

Palma Computer Club



March/April 2009

Next Meeting
March 11, 2009 7:00PM
Identity Theft II
April Meeting is
Cancelled

USER FRIENDLY

IN THIS ISSUE

From The President's Desk.....	3
Editors Corner.....	4
Web Surfer Tips.....	5
Tech Resolutions and More.....	6
This Car Runs on Code.....	7
How To Send an Email Message From Any Cell Phone>>>>.....	9
How to Switch Internet Browser.....	11
There is More to Music Than the Ipod... ..	12
What if Your Car Ran Like a Computer?.....	16



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Vice-President: Nick Nicholson

Secretary: Jerry Moore

Treasurer: Bob Ruben

Webmaster: Jerry Moore

User Friendly is an electronic publication for members of the Palmia Computer Club. It is published and distributed during the months of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Managing Editor: Nick Nicholson

Editorial Staff: Eva Schmidler

User Friendly is your newsletter. It's objective is to serve every member. If you have a suggestion for an article for publication, or if you would like information about a specific topic, please contact the Palmia Computer Club President, or the User Friendly editor. This newsletter is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to learn.

Guidelines

Articles (1) must be submitted to the Managing Editor no later than the 10th day prior to the month of publication; (2) should be no longer than 1,200 to 1,500 words (approximately three columns), although longer articles may be published; (3) may be edited by staff for clarity, spelling, grammar, and space available. Articles should be relevant to the membership of the Palmia Computer Club. The choice of articles to be included in any issue is solely the prerogative of the Editorial Staff.

Computer Club Special Interest Groups

SIGs meet from 3:30 to 5:00 P.M. on the specified Fridays unless noted otherwise:

1st Friday- Windows/Visa.....Barry Robbins

2nd Friday - Computer Potpourri.....Barry Robbins

4th Friday - Photo Editing & Scanning.....Don Yenche

Note: Our Email and Internet SIG is on temporary hold at this time.

There is also a HELP SIG! This SIG is intended for beginners to answer your basic questions relating to computers (This is not a class). It meets on the first, third and fourth Mondays of each month at 10:00 A.M. The SIG leader is Joe Lebovitz.

Contacting Board Members and Officers

All Board members and officers are available for help or information via email addresses as follows:

Shelly Stern, President - sk.stern@cox.net

Nick Nicholson, Vice President - npierce@palmia.com

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Barry Robbins, Past President - pcc_pres@cox.net

Palmia Computer Club meetings are scheduled for 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday of every month except July, August and December. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for Q&A and socializing. Visitors are welcome. For visitors from outside the Palmia community, our address is: 21455 Monterey, Mission Viejo, CA 92692. The parking lot is on the left, just inside the Monterey gate. Telephone: 949-472-5075.

IDENTITY THEFT PART II

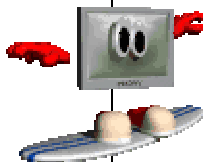
Make it a point of attending our March 11th meeting at 7:00 PM. Jerry Moore will be presenting a follow up to last month's Identity Theft program. Learn the how-to of online banking, data encryption, Paypal and where to find additional resources.

Editor's Corner
By Nick Nicholson

Your computer club will be broadening it's outreach to members by emphasizing the increasing diversity of electronic media now in common use by Palmia residents. Consequently, as editor, I will be featuring articles on a variety of subjects such as HDTV, cell phones, Personal Digital Assistants, MP3 players and similar subjects in upcoming issues of *User Friendly.* I welcome tips and contributions from readers. If you know of anything related to technology that you believe would be of interest to your fellow members, please let me know. Send me an email at: npierce@palmia.com.

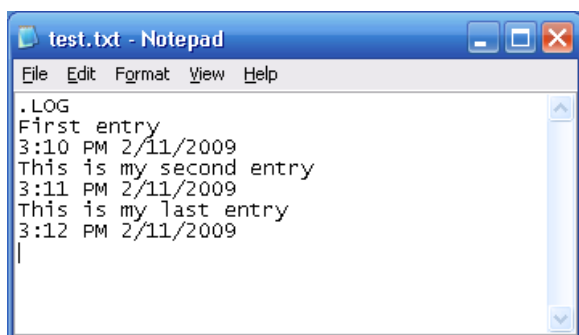
WEB SURFER TIPS

By Jerry Moore



Use Windows Note Pad To Record Time Stamps

Have you ever had an occasion where you wanted to maintain something like a journal where each time you made an entry the date and time were automatically recorded? Microsoft has built a neat little tool into notepad that does exactly this. Click on Start - All Programs – Accessories - Notepad to launch the program. Now type .LOG on the first line and press enter. Make your required entries and save this file on your desktop or in your My Document folder. The next time you open this file, make new entries and save it again, the date and time will be automatically recorded. Here's an example of what the file will look like:



Microsoft Malicious Software Removal Tool (MSRT)

For those of you running Windows, you may have noticed that on the second Tuesday of each month, there is a download from Microsoft with critical security update patches. If these software updates have not yet been installed, you will see a yellow icon in your System Tray to the left of the clock that looks like this:

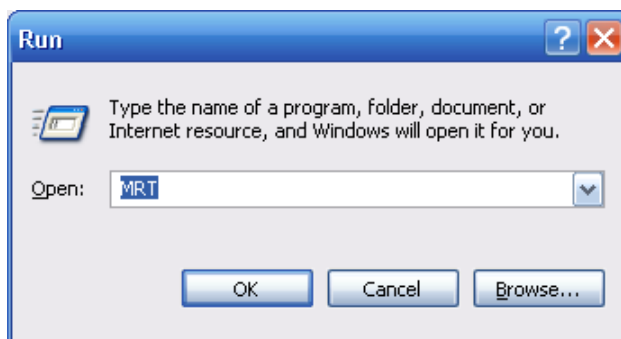


You should **ALWAYS** download and install these security patches as soon as they become available. Once released, the bad guys know about new security holes in your computer and will try to exploit these vulnerabilities on computers that have not been patched. The longer you wait, the more you are at risk.

As part of these monthly updates, Microsoft pushes a new version of MSRT that will run one time only after you restart Windows. This tool scans for any new bad stuff on your computer and silently removes it without any needed interaction by the user. You

can learn more about what this tool does by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/seemsrt>

If you would like to scan your computer at any time in between these monthly updates, just click on Start-Run and enter MRT (all upper case) in the dialog box



After you click OK, you will be presented with this window:



Just follow the on screen instructions to perform a scan.

Don't forget that if you have any questions or comments about these sites, don't hesitate to send me an email at jerry.moore@cox.net. Until next issue – happy and safe surfing!

From the President's Desk

By Shelly Stern

Wow! So many faces to Identity Theft! At our Feb. 11 meeting Mari J. Frank showed us the what, how, why of Identity Theft and steps we can (must!) take to prevent it. She also went over steps we can (must!) take if, indeed, our identity has been stolen. Mari has authored books, a survival kit and a PBS special program, all on Identity Theft. She generously gave them out as prizes. If you did not receive one of them as a prize and are interested in purchasing any of those items, they can be found on Mari's website.

Our focus has expanded beyond computers. If "it" plugs in, runs on batteries, contains a chip, and communicates, we want to learn about "it". While we will continue with computer software, operating systems and hardware, we will also address digital cameras, look at cell phones, talk about blue tooth technology, find out about plasma, LCD and projection television sets, keep up with internet and email capable television sets that come with keyboards, overview GPS devices . It is our intent to keep up with the remarkable technology being developed for our use. We can keep up with this technology just as well as our children and grandchildren. When they tell us to pair our blue tooth capable cell phone with the GPS in the car, we can tell them we already knew it. We'd like to say it's not us keeping up with the kids, it's the kids trying to keep up with us!

Securing resources to provide these programs takes a great deal of effort on the part of our Program Chairperson. It was Jerry Moore who secured the services of Mari Frank for the February program, and it is Jerry who is planning the remainder of our programs this year. If you have an idea as to a program you think would be of interest, or if you know of a resource who can present a program along our lines of interest, communicate with Jerry. Our programs have a value for those attending and gaining information and knowledge. At our general membership meetings, guests will now be charged five dollars to attend. It is really cost-effective to join the club and attend all of the meetings, rather than attending a few separate programs and paying the five dollars each time. Encourage your friends and neighbors to join the Palmia Computer Club.

Speaking of meetings, the second Wednesday in April, our regular meeting date, coincides with a religious holiday this year. Therefore, **there will NOT be a general meeting of the Palmia Computer Club in April.** Friday Special Interest Groups and the Monday General Computer Help will continue on their regular schedule.

Those of you who subscribe to *Smart Computing* magazine help the Club earn credits toward rewards such as free subscriptions to the magazine. To ensure our club receives credit for new subscriptions and renewals, ALWAYS subscribe and renew using the Subscribe or Renew Today! feature available within the User Group portion of the *Smart Computing* Web site. From there, you can select our user group from the drop-down list provided to ensure we receive credit for the subscription order.

TECH RESOLUTIONS AND MORE

It is a brand-new year, and that means it is time to plan the best strategies and techniques for safe and secure computing in 2009. Malware, Trojans, scareware, spamware, etc., aren't going to stop, aren't going away and aren't getting any better. So, what are we going to do differently? You can't do the same thing and expect different results, right?

Resolutions

- Invest in a good antivirus software program. The freebies are just OK, and may be adequate, but you need to drop some coin into a better solution for better results. (AntiVir PE, AVG Anti-Virus 8.0, paid versions, no freebies)
- Check your backup procedure. Backup solutions are not a "set it and forget it" process. You definitely need to verify the process is still working and that the destination drive is functioning. And if you don't have a backup procedure in place, do it now. (SyncBack SE, Mozy Home)
- Perform maintenance on your computers. If you don't know how or don't want to do it, hire an IT pro to come in every three or four months and clean out temp files, patch it, update it, stop unwanted startup programs, and check the antivirus and backup process.
- When was the last time you changed your bank logon ID? Yeah, that's what I thought. Let's get that changed today. And for Pete's sake, let's use a better password.
- Replace those power strips with "one" power surge protector. Power strips are great for plugging in lamps, speakers and pencil sharpeners, but not your modems, routers, backup drives, computers, etc. (APC Premium, Belkin Pivot Plug).

- Sign up for a Privacy Assist credit-monitoring service provided by your bank. This service monitors your credit report and provides identity-theft insurance.
- Clean your desktop mouse and keyboard. And if you are game, bust out the dust inside your desktop (or have the IT pro do it).
- Organize and keep your computer software all in one place and easily accessible.
- Inventory your computer hardware for insurance purposes.
- Establish one location, one notebook, one folder, whatever it may be, for all your user IDs, login passwords, e-mail passwords, router settings and anything to do with computing.

Just a few simple, easy-to-follow resolutions like these will start your 2009 on the path of better, safer computing.

Extracted from Computer Edge Magazine.

This article was provided to us courtesy of Barry Robbins, our Past President.

THIS CAR RUNS ON CODE

By Robert N. Charette

It takes dozens of microprocessors running 100 million lines of code to get a premium car out of the driveway, and this software is only going to get more complex



IMAGE: DAIMLER

The avionics system in the F-22 Raptor, the current U.S. Air Force frontline jet fighter, consists of about 1.7 million lines of software code. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, scheduled to become operational in 2010, will require about 5.7 million lines of code to operate its onboard systems. And Boeing's new 787 Dreamliner, scheduled to be delivered to customers in 2010, requires about 6.5 million lines of software code to operate its avionics and onboard support systems.

These are impressive amounts of software, yet if you bought a premium-class automobile recently, "it probably contains close to 100 million lines of software code," says Manfred Broy, a professor of informatics at Technical University, Munich, and a leading expert on software in cars. All that software executes on 70 to 100 microprocessor-based electronic control units (ECUs) networked throughout the body of your car.

Alfred Katzenbach, the director of information technology management at Daimler, has reportedly said that the radio and navigation system in the current S-class Mercedes-Benz requires over 20 million lines of code alone

and that the car contains nearly as many ECUs as the new Airbus A380 (excluding the plane's in-flight entertainment system). Software in cars is only going to grow in both amount and complexity. Late last year, the business research firm Frost & Sullivan estimated that cars will require 200 million to 300 million lines of software code in the near future.

Even low-end cars now have 30 to 50 ECUs embedded in the body, doors, dash, roof, trunk, seats, and just about anywhere else the car's designers can think to put them.

That means that most new cars are executing tens of million of lines of software code, controlling everything from your brakes to the volume of your radio [see table, "[How and Where Is Software Used in Cars?](#)"].

"Automobiles are no longer a battery, a distributor or alternator, and a carburetor; they are hugely modern in their complexity," says Thomas Little, an electrical engineering professor at Boston University in Massachusetts, who is involved in developing intelligent transportation systems. "The goals to save energy, reduce [emissions], and improve safety have driven the specialization and adoption of electronics in particular."

I have experienced that complexity myself recently. Last year I bought a new car and was staggered to discover a 500-page manual explaining its operations, along with a 200-page companion manual for the GPS and radio systems. One of the new features touted was the much larger glove compartment, but the size was probably dictated by that of the required .

My new car also comes with front and side passenger air bags. The car's air bag electronic controller—along with the dozen or so sensors that provide it with data—have to be able to operate for years in temperatures ranging from the dead of a freezing Minnesota winter to the blazing heat of an Arizona summer sun.

(continued on page 8)

(continued from page 7)

Most of the time the air bag system is just monitoring the car's condition, but if the air bags are triggered by, say, a multiple vehicle collision, the software in the ECU controlling their deployment has 15 to 40 milliseconds to determine "which air bags are activated and in which order," says Broy.

In the near future, Broy says, air-bag control systems will use more than just crash impact information. For example, BMW has just announced that many 2009 models will be equipped with its BMW Assist system, which features a "risk of severe injury" calculation based on information gathered from the car's air-bag controller and its other ECUs, which will inform accident response teams not only where the accident took place, but the likelihood of passengers being severely injured.

The current amount of software in cars is pretty amazing, given that the first production automotive microcomputer ECU was a single-function controller used for electronic spark timing in the 1977 General Motors Oldsmobile Toronado. In 1978, GM offered as an option its Cadillac Trip Computer on the Cadillac Seville. The computer, a modified Motorola 6802 microprocessor chip, displayed speed, fuel, trip, and engine information. However, the chip served another function: It was used by GM to test how well a microprocessor could control multiple functions such as port fuel injection, electronic spark timing, and cruise control.

By 1981, GM was using microprocessor-based engine controls executing about 50 000 lines of code across its entire domestic passenger car production. Other car companies quickly followed suit.

Jonas Bereisa, a GM engineer, wrote in a 1983 article in *IEEE Transactions on Industrial Electronics* that "software development will become the single most important consideration in new product development engineering." How right he was. Broy esti-

mates that more than 80 percent of car innovations come from computer systems and that software has become the major contributor of value (as well as sticker price) in cars. The cost of electronics as a percent of vehicle costs climbed from around 5 percent in the late 1970s to 15 percent by 2005 (excluding final assembly costs). For hybrids, where the amount of software needed for engine control alone is nearly twice as great as that for a standard car, the cost of electronics as a percent of vehicle costs is closer to 45 percent. Within 10 years, some experts predict that the percentages relating to the cost of electronics as a percent of vehicle cost are expected to rise to 50 percent for conventional vehicles and 80 percent for hybrids.

For today's premium cars, "the cost of software and electronics can reach 35 to 40 percent of the cost of a car," states Broy, with software development contributing about 13 to 15 percent of that cost. He says that if it costs US \$10 a line for developed software—a cost he says is low—for a premium car, its software alone represents about a billion dollars' worth of investment.

John Voelcker, *IEEE Spectrum's* automotive editor, wrote in April 2007 about [the GMC Yukon hybrid automobile and its Two-Mode Hybrid automatic transmission](#). Voelcker told me that "of all the staff hours in the entire program to build the Two-Mode Hybrid transmission...some 70 percent...were devoted to developing the control software."

As Voelcker pointed out in his story, that control software logic analyzes hundreds of inputs every 10 milliseconds, including vehicle load, engine operations, battery parameters, and the temperatures in the high-voltage electric components.

This article was contributed by Jerry Moore

HOW TO SEND AN EMAIL MESSAGE TO ANY CELL PHONE

Written by Ken Peters,

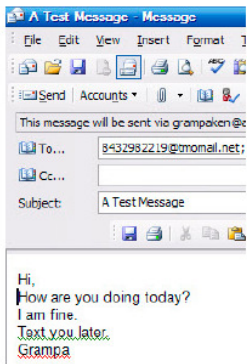
Hilton Head Computer Users Club

Impress your kids, grandkids and friends with your ability to text. Send a text message to their cell phone by email from your computer.

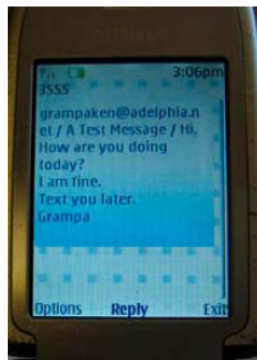
Most cell phones have the ability to send and receive short text messages. This is called short message service (SMS) or text paging. This service can take email sent over the internet and deliver them to a cell phone as a text message. Each carrier has its own email address extension i.e. @tmomail.net for T Mobile carrier.

The two things you need to know to send a message are the person's cell phone number and their carrier's email extension. So to send to a T Mobile phone, enter the phone number and add the extension - 8433216549@tmomail.net

The message will look similar to this.



The email message



Appears on cell phone

Some of the common cell phone emails are:

Alltel AT&T (formerly Cingular)

10-digit phone number@message.alltel.com
10-digit phone number@txt.att.net

Example: 2125551212@message.alltel.com
Example: 2125551212@txt.att.net

Boost Mobile Nextel (now part of Sprint Nextel)

10-digit phone number@myboostmobile.com
10-digit telephone number@messag

Example: 2125551212@myboostmobile.com
ing.nextel.com

Example:
7035551234@messaging.nextel.com

T-Mobile Verizon

10-digit phone number@tmomail.net 10-digit
phone number@vtext.com

Example: 4251234567@tmomail.net Exam-
ple: 5552223333@vtext.com

Virgin Mobile USA US Cellular

10-digit phone number@vmobl.com 10digit-
phonenumber@email.uscc.net

Example: 2622341256r@vmobl.com Exam-
ple: 2125551212@ email.uscc.net

Sprint PCS (now Sprint Nextel) 10-digit phone
number@messaging.sprintpcs.com Example:
2125551234@messaging.sprintpcs.com

If you can't find the email address for the carrier, check the carrier's website (Links above) or call their customer service.

The one receiving the message may be charged 10 to 15 cents per message unless they have a plan that includes text messaging. There is a 160 character limit per message including the email address and the subject line. Some carriers will split the message into two messages if it is longer.

The person receiving the email text message can reply to you from their phone and some-time later you'll receive their reply in your email inbox. If you don't like texting from a cell phone or hate trying to type a message with those small phone keys, give this a try. It's fun.

HOW TO SWITCH INTERNET BROWSERS

Written by **Sandy Berger**
CompuKiss

Microsoft's Internet Explorer is a software program that comes on all computers that use the Windows Operating System. Internet Explorer is called an Internet browser since it is the software that allows you to view Web pages and surf the Internet. In fact, at least 80% of you reading this Web page right now are using Internet Explorer. You don't, however, have to use Internet Explorer. There are several other Internet browsers available.

Due to recent critical security glitches in Internet Explorer, other browsers are looking more attractive. Also, while Internet Explorer has stagnated over the past several years, several other Internet browsers have overtaken it with useful new features and advanced functionality. Features like a tabbed interface that lets you quickly move from page to page and voice-activated menu systems have put alternative browsers like Firefox and Opera ahead of Internet Explorer.

Using an alternative browser is easy. You simply download the browser from the Web site of the manufacturer and install it on your computer. Firefox, Opera, and Chrome are all alternative browsers that are free downloads. Just follow the Web site instructions to download and install the new browser. During installation the program will see Internet Explorer and will ask you if you want to transfer your Favorites and other information from Internet Explorer to the new program. Most alternative browsers will help you make the switch from Internet Explorer to their browser program. When you install Opera, Netscape, or Firefox you will be given the option importing your Internet information. Opera can import bookmarks and favorites. Firefox allows you to import options, bookmarks, history, passwords, cookies, and other data from Internet Explorer. This works for many different browsers. For example, if you switch from

Internet Explorer to Netscape and decide that you would then like to switch to Opera, you can move your information from Internet Explorer to Netscape and then to Opera by simply following the instructions given during installation.

To use a different Internet browser, you don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer. In fact, it is best to leave Internet Explorer on your hard drive. Not only is Internet Explorer difficult to uninstall: you may need to use it in the future. Internet Explorer is the only browser that you can use to access the Windows Update Web site. Also, since it is the most popular Web browser, many Web sites are optimized for Internet Explorer. If you use an alternative Web browser, in your surfing you may find an occasional Web site that does not work properly in the browser that you have chosen. If that is the case, you can simply switch to Internet Explorer to access that Web site and switch back to your alternative browser for your main surfing. You see, there is no problem with using several different browsers. In fact, you can actually use two or three different browsers at the same time with no interference.

When you start using your new browser you will be asked if you want to set the new software as your default Web browser. Whatever browser is set as your default browser will be the browser that will appear when you click on a link in an e-mail or other document. If you want to use your new browser all the time, you will want to set it as the default. If you say no to setting the new program as your default, the program will continue to ask you this question every time you start it. Look for a notice with a check box in front of it to tell the program that you don't want to see that question again. For instance in Opera you will click to put a checkmark into the box in front of "Do not show this dialog again." In Firefox click to remove the checkmark in the box that says "Always perform this check when starting Firefox." Then the program will not ask that question again.

If you decide that you don't want to continue to use the new browser, you can switch back to Internet Explorer at any time. Any new favorites or cookies that you have added to the new browser can be transferred back to Internet Explorer by using the export and import settings in the two browsers. You simply export the information from the program you are using and import it into the program you want to use. Click on File, and choose Import/Export to use these functions. Most browsers have Wizards that will help you through the entire process. Some programs like Firefox make it easy to import information, but make it more difficult to export information. If a Wizard is not available you can use the programs Help menu for detailed instructions.

If you are used to using Internet Explorer, downloading and using a different Web browser is a big step. Although most alternative browsers are similar to Internet Explorer, you will need to invest some time into learning the new interface. Some features may not be obvious. For instance the tabbed browsing in Firefox is not instantly noticeable. So be sure to read the help files and information on the product's Web site to get the full gist of what features are available.

This article was contributed by our President, Shelly Stern.

THERE IS MORE TO MUSIC THAN THE IPOD

Written by Mike Morris, Editor, Front Range
PC Users Group, CO

<http://www.frpcug.org> twriterext (at) gmail.com

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

There is more to music—and more to life—than the iPod. I think I can prove that statement with the words that follow. Please don't misunderstand me. I admire the iPod as a successful product—a success technically and financially—even though I don't have one. However

I need to start my “proof” by saying that in previous articles that I have written for this newsletter, I made a claim to being an Old Analog Guy (as a reminder, the acronym = OAG and is pronounced “ogre”). It is with that persona that I bring this subject to your attention.

I just completed a catalog of nearly 300 old LP's that belonged to a family member who died last year. And when I say old, I mean some of those LP's have release dates more than 50 years old. Some of the recordings are much older than that. There are many memorable, and even historic, performances recorded on those albums.

A small part of that music has been re-released on CDs. But there is much of that music—almost all Jazz—that you will not currently find in any digital format. So put down your iPod (or one of its imitators) and please listen to what I have to say.

I decided to create a database for this catalog using Microsoft Access[®]. One significant issue, as you might expect, is just how much information to include in the database. This database is for family use—not for radio station or other broadcast use. I did, however,

want to make a record (no pun intended) of whatever information was necessary to properly document the collection. The most significant decision was related to the track (song) names, sequence and times on each side of each LP. Clearly, if I needed to document that information, both the data entry task and complexity of the database were going to be much higher. If the average number of tracks per side is 4 (it is probably higher), and I wanted to include all that information, then I was faced with a data entry task of $4 \times 2 \times 300 = 2400$ entries (plus all the other information I wanted to include).

1. “No big deal” you say—there are many much much larger databases in the world. You are correct. But remember, I am an OAG (please correctly pronounce that acronym). Therefore I was looking for an “easy” way to complete this task. Credit is due to Ken Campbell of radio station KRFC (more on that in a moment), a local public radio station, for a solution. Ken told me about an online music database called allmusic.com (<http://www.allmusic.com>) (yes, it is spelled with all lower case letters). It turns out there are many online music databases (a Google[®] search turned up more than 68,000, using the phrase “online music database”). The allmusic.com database was the best for my catalog project for the following reasons: A successful search for an artist will provide an Overview, a Biography, a Discography (a list of all albums by the artist known to the database, with title, date and label), Songs, Credits, and Charts and Awards.

2. From the discography, one can click on an album and get information (usually) on the album tracks (including times), composer(s), recording date(s), release date, label, format (LP or CD), the label's catalog number, and, for some albums, a review of the album.

The search options include artist/group, album, song, classical work. There is substantially more information about the Jazz genre than just a list of names and dates.

(continued on page 13)

(continued from page 12)

For example, on the Jazz “home page,” there are a number of “Related Essays” on Jazz, including “[A Brief History of Jazz.](#)”

For a project such as the cataloging of an existing music collection, with LP’s that are up to 50 years old, this database is the best choice by far of all of the databases examined or considered. It is the equivalent of an encyclopedia, and the functionality makes searching easy, with related data presented on a single page. The ability to link from a list of albums (discography) to a single album (or CD reissue) provides very efficient searching for a project of this type. That is not to say that it is error free. There are albums not included in the database—the web site makes no claim that it contains every album ever released. There are also tracks missing from some albums (or the track order in the database doesn’t match the order on the disk). An album may be in the database, but not in the artist’s discography. And, there are numerous problems with release and recording dates. Still, the “pros” far outweigh the “cons.”

There is a feature offered by this web site that is unique. Each page (any of the choices listed in item 1 above) has a “Corrections to this entry?” option, allowing the user to submit corrections. Those corrections are then researched for confirmation (if the web site statement is correct) before they are added to the database. That feature was used extensively during the research for this music cataloging project—although not every error or missing item was submitted.

For my project, the search by artist was the most effective. If an album was not listed in the artist’s discography, a search by album was the alternate choice. Although the database has many very early jazz albums, there were a few albums in the collection, both old and new—or at least “newer”—by well-known artists that were missing from the all music database. So, although not perfect, the all music database is an excellent research tool, and you don’t need the iTunes media player (or any other media player) to use it.

The database is not limited to research, however. You can listen to short sound bytes from some tracks, and there are links that allow you to buy selected tracks or albums (correction – CDs).

OK, so your iPod and the iTunes media player are great for listening to (and buying) current and even “relatively” old music. But the iTunes media player is not going to help you—to same extent as the allmusic database will—find classic old Jazz performances (and perhaps classic performances from other genres). And, you must have the iTunes media player installed on your computer before you can do any searching with it.

You may be wondering why I am talking about online databases and why I consider a good online database important to my “proof.” Yes, there is a relationship. But before I offer the conclusion, I have several comments on other databases.

Another online database used rarely was Gracenote®, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America. Gracenote is used “...for digital media recognition of CDs, digital music files, and streaming audio. With the most comprehensive database of music information in the world, the Gracenote Media Database contains information for more than 80 million tracks and 6 million CDs....” This database is normally linked to media players, such as Winamp®, to automatically identify music on a CD or from a download. It provides album title (and, in some cases, an image of the album cover), and track names—if you connect through a media player (or other audio/video equipment with the enabling software installed that is connected to the internet).

If you connect to Gracenote directly from a browser (<http://www.gracenote.com/>), the search options are artists, albums, tracks. A successful search on an artist returns a list of albums (a lot less than the allmusic database) released by that artist that are known to the database.

(continued on page 14)

It is important to note that the quantity information in the Gracenote advertisement makes an explicit reference to CDs

The album information is similar to that in the allmusic database, except that there are no track times. There are, however, links to the lyrics of some tracks—for those songs that have them. Also the “Buy” buttons are much more prevalent, and much more obvious in the Gracenote database, compared to the allmusic database.

Another online database examined briefly was Rhapsody[®], <http://www.rhapsody.com/home.html>, a service provided by RealNetworks.com, better known for its Real[®] media player. The company claims to provide “Technology and services that help people enjoy digital entertainment whenever and wherever they want.”

Connect to the Rhapsody website and the first thing you will notice are the annoying animated ads. Get beyond that and the search options are artist, keyword, track, album, composer, video, lyrics, and playlist. If a search for an album is successful, you can, for most albums, get track information by clicking on the album image—but that track information (no times) is very probably going to be from a more current CD release, not from the original LP, depending on how old that original LP is and how popular the album was. However, there is nowhere near the same level of information available from this database, compared to the allmusic database. The Rhapsody database is organized for listening to (or buying) music that is already known to the user, either by song name or by artist (in my opinion). It is not an effective research tool for finding information on old LP’s. It is not necessary to have the Real player installed in order to search the Rhapsody database.

Now listen up everyone! Here is my reason for talking about music databases:

There is some great old music out there! In all genres. Please don’t get so comfortable with your iPod that you ignore that music. Especially when you have a resource such as the all music online database to help you identify it, catalog it, find reviews on it and find some history of it.

I suspect that many of you reading this article (I hope there are many readers) have some of that “great old music” sitting on your shelves or in your cabinets. Or perhaps stored away somewhere. If so, “unstore” it. You will, I am certain, enjoy that music, especially with the added information available from the allmusic database.

And that is what I mean when I say “There Is More to Music than the iPod.”

WHAT IF YOUR CAR RAN LIKE YOUR COMPUTER?

For all of us who feel only the deepest love and affection for the way computers have enhanced our lives, read on.

At a recent computer expo (COMDEX), Bill Gates reportedly compared the computer industry with the auto industry and stated,

'If GM had kept up with technology like the computer industry has, we would all be driving \$25.00 cars that got 1,000 miles to the gallon.'

In response to Bill's comments, General Motors issued a press release stating:

If GM had developed technology like Microsoft, we would all be driving cars with the following characteristics (and I just love this part):

1. For no reason whatsoever, your car would crash.....
Twice a day.
2. Every time they repainted the lines in the road, you would have to buy a new car.
3. Occasionally your car would die on the freeway for no reason. You would have to pull to the side of the road, close all of the windows, shut off the car, restart it, and reopen the windows before you could continue. For some reason you would simply accept this.
4. Occasionally, executing a maneuver such as a left turn would cause your car to shut down and refuse to restart, in which case you would have to reinstall the engine.
5. Macintosh would make a car that was powered by the sun, was reliable, five times as fast and twice as easy to drive - but would run on only five percent of the roads.
6. The oil, water temperature, and alternator warning lights would all be replaced by a single 'This Car Has Performed An Illegal Operation' warning light.
7. The airbag system would ask 'Are you sure?' before deploying.
8. Occasionally, for no reason whatsoever, your car would lock you out and refuse to let you in until you simultaneously lifted the door handle, turned the key and grabbed hold of the radio antenna.
9. Every time a new car was introduced car buyers would have to learn how to drive all over again because none of the controls would operate in the same manner as the old car.
10. You'd have to press the 'Start' button to turn the engine off .

Contributed by Eva Schmidler.



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