carol Sanzi

SEMCO

Serving the needs of professionals, hobbyists, novices, and prospective computer users since 1976.
* Learn more about computing in an informal, non-academic setting.
* Get honest answers to computer questions without commercial bias.
* Meet and interact with other computer users. Personal and electronic networking.
* Gain access to members willing to provide help in response to a phone call or e-mail.
* Receive monthly newsletter with informative articles.

Pictures: Recent SEMCO Meetings: <http://www.tinyurl.com/y8cm99e>
Video: Recent SEMCO Meeting: <http://www.tinyurl.com/363vnbd>
Podcasts: Podcasts of SEMCO meetings can be found at:
<http://www.semco.org/podcasts.htm>

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SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)

SIG-COMPUTING
Tom Callow

July 8: 1:45 p.m.: The World of Unmanned Vehicles: Innovations and Implications – Micho Radovnikovich, a Ph.D. candidate in Systems Engineering at Oakland University and president of the Oakland Robotics Association, will discuss how unmanned vehicles affect the present and how much more significant they will be in the very near future. He will also address some of the main issues encountered when developing vehicles that operate themselves and what it takes to program them. Finally, he will present the work his student organization does at Oakland University with some video demonstrations.

SIG-TECHNIQUES
Warner Mach

July 8: 3:45 p.m.: Gadgets: SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will discuss some of the exciting electronic gadgets currently under development that are being made possible by the latest technology. Will we ever see them? Will we be able to resist them?

SIG-PROGRAMMING
Richard Jackson

July 21: At the home of Richard Jackson. Contact Mr. Jackson for full details: (248) 546-3694. **Topic:** Further review of chapter 9 - "Working With Sound & Graphics."

SIG-ADVICE
Franz Breidenich

July 3/Aug. 7 (Tues): 5:30 p.m.: At the Madison Heights Library located at 240 West 13 Mile Rd. one block West of John R. The parking lot entrance is off Brush St. The lot and entrance to the library are located in the back of the library. Topic: General discussion.

SIG-LINUX
Michael Rudas
Mike Bader

July 24 (Tues): 6:45 p.m.: At Motor City Free Geek, 1511 Jarvis St., Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. The building is on the Northwest corner of Wanda and Jarvis - The first traffic light south of 9 Mile, on Wanda. Topic: TBD.

Aug. DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., July 15, 11:59 p.m.
Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor address on Page 2; e-mail address: <warnermach@gmail.com>. PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Contact Editor (address Page 2)**.**

Warner Mach
warnermach@gmail.com
(to post monthly computer group info)

CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron

(See web site) Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: <Bwcompinfo@gmail.com>. Web: <http://www.bwcomp.org>.

DITUG: Detroit IT User Group (Formerly Focus: Hope IT User Group)

1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info <http://www.ditug.org/>. See web sites for details. Pre-registration required.

HUG (Holly User Group)

July 14, 9 a.m.-noon (2nd Saturday) Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Holly, MI. 48442. Ron McCauley 810-629-9683. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup-Detroit

July 15, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 248-569-4933. <http://www.macgroup.org>. Topic: TBA. SIGs: 2:00 PM.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

(See web site); See web site for meeting time and location. <http://www.mactechnics.org>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

July 14, 12:30–2:30 p.m., (2nd Saturday); MDLUG meetings will be at The Gaudior Academy located at 27100 Avondale Avenue in Inkster. Web: <http://www.mdlug.org>. Topic: TBA.

Motor City Free Geek

Every Saturday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. <http://www.motorcityfreegeek.net>. E-mail: <MotorCityFreeGeek@gmail.com>. Recycling & Open Source.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

July 10, 6:30 p.m., (2nd Tuesday): Farmington Community Library-Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. <http://www.mug.org>. Topics: Mac for Linux Geeks.

Oak Park Computer Club

Every Fri., 10:15 a.m. at Oak Park Library, Oak Park Blvd. west of Coolidge.

Royal Oak Computer Club

Every Wed., 12:30 to 2:30 PM at Mahany/Meininger Senior Community Center, 3500 Marais Ave., Royal Oak, 48073. Near Crooks & 13 Mile. Guest speakers & regular monthly speakers. <http://tinyurl.com/royaloakcc>.

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

Sept. 4, 7:30 p.m.(1st Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>. Topic: TBA.

behind. If you try working with your tablet using regular gloves, they don't work because the bioelectric charge cannot be passed through the fabric of ordinary gloves. Agloves, on the other hand, do work normally because of the silver woven into the glove fabric.

These gloves are functional not just with one or two fingers, but all ten. For those of us who are touch typists, using all ten fingers is essential.

One other benefit of Agloves is their ability to operate touch-screen devices when the temperature is cold. Your fingers tend to lose their moisture when cold. The gloves aren't affected by cold and conduct your bioelectric charge even in the cold.

The gloves only come in one color, black. They are not solid black, but instead black with white interlacing. The white comes from the silver woven into the whole glove. They also keep your hands warm!

Vendor: Agloves. <http://www.agloves.com>. Price: $24.

George Harding is Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ. From: April 2012 issue, "eJournal." Web: <http://www.aztcs.org>. E-mail: <georgehardingsbd (at) earthlink.net>.

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

This is a list of people willing to be resources for other members to call when they have hardware or software questions.

Are you willing to help members learn?

Which software programs are you familiar enough with?

It is not necessary to be an expert, but just have some familiarity with the program and be willing to help someone starting to learn it. Please give this some thought and volunteer at the next group meeting.

Almost Anything: Vander-Schrier	**MS Office for Windows:** Callow
AutoCAD: Comptois	**MS Word:** Clyne
Genealogy: Cook	**Networking:** Callow
IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Yuhasz	**Novell Netware:** Yuhasz
Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz	**Quicken:** Clyne
MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz	**Geocaching:** Cook
Security: Bader	**Relational Database Programming**: Lis

Bader, Mike—586-573-7330, 9am–8pm.................... mdbader@flash.net
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770, 9am–5pm.................. tcallow@monaghanpc.com
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm.................. clyne@mich.com
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves........................ scook48227@ameritech.net
Lis, Bernie—248-669-0101, 10am-8pm................... BerlLis@comcast.net
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720,12–8pm .... jvanders@comcast.net
Yuhasz, Steve.. Help@yuhasz.org
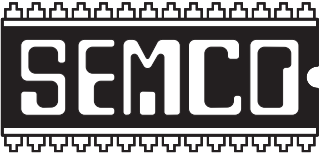
SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.

SEMCO CALENDAR

Engineering Society of Detroit
20700 Civic Center Dr., Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield, MI. 48076
42°29'7" N by 83°14'29" W

July 8—SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

SEMCO Board Meeting at 12:00 noon. For Officers and SIG Chairpersons. Other members are invited to attend.

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-COMPUTING, 1:45 p.m.: The World of Unmanned Vehicles: Innovations and Implications — Micho Radovnikovich, a Ph.D. candidate in Systems Engineering at Oakland University and president of the Oakland Robotics Association, will discuss how unmanned vehicles affect the present and how much more significant they will be in the very near future. He will also address some of the main issues encountered when developing vehicles that operate themselves and what it takes to program them. Finally, he will present the work his student organization does at Oakland University with some video demonstrations.

SOCIAL PERIOD, 3:15 p.m.: Refreshments! (Reminder: We must continue to maintain a neat environment.)

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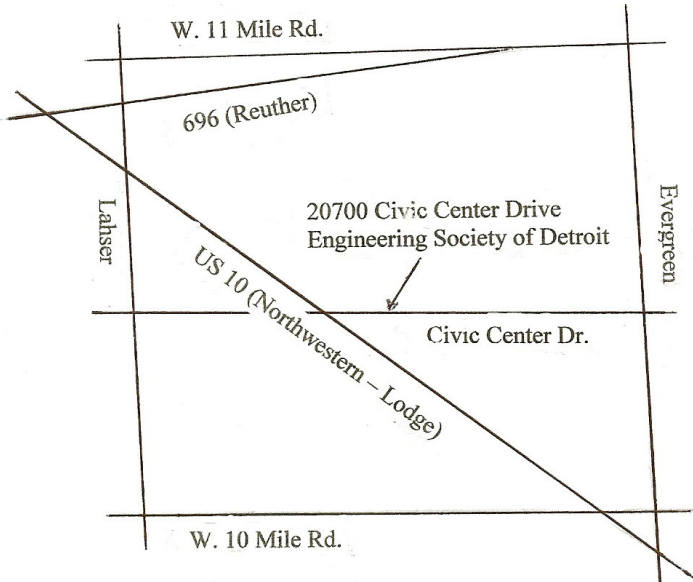
Aug. 12 - SEMCO Sunday.

http://www.semco.org
PUBLIC INVITED

SEMCO Meetings at [Engineering Society of Detroit](#)
20700 Civic Center Drive, Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield MI 48076.
42°29'7" N by 83°14'29" W

From I-696 exit at Evergreen. Take Evergreen south to Civic Center Drive. Civic Center Drive is about halfway between I-696/Eleven Mile Rd. and 10 Mile Rd. Turn west, right if you are coming from the north, onto Civic Center Drive. Follow Civic Center Drive, watching the number signs on the right. When you get to the 20700 sign turn right, north, and follow the drive until you arrive at the southwest corner of the brown building with the Engineering Society of Detroit sign near the top. Turn right, east, and go past the front of the building. When you reach the end of the building, turn left, north and go to the back of the building and turn left, west, again. The parking lot will be on your right. The entrance is in the center of the building. Park in back of building. Enter the rear door. The ESD office is on the fourth floor.

SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707

SEMCO (future meetings)
July 8
August 12

SEMCO: A Community Organization
Helping People for the 21st Century