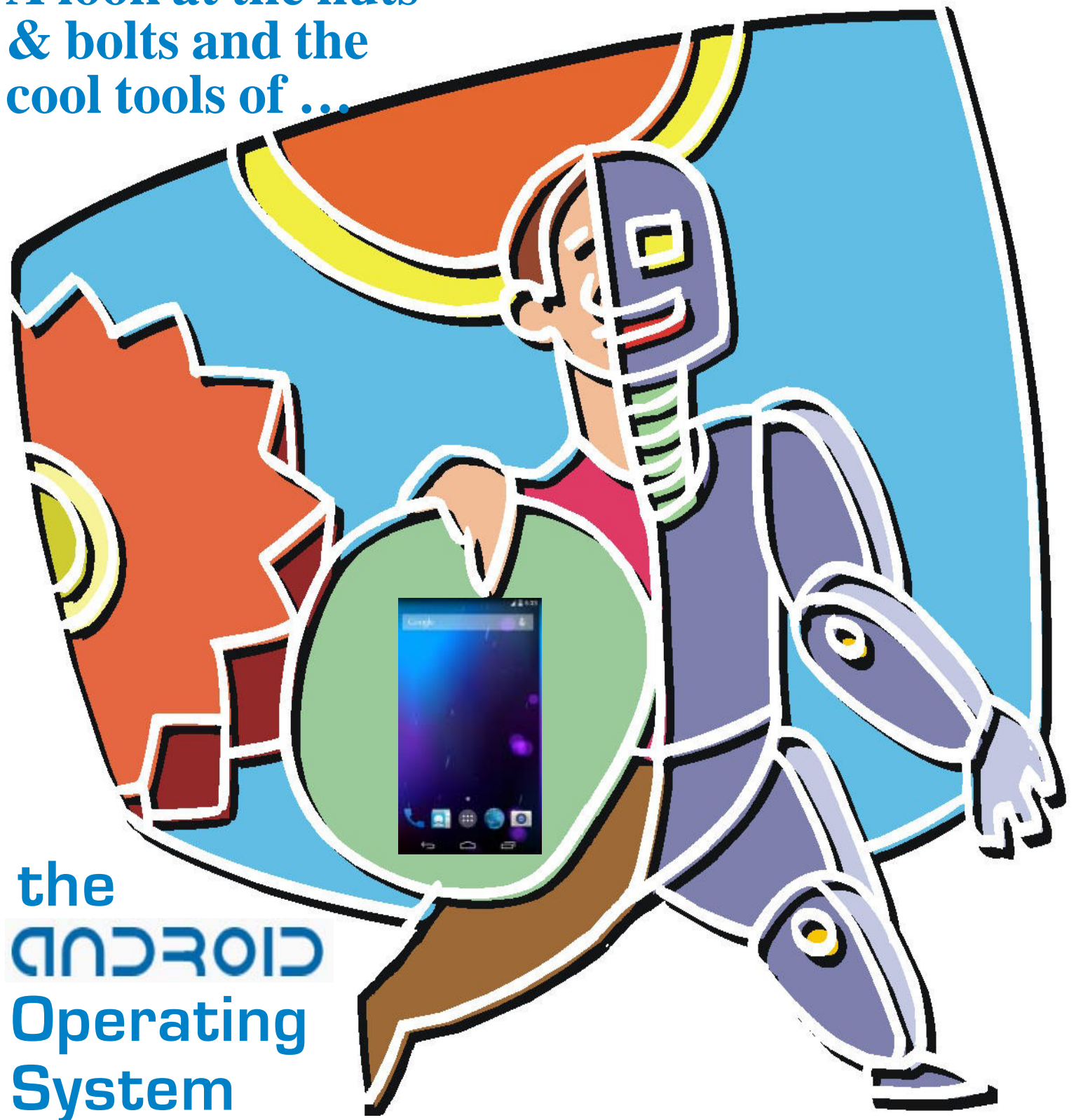


Next Meeting, April 1
A look at the nuts
& bolts and the
cool tools of ...



the
ANDROID
Operating
System

Directors' Notes

A meeting of your board of directors was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2014. Attending were: Richard Corzo, Dick Gingras, Lisa Leifels, Bruce Preston, Bill Saturno, Jim Scheef, Richard Teasdale, Andy Woodruff. Guest: Charles Bovaird. The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM.

The minutes of last meeting were accepted.

Treasurer's Report February 2014

Balance on hand 2/1/14 \$3,846.61

INCOME

Donation \$2.00

Dues \$102.36

Total Income: \$104.36

EXPENSES

Newsletter Postage \$43.40

Newsletter Printing \$78.00

Renewal Postcard Postage \$5.10

Resource Center Phone & Internet \$71.63

Resource Center Security (4x/yr) \$86.27

Web Hosting (3 yrs) \$251.64

Total Expenses \$536.04

Balance on hand 2/28/14 \$3,414.93

New Business

Annual officer elections for Secretary, Treasurer, President.

- Bert Goff has agreed to be Treasurer for one year.

- Bruce Preston has agreed to extend his term as Secretary for one more year.

- Dick Gingras has agreed to be President for one year.

Old Business

1. General meetings

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- March 4: Xbox One and End of XP-Microsoft Store. Preview: Richard Corzo, Review: Richard Teasdale. (Note: Bruce filled in for Jim to do Ask DACS.)

- April 1: Android-Jeff Postolowski, WCSU. Preview: Richard Corzo, Review: _____

- May 6: John Patrick-State of the Internet. Preview: _____, Review: _____

- Possible future topics:

- We've started to do a "Meet the SIG" segment between the Ask DACS session and the featured presentation. We did the Mobile Devices/Windows 8 SIG in February. Annette will do Web Design in May. Available for future months: Drupal.

- "LifeStream" monitoring. Mike Kaltschnee mentioned FitBit (currently available at BestBuy) or other 'wearable electronics.' Andy spoke with Jeff Schlicht, professor of Health Promotion & Exercise at WestConn, about a possible presentation at DACS re wearable electronic devices that monitor exercise and/or body functions. At present Jeff is not committed. Bill Saturno may have access to someone who has Google Glass and someone who has an Oculus Rift (virtual reality headset). Another possible device that can be covered is the Pebble Watch.

- Andy suggested a session on creating a web site of various types: blog, brochure, e-commerce site, etc. - making use of such products/services as SiteBuilder (online or on PC), turnkey sites, etc. Andy suggested that as a computer group we should do some sort of session that would answer the question: "I think I need a web site, what are my options?" This might involve a "high level" overview of the various approaches. Andy (and to some extent Bruce) wanted to talk about the entry level 'turnkey' systems where you must live within the constraints of the design, where Annette is more concerned about "What happens if it doesn't do what you want it to do?" Annette and Andy will discuss creating an outline that describes at a high-level what components might be a part of a web site and the repercussions they have upon the construction of the site.

Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 3

Membership Information

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DACS, its officers and directors assume no liability for damages arising out of the publication or non-publication of any article, advertisement, or other item in this newsletter.

The editors welcome submissions from DACS members. Contact Richard Teasdale (dacseditor@dacs.org). Advertisers, contact Charles Bovaird at (203) 792-7881 (aam@mags.net).

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Applications & Hardware to enhance *dacs.doc* are welcome.



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Apple User Group

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HelpLine

Our former telephone HelpLine has been replaced by our web-based DACS Community Forum at <http://forum.dacs.org>. We have topic-specific forums where DACS members can post questions. Questions may be answered by SIG leaders or other DACS members. If none of the categories fit your question, just post it to the Ask DACS forum.

Topic

.NET Programming
Digital cameras/scanners/image processing
Content Management Systems
Linux
Mac and iPhone/iPad/iPod touch
PC maintenance
Smartphones & Tablets
Virtual machine software
Desktop publishing and website design
Windows

Forum

ASP.Net and C#VB.Net SIG
Digital Imaging SIG
Drupal SIG
Linux SIG
Apple SIG
PC Maintenance SIG
Mobile Devices SIG
Virtual Computing SIG
Web Site Design SIG
Windows SIG

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 2

° Lisa suggested a "decision tree" presentation - "What should I get?" - Windows or Mac, desktop, all-in-one, notebook, tablet, or even smartphone - Android or iOS, etc. Lots of decisions - how to decide what meets your needs. We think this would be a 'tough' presentation to pull off but a lively session. Bruce will concentrate on desktops, Richard Corzo will concentrate on mobile devices, Jim and Charlie will work on defining the metrics.

° Video production - putting something up on YouTube, or short personal videos on Vine, Instagram, etc. Approach WestConn or Naugatuck to see if a student might do it. Perhaps for a senior project? Andy is currently working on a project. He potentially could do a presentation mid-to-late summer.

° Home theater systems. Jim is in the process of assembling one and might be able to put together a program based upon his experiences. Andy will look for an independent home theater installation company. Comparison of services such as Xfinity, CableVision, DirecTV etc. Carston Stereo might be a good prospect - Andy will talk to them. Richard wrote a newsletter article on watching YouTube on TV.

° Digital cameras - higher end digital cameras. Explanation of what they have that you don't get in a phone, etc. What is RAW mode, HDR, sensor size, what causes noise, etc. Andy offered to do it, but not for March. Jim suggested that we might be able to get a member from Candlewood Camera Club. Bob Green is a member.

° 3DPrinting - Bill Saturno may be able to come up with a speaker for this topic.

° Jim would like to see things like the Raspberry Pi, Arduino etc. Jim will see if he can find a speaker, perhaps someone from Hackerspace.

° Andy suggested an overview of the "app development" process. Discussion last month followed as to how it might be made interesting to general populace. We did mobile app development (iOS and Android) in November 2012.

2. Workshop

° March 15: XP to Ubuntu Linux Workshop - Bruce Preston, David Mawdsley, Jim Ritterbusch, Sean Henderson. Preview: Bruce Preston, Review: _____

Directors' Notes, Cont. on page 11

Meeting Review

Xbox One and the Termination of Windows XP Support

By Richard Teasdale

THE MAIN TOPIC OF the evening at the DACS General Meeting for March 2014 was Microsoft's new entertainment offering, the Xbox One. Staff members from the Microsoft store in the Danbury Fair Mall described and demonstrated the product. Although somewhat unstructured, the presentation was very informative and the enthusiasm of the presenters for their product was evident.

Carolyn Bighinatti, the Community Development Specialist at the store, introduced the presenters, Dave and Nick. Dave is an "Xbox guru" and Nick is a service technician at the store. Carolyn, who is no stranger to DACS meetings, reminded the audience of the services, many of them free, offered by the Microsoft store.

Unlike its predecessor, Xbox 360, the Xbox One is more than just a gaming platform - it is a full-blown entertainment control center. "Built for the Future", the Xbox One interfaces with many other devices that the average family probably owns. The name of the product is meant to symbolize Microsoft's goal of having a single device be the control center for all entertainment functions.

Xbox One consists of a computer with an 8-core processor running at 1.75GHz, controlled by a modified version of Windows 8, tied to a Kinect user interface device and a game controller. No monitor is included, because the owner is expected to connect it to a TV. The characteristic tiled start screen of Windows 8 is immediately recognizable. Over time, the Kinect learns the unique body movements ("gestures") and voices of its users. The Xbox can also be controlled via smartphone and through Microsoft's tablet device, the Surface, using the free Smartglass app.

Kinect is not new with Xbox One, having been introduced several years ago for earlier Xbox models, but has been improved. It is a motion sensing and voice recognition technology which detects gestures and voice commands by the user. Despite some slow responses, the presenters demonstrated the use of Kinect; the sluggishness was attributed to the fact that the demonstration unit was brand new and had therefore not fully learned the profiles of the presenters.

Xbox One includes a built-in Blu-ray (and DVD and CD) player. In addition, it can physically connect to virtually any

device which has an HDMI interface, including TVs, "Smart" TVs, computers, cable or satellite boxes, and home theater receivers. It connects wirelessly to mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets.

The Xbox One's 500GB hard drive allows many apps to be installed, e.g. Netflix, Hulu Plus, YouTube, NFL, personal fitness applications, Internet Explorer, and even Skype, using the included Kinect camera. The camera has a very wide-angle lens and is able to detect the presence of people anywhere in the room, and "follow" specific individuals. The Xbox's operating system has full multi-tasking capability; one or more apps can be suspended while the user goes to another.

Beginning March 11, Xbox will be integrated with the online gaming site, Twitch.

All games can now be purchased from the Xbox One Game Store through digital download as well as on disk. In fact, all products purchased from Microsoft, including software, music, games, movies, etc. can be obtained via download instead of on disk. Ownership is tracked via an associated Microsoft account.

All different types of Microsoft account are integrated for single sign-on under the umbrella of a Microsoft Account, which connects the user to all Microsoft services, e.g. Xbox Live Gold, enabling multiplayer games and some other features. (One Xbox Live Gold account can be used by all family members within the same household.) Use of Xbox One is all based on user accounts, which are portable. Once a user has established a profile, they can use it on any Xbox One device, anywhere.

An app is available for interfacing with OneDrive, Microsoft's cloud storage service, which allows media stored in a OneDrive account to be played on Xbox One.

Dave described the use of Xbox, via the Kinect interface, to control other devices, e.g. switching the cable box to watch a desired TV channel. There is no support yet for digital video recording (DVR) devices but there is a feature called "Game DVR", which continually records the most recent 15 seconds of a game-playing session and, on command, stores the recorded track for future playback and viewing.

Dave and Nick emphasized that Microsoft is making an effort to listen to its customers and make improvements to

its products wherever they are needed.

Extensions to the basic Xbox One product are still in the works, e.g. Dave mentioned that a keyboard will be available in the near future. Also, Microsoft will shortly release a new stereo headset customized for use with the Xbox One.

In response to an audience question, the presenters explained that Xbox 360 and Xbox One are separate worlds as far as gaming is concerned, although media that are associated with a Microsoft Account can be transferred between the platforms. No emulation facility currently exists to allow Xbox 360 games to be played on an Xbox One (like there was for original Xbox games on the Xbox 360), but Dave and Nick did not rule it out as a future possibility.

Another question inquired about the security features of Xbox One, but the presenters were unable to offer many specifics beyond the fact that the operating system includes a software firewall.

The presentation concluded with an outline of Microsoft's plans for support of users who still use Windows XP and/or Office 2003. Basic support for these products will terminate on April 8, 2014. The Microsoft product, Security Essentials, will continue to support XP for another year. Microsoft will provide a free transfer tool, PC Mover Express, for migrating system settings to a Windows 7 or 8 machine. A Professional version will be available for \$24 to transfer compatible software. More information is available at www.windowsxp.com.



Do you have a burning computer question, but can't make it to the meeting, or just never seem to get your hand up in time? Email your inquiry to Jim Scheef, the answer guy, at askdacs@dacs.org, and your question will be taken up at Ask DACS at the next meeting.

Meeting Preview

Android – Jeff Postolowski

By Richard Corzo

APPLE CAME OUT WITH the iPhone in 2007. It was a phone, iPod music player, and mobile Internet browser in a single device, with a large touch screen but no numeric keypad or keyboard. Nokia and many other manufacturers had started to put out so-called smartphone features based on the Symbian operating system. BlackBerry had much success by focusing on constant access to e-mail on a phone with their famous keyboard. Palm was out there with their Palm-based Treo phone on which you could install apps. Microsoft had Windows Mobile with a tiny start menu that required a stylus to operate the phone. Finally there was Google, who, to keep their dominance in Internet advertising, wanted to have a strong presence in the mobile space. So they had been working on a phone OS for running Java apps.

Eventually all realized, but probably Google the most quickly, that the iPhone had changed the game. Suddenly all existing phones looked obsolete next to the iPhone. Google went back and retooled the Android OS they had been working on to enable an all-touch-screen interface. The Asian manufacturers who had based their phones on Symbian or Windows Mobile started to look for alternatives. Within a year Google was able to release the first version of Android. It was billed as an open OS which phone manufacturers could customize in response to the iPhone. Samsung's earliest smartphones based on Android closely mimicked the look of the iPhone.

In the U.S., Apple had signed an exclusive contract with AT&T and was gaining customers due to that exclusivity. The larger carrier, Verizon, was eager to find phones that could compete. It spent a lot of money promoting phones based on Android, ensuring that it would gain a strong foothold in the market. Google charged the phone manufacturers nothing to use Android. Since many of those phones were lower-priced and could be offered free on contract, cost-conscious consumers responded positively to the chance to gain iPhone-like features for less, or were just curious to try something new.

A year after the iPhone debuted, it gained an app store which quickly attracted

a slew of developers and made the iPhone even more desirable for customers. Android came out with the Android Marketplace, which also had apps but had some catching up to do. It was a bit more challenging to develop for, due to the wide variety of phones to support, but that variety also attracted a range of customers. Technically-inclined customers were also attracted by the ability to install apps from sources other than the Android Marketplace (later called Google Play Store), as well as the possibility of replacing the manufacturer- and carrier-customized version of Android on their phone with a version more to their liking.

In 2010 the next challenge for Android was Apple's iPad, based on the iOS operating system used by the iPhone. It was fairly easy for developers to create apps uniquely adapted for the larger screen. Google's response was the Honeycomb (3.0) release of Android which started to enable Android tablets to be built. The earliest success came with the 7-inch tablets, on which scaled-up phone apps still looked reasonable. Google continued to enhance Android for tablets, and developers started to create tablet-optimized apps, allowing larger Android tablets to be viable.

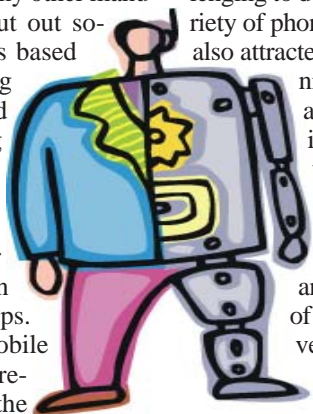
Our speaker, Jeff Postolowski, is a server and network administrator at Western Connecticut State University. He actually started with an iPhone in its early years, but quickly replaced the installed iOS with an alternate OS that allowed him to customize it to his liking. When it came time to replace his phone, he was an obvious candidate for the greater flexibility of Android and has never looked back. He will be a great resource for your Android questions.

In addition to showing us all the ins and outs of Android on phones and tablets, Jeff may also talk to us about Google Chromecast, a video streaming device based on Android, which plugs into your HDTV and connects to your home Wi-Fi network. Combined with an Android phone or tablet, it's starting to become a powerful entertainment option, although perhaps for those who are a bit more technically astute.

So if you've been considering an Android device or already have one, come to the April 1st general meeting to hear everything you always wanted to know about Android.

DACS meetings are usually held at Danbury Hospital auditorium. (Go to www.dacs.org to find directions and parking information.) Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for registration and casual networking. Meetings start at 7:00 p.m. with a Q&A period (Ask DACS), followed by announcements and a short break. The featured presentation begins at 8:00 p.m. The meeting is scheduled to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.

DACS General Meetings are free and open to the public. Members and prior attendees are encouraged to extend invitations to anyone interested in this topic.



Special Interest Groups

SIG NOTES: April 2014

Apple. Focuses on all aspects of the Mac and iPhone operating systems.

Contact: Richard Corzo (macsig@dacs.org).

Meets 2nd Monday, 7 p.m. at DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Apr 14

Digital Imaging. All about digital cameras, retouching, and printing using various programs.

Contact: Ken Graff at 203 648-9747 (thedigitalwiz@gmail.com).
Meets last Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Spring 2014

Drupal. Covers all things on Drupal, the open source content management system (CMS).

Contact: Jim Scheef (jscheef@dacs.org).

Meets on the second Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center, or go to the DACS Community Forum (<http://www.dacs.org/forum/>) within the Members only area.

Next meeting: Apr 10

Jobs. Networking and jobs search

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (aam@mags.net).

Go to DACS Community Forum (<http://forum.dacs.org> for job listings).

Linux. Helps in installing and maintaining the Linux operating system. Also of interest to Apple owners using OS X.

Contact: Dave Mawdsley, linuxsig@dacs.org

Meets 3rd Wednesday, 7:30 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Apr 16

Mobile Devices. Focuses on smartphones, tablets, and e-readers of all makes and models.

Contact: Richard Corzo and Jim Scheef (Mobilesig@dacs.org)

Meets 4th Monday, 7 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center

Next Meeting: Apr 24

PC Maintenance. Review of PC hardware and OpSys maintenance and use.

Contact: Charles Bovaird, 203-792-7881 (aam@mags.net).

Go to DACS Community Forum (<http://forum.dacs.org>).

Server. Explores Back Office server and client applications, including Win NT Servers and MS Outlook. SIG is on hiatus and presently merged into the Drupal SIG.

Contact: Jim Scheef (jscheef@telemarrksys.com), or go to the DACS Community Forum: <http://www.dacs.org/forum/>, within the Members-only area

Web Design and DTP. Learn about Adobe software for web, graphics and desktop publishing.

Contact: Annette van Ommeren (avo@annagraphics.com).

Meets 3rd Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. at the DACS Resource Center.

Next Meeting: Apr 15

SIG News & Events

Apple. March's topic was digital magazines, books, and offline maps.

Apple sells magazines in the App Store that show up in the Newsstand app on your iPad or iPhone, but those are the only two places you can read them. Zinio (<http://www.zinio.com>) is a seller of digital magazines which has been around for a long time, starting with applications that run on your Windows PC or Mac. Zinio kept up when mobile devices started appearing; its publications are available on iOS and Android devices, and Zinio even has a Windows 8 Store app. It has a deep inventory to choose from, including foreign magazines. You buy the magazine or subscription once, and it's available on all your devices by logging in to your Zinio account. Zinio supports bookmarks but those are available only on the particular device where you save them, and doesn't support syncing across devices (a feature available on some e-book platforms). The Barnes & Noble (<http://www.barnesandnoble.com>) NOOK store is another good source for magazines and is available on the same mobile devices as Zinio (including Windows 8), but no longer provides Windows PC and Mac desktop applications. Instead they have a NOOK for Web application that runs in most current browsers.

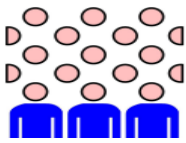
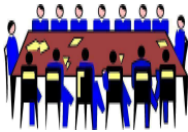







In recent years, Apple has been selling e-books in the App Store that appear in the iBooks application on your iPad and

iPhone. Since the release of OS X Mavericks in October 2013, Macs now have an iBooks application for reading the same iBooks in your library. Other sellers of e-books, such as Barnes & Noble NOOK and Amazon Kindle, are available on more platforms. They sell their own dedicated e-reader devices and tablets, as well as offering apps in the App Store for Apple devices. They are able to remember your reading location when you switch from one device or computer to another. I prefer the NOOK format because it offers page numbers and not just a percentage complete as is typical with the Amazon Kindle format. NOOK and iBooks are able to side load and read the EPUB format in which you sometimes find e-books, often free, that do not have DRM protection.

You sometimes find PDF maps that you can download and use off line (when a Wi-Fi or cellular data connection is not available). A great app for that purpose is Avenza PDF Maps (<http://www.avenza.com/pdf-maps>). Since I go hiking I can find PDF trail maps for Connecticut parks at the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (<http://www.ct.gov/deep/>). I can paste the URL I find in Safari into the PDF Maps app to save the map and later view it. The app has a digital map store with some free and paid maps of all kinds in the U.S. and worldwide. If you create an account the maps will be available on all your iOS (and Android) devices.

April 2014

Danbury Area Computer Society

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
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20	21	22	23	24  Mobile Devices 7:00 PM Jim Scheef & Richard Corzo mobilesig@dacs.org	25	26																																																																																																		
27	28	29	30  Digital Imaging 7:00 PM Ken Graff 203 648-9747 thedigitalwiz@gmail.com	<div> <div> Mar 2014 <table> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr> <tr><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> <div> May 2014 <table> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr> <tr><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> </div>			S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					
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Peripherals

Fun With Your Scanner

by Jim Cerny

IN A PREVIOUS ARTICLE, we looked at the many options and ways of having fun with your printer. This time I would like to look at using a scanner. It only makes sense that if you are purchasing a new printer it is a good idea to get a "combo" printer that includes a scanner.

Scanners have been around for a long time and their technology keeps improving. If you have a scanner, you can think of it as a digital camera - it is really taking a digital photo of what you are scanning and making a new file of that image on your computer. Anything you can do with a digital photo you can do with what you scan with your scanner - it creates a ".jpg" file, for example. Here are some basic tips for using a scanner (but read your scanner's manual!).

When you install your scanner (i.e. combo printer) it will create an icon on your computer Windows desktop to control it. Whenever I scan something I first double-click on that icon to open it and use the controls there to control the scanner. Many combo printers have some controls and buttons to push on the control panel to make copies, print, or do a scan, but I always find that I see more options and get better results if I always use the controls on my computer window. When you do a scan you need to provide the scanner with some information - such as the following:

- File type - do you want to save your scanned image as a ".jpg" photo file? That is my usual choice. But other file types may be available too if you want or need them.
- File name - give your new file a meaningful name.
- Destination folder - into what folder would you like your new file to be placed? My usual selection is "My documents". I can move the file anywhere from there whenever I want. You should always be aware of where your scanner is putting the new files so that you can find them!
- Scan resolution - the higher the density (of dots per inch) the higher the resolution and the more time it takes to scan and create the new file. Go with the suggested default resolution settings to start with and change them later if you need to. Usually 200 dpi (dots per inch) is fine, although most scanners are capable of much higher resolutions.

Scanners will have "default" settings for these and other options. Read your manual to understand how to change these default settings - or you can change them before each scan is performed.

Double-click (the right mouse button) on the printer/scanner icon on your desktop and follow the instructions. Place the object you would like to scan flat (and I mean totally flat) on the clean scanning bed - facedown, of course, the scanner is not an x-ray machine! Then click on the "scan" control box on your computer window. The pop-ups should tell you what the settings will be for the scan or give you an opportunity to change them. I always give the file a good name, put it into the "My documents" folder, and use ".jpg" as the file type (scanning the object to create a photo file). When I hit the "scan" button on the screen, the scanner will do an "initial scan" of the object and display it in your window. Now you may be able to change the area scanned (that is, you can select only a portion of the image to scan, sort of like cropping a photo). So if you are scanning the page of a magazine, you can select only what you want on that page to be scanned for your final image. When you are ready, hit "scan" again and wait for the results. After a scan has completed, always view the file you created right away to make sure it worked! Scanning your old family

photos to create timeless digital images is always a good use for a scanner.

If you are scanning text (and this is really amazing) you can scan the text and put it directly into a Word file, for example. Do you understand what this means? It means your scanner can actually "read" text and put the text right into a Word file (or another text file) just as if you typed the text in using your keyboard. You can then edit and change the text in the file all you want. So in this case, your scanner is not "taking a photo" of the text or creating a .jpg file -- it is interpreting the text and entering it into a word processor file for you - so you do not have to enter the text from the keyboard! An example of this would be scanning a recipe from a document, letting your scanner create a text file with the words (you would select a text "file type" such as Word (.doc) or .txt or other text file type you know you can open and edit) and then opening the file and changing the recipe.

Don't forget that Google is a great source of information. Even if you lost your scanner manual, just enter the make and model in Google and get all the information you need. But take some time to try your scanner and see what happens. You are not going to break it by trying it out. I am sure you will be impressed.

Finally, remember that it is illegal to scan (or copy) copyrighted material - you know, like books or money. Well, maybe you could scan a few coins but I don't think they would work in a vending machine anyway.

JIM CERNY is director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida. This article appeared in the October 2013 issue, *PC Monitor* (www.spcug.org; jimcerny123@gmail.com).

This article has been distributed for reprint by user groups.



Let's join heads!

Do you have a special technology interest you would like to share or learn more about? Join a DACS SIG or start one. You don't have to be a nerd or a guru — just have a curiosity for what's out there and an interest in sharing or dis-

covering with others like you. Just send an e-mail to dacsprez@dacs.org, or talk to one of our officers at the next meeting, and say something like "I want to start a SIG!" or "Wouldn't it be nice if we had a SIG on . . .?"



Making Connections

I/O, I/O, It's Off To Work We Go

by Phil Sorrentino

THE WORK I'M TALKING about here is computer data transfer. I/O or Input/Output is a term used to collect all the ways you can move data into and/or out of a computer. (This may be a review for some, but there are a few new ideas that might make it worth the time.) For all of those that have been with computers from the beginning, circa 1980, the only way into or out of your computer, then, was through the serial and parallel ports (the keyboard, mouse, and display interfaces were really internal and were only used for their intended purposes). Fortunately, the serial and parallel interfaces have been replaced with interfaces that are much faster and much more flexible and easier to use. Today, most of the I/O is conducted over the Universal Serial Bus (USB) interface. However, there are a few special purpose interfaces that have become basic to computer use.

Early on, audio was included in the computer's bag of tricks so we now typically have an audio-in for a microphone and an audio-out for speakers. Many computers also have another audio-in, usually tagged as line-in. Audio-out is typically used to drive external speakers and line-in is typically used to input a stereo analog signal for use by audio processing software. Also added early on was an Ethernet connection which has become the computer's on-ramp to the Internet. Yes, and Wi-Fi (Wireless-Fidelity) has certainly become the mechanism for all – laptops, netbooks, tablets, and smartphones – to get onto the Internet. Wi-Fi is a wireless I/O, and therefore needs no connectors or wires. It is all accomplished by the transmitter and receiver hardware and software, within the computer. There are two other wireless interfaces, Bluetooth and NFC. Bluetooth is becoming very popular as a way to easily connect various Bluetooth compatible devices to the computer with no wires cluttering up the computer area. Bluetooth sets up a PAN (Personal Area Network) around the computer, usually within 10 meters. Bluetooth is also finding its way into many places like the living room entertainment center and the automobile. NFC (Near Field Communications) is a very

short range (less than 4 inches) wireless interface that may or may not be used on a computer but will probably be used with smartphones to help make the electronic wallet possible in the future.

Not so early on, around the time laptops became portable, rather than luggable, a video display output port started to appear. This became the very popular VGA (Video Graphics Array) output port (a.k.a. the RGB port because it provided Red, Green, and Blue analog video signals). The VGA port was typically used with an external display device like a larger display or a projector. For a brief time, the DVI (Digital Video Interface) began to take over the job of moving digital video information from the computer to an external display device, but it was soon overtaken by a more comprehensive and versatile interface. Today, the VGA and the DVI port, is being replaced by a digital multi-media port, the HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) port. The HDMI port carries both digital video and digital audio signals from the computer to a digital display device. (HDMI is also used in most new digital entertainment centers and digital televisions. Many new digital TVs even provide multiple HDMI input ports, so you can connect cable boxes and DVD players to the TV.) HDMI is also being used on small devices such as smartphones and camcorders and as such is being made available in mini and micro sizes.

So, besides audio and video, most of the digital data that is transferred to and from the computer is done via the USB ports. Modern computers usually have multiple USB connectors (laptops maybe 2 to 4, and desktops may have 2 to many). The USB port is a rectangular plug that is keyed so you cannot plug the connector in incorrectly. The USB connector also provides a limited amount of power to the device connected to it, which can be used to charge a battery or even power the device. Because the USB connector provides power to the connecting device, many smartphones and media players charge their batteries through the USB connector. Currently USB is at version 3.0. (Early versions were 1.0 which was little used, 1.1 which was very popular but slow at only

12 Mbps, and 2.0 which was ubiquitous, and fast at up to 480 Mbps.) USB 3.0 devices began to appear in January 2010. USB 3.0 has a maximum data rate of 5 Gbps, yes that's 5 thousand Mega bits per second. That is a maximum, and most data transfers will probably not be near 5 Gbps, but they will be very fast. Fortunately, USB 3.0 is backward compatible with both 1.1 and 2.0. Backward compatibility means that devices at any USB version can operate together, although the data transfer will only be at the speed of the lowest USB version. USB 3.0 connectors usually have a blue center post to identify them as 3.0. Because USB is used on so many small devices, like smartphones and tablets, USB connectors come in Mini and Micro sizes. USB has become so fast and ubiquitous that it has just about eclipsed the other, almost popular, serial bus, IEEE1394 (a.k.a. FireWire).

There are a few other interfaces that may show up on a higher-end computer. These tend to be for special purposes or are extremely fast. One interface, for the purpose of connecting external hard drives, is eSATA (external Serial Advanced Technology Attachment). This interface is not as popular as it was before USB 3.0 became available, but it is still a way to extend the computer's hard drive capability. Thunderbolt is another special purpose interface, rarely seen on typical computers, with speeds up to 10 Gbps. Thunderbolt can connect multiple compatible devices in a daisy chained configuration. DisplayPort is another special purpose Video Display interface that is very fast, it is advertised at up to 21.6 Gbps, and is designed for multiple displays. These very fast interfaces may be found on professional Display systems that require resolution and refresh rates far beyond those of HDMI. This type of display may be found in medical systems that may be used to display MRI Scans or X-Rays. DisplayPort may be found on some high-end machines, maybe gaming machines and if resolutions beyond 1080p ever find their way to the home, you may find DisplayPort driving those display devices.

The job of moving digital data around is tough work, but these interfaces seem to be up to the job, and I'm sure the ones that will come in the future will probably be faster, more versatile and even more capable.

PHIL SORRENTINO is past president, Sarasota PCUG, Florida. This article appeared in the November 2013 issue, PC Monitor (www.spcug.org; [philsorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:philsorr@yahoo.com)).

This article has been distributed for reprint by user groups.

Office Tools

Free Internet Faxing Services: No Fax Machine Required!

by Bob Rankin

DUMP YOUR FAX MACHINE, the Internet has made this dinosaur obsolete. Think of the savings on toner, paper, and time when all you really need these days is a cell phone, PDA, or PC. I have a big list of sites for you that offer free Internet faxing services. Some of them are completely free, while others offer free or limited trials. Pick the online fax service that suits you best...

FaxZero lets you send free faxes from a simple web-based interface. Just enter the sender and recipient info, type in your message, and hit the "Send Free Fax Now" button. The rich-text editor lets you add basic formatting, highlighting and fonts to your text. You can also fax a file from your hard drive. Supported file formats include PDF, Microsoft Word (DOC, DOCX or RTF), Excel spreadsheet (XLS or XLSX), image files (PNG or JPG), TXT, HTML, and PowerPoint (PPT). You can attach multiple files, but the combined size of all attachments must be 20MB or less.

And yes, it's really free to send a fax to anywhere in the USA or Canada. You can send five free faxes per day, each with a maximum of three pages. No ads are inserted on your faxed pages, but the FaxZero logo will appear on the cover page of your outgoing fax. You can even use FaxZero to fax your U.S. congressperson or senator. I've written more about FaxZero in my Send a Free Fax article.

GotFreeFax is basically a clone of FaxZero, with some minor differences. You can send 2 free faxes daily to the USA or Canada, with a 3 page per fax maximum. No ads or branding appear on the cover page. GotFreeFax supports PDF, Microsoft Word, OpenDocument Text (.odt), and Rich Text (.rtf) file formats only. One unique feature is the ability to substitute tokens in the message, such as { RECEIVER_NAME }, { RECEIVER_COMPANY }, and { RECEIVER_FAX }.

PamFax is another free faxing service that offers 3 free outgoing pages (after signup) with no ads. You can also get a free fax number for inbound faxes. PamFax has an address book for convenience, integrates with Outlook, and works with popular cloud services such as DropBox, Google Drive, and SkyDrive.

PopFax is yet another free fax sending service. Like the others, you can input a

brief text message, or upload a document from your hard drive. But I can't recommend PopFax for several reasons. In the Terms of Use on their website, it says that PopFax does not guarantee "the possible alteration of the data sent by the User nor the service availability." It also says they are not liable for damage "following to an alteration of the User data transfer." This could be badly translated legal mumbo-jumbo, but yikes! Also my Chrome browser crashed when trying to send a DOC file with PopFax. On another attempt, it said my fax number was "invalid." After sending a test fax to another number, it never arrived. Of course, your mileage may vary, but with so many other choices, I'd steer clear of PopFax.

Sign up with K7, a messaging system that will send free faxes and voicemail to your email address, with an option to view or listen to your messages via the web. You get a free fax/voicemail number which you can give to your family, friends, and business buds. Just sit back and wait for the faxes to start dropping into your inbox as email attachments. If a K7 number is inactive for 30 days (no incoming voice or fax messages), it will be terminated. K7 cannot be used to send outgoing faxes. My companion article Free Inbound Faxing goes into more detail about Faxaway, an almost-free service that forwards incoming faxes to your email.

eFax claims that they are the largest online network on the planet with over a million subscribers in 2,500 cities and 27 coun-

tries. Also known as Zipfax, you can send and receive faxes as email attachments. You simply use the recipient's fax number and eFax's address. The 30-day freebie allows you to send or receive up to 150 pages. If you don't cancel during the initial month, you will be charged \$16.95 per month. See also Free Inbound Faxing for more details on eFax Limited Accounts, a free service that forwards incoming faxes to your email.

Nextiva Fax offers a 30-day free trial, including 500 free faxes. Send a fax by email, or send and receive faxes from Microsoft applications. Instead of hitting the print button, simply select "fax" right from Word, Excel, etc. Nextiva also lets you send and receive faxes from mobile devices. After the trial period, you'll be \$8.95 per month, unless you cancel.

RingCentral is designed for small businesses, not only can you receive and send faxes via email, they can supply you with toll-free fax numbers, custom greetings, an auto-receptionist, voicemail, and multiple extensions. The company offers a 7-day free trial, during which you get 500 free fax pages. After the trial period, you'll be \$7.99 per month, unless you cancel.

I couldn't find a smartphone app that sends free faxes. There's an app called scanR that's supposed to do that, but apparently it's defunct. CamScanner is a free app that turns your iPhone or Android smartphone into a scanner, fax machine and PDF creator. Take a picture of a document, receipt, business card, etc. CamScanner turns it into a searchable PDF that you can fax, print or upload to various cloud storage services. Faxing costs 99 cents per page.

Bob Rankin operates an online tech support service, www.askbobrarkin.com.

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Do the General Meetings leave you thirsting for more?
Find all that after the meeting at the DACS Pig SIG.

Ask DACS

March 2014

Moderated by Bruce Preston and reported by Jim Scheef

WE WELCOME QUESTIONS FROM the floor at the start of our General Meetings. The role of moderator is to try to guide the discussion to a likely solution to the problem. In addition, members who are not able to attend the General meeting may submit questions to askdacs@dacs.org. We will ask the question for you and post the reply in *dacs.doc* and on *dacs.org*. Please provide as much information as possible, since we can't probe during the session.

Q – The social networking site, Meetup.com, has been sporadically unavailable over the last few days. They announced that this was caused by a distributed denial of service attack (DDoS). What is a DDoS?

A – A denial of service attack is any attempt to prevent a facility or service from performing its intended function. The original denial of service attack is the siege which evolved in more civilized times to the picket line. People outside a store or factory gate with signs asking that others not use the service provided by the store or factory. Another type of DoS is the "sit in" where people occupy a building or (during the civil rights struggle in the South) occupy the seats of a lunch counter. Typically, on the Internet a DoS takes the form of flooding a server with so many requests that legitimate users are denied access to the server. DoS attacks may also use malformed requests in an effort to crash the server.

A distributed attack is one where the malicious requests are sent from many computers. Such attacks may involve thousands of computers that have been "hacked" one way or another to install malware that allows the computer to be controlled remotely. When such legions of computers are controlled from a single server, they are called a "botnet". A DDoS attack in recent news was when the "hacker" group, Anonymous, attacked banks who refused to process donations to the WikiLeaks organization. Currently attacks are reported against the government of Ukraine.

The Internet is not the only place where DoS attacks are possible. Several years ago a security researcher (white hat hacker) demonstrated that it is possible to deny service on cellular networks by flooding the signaling channel with a high volume of text or other signaling messages. The signaling

channel is used to make and receive calls so if it is overly busy, your phone cannot originate or receive a call. The Wikipedia article is wikipedia.org/wiki/Ddos#Distributed_attack.

Q – What can an organization do to prevent or stop a DDoS?

A – The short answer for a typical individual or business using the Internet is "nothing". Really large Internet sites often simply ignore the attack and hope the attackers get tired soon. The result of an attack against organizations like Google or Microsoft is slightly longer response times for webpages. These organizations have such massive bandwidth, and their services are distributed across so many servers in many physical locations, that they can simply absorb the extra packets. Organizations who are not in the Internet business have a much harder time defending against a DDoS. If they have a single location with only a moderate speed Internet connection, the attack may, indeed, knock them off the Internet, as happened to Meetup.com for short periods of time. Hosted DNS providers like Dyn and OpenDNS claim to be able to mitigate attacks. Longer term, Microsoft and various law-enforcement agencies have programs aimed at locating and taking down botnet control sites. These programs have been successful at reducing spam. It's impossible to tell what the effect has been on DDoS attacks.

[Disclaimer: Ask DACS questions come from members by email or from the audience attending the general meeting. Answers are suggestions offered by meeting attendees and represent a consensus of those responding. DACS offers no warranty as to the correctness of the answers, and anyone following these suggestions or answers does so at their own risk. In other words, we could be totally wrong!]

Directors' Notes, Cont. from page 3

3. Bob Green has become very frustrated with trying to use CiviCRM to maintain our membership data and then generating his sign-in sheets for members and visitors to the general meeting. He is near the point where he wants to quit, so we need to focus on issues he has reported and make this a turn-key operation for him that does not require him to debug the system. Jim has addressed the extreme slowness with a new updated Drupal install, followed by an updated CiviCRM. It's possible to host CiviCRM on WordPress, so we may take a look at the possibility. We met with Bob so he could explain what he's learned so far in using CiviCRM, and Jim and Richard will have started to maintain the membership database for now. Bob has agreed to continue as the general meeting greeter for the time being, but Charlie filled in for the March meeting.

4. Dave Green has received a letter from our insurance carrier Zurich North America notifying us that the company providing us with small business insurance, Maryland Casualty Company will be replaced with a new one, Foremost Insurance Company. Our treasurer Bert Goff needs to update our address with the insurance carrier.

5. Bill DeRosa gave us some feedback on our Facebook page. Do we want to make any changes in how we use it? We decided that while his suggestions may be valid they may be impractical. There isn't enough 'return on investment.' Jim suggested that instead of posting articles on Facebook that we at least post links to the DACS site. We should also continue our presence on Meetup and LinkedIn. Richard invited people to RSVP on Meetup if they plan to attend a meeting.

6. Jim looked into changing our printer for the newsletter to Infinity Printing. Here is the information he got:

- 75 copies folded to 8½ x 11 (we must fold them in half and fasten at the top and side)
- 12-pages \$78
- 16-pages \$97

We started using them for the March newsletter and we are now saving \$10 a month.

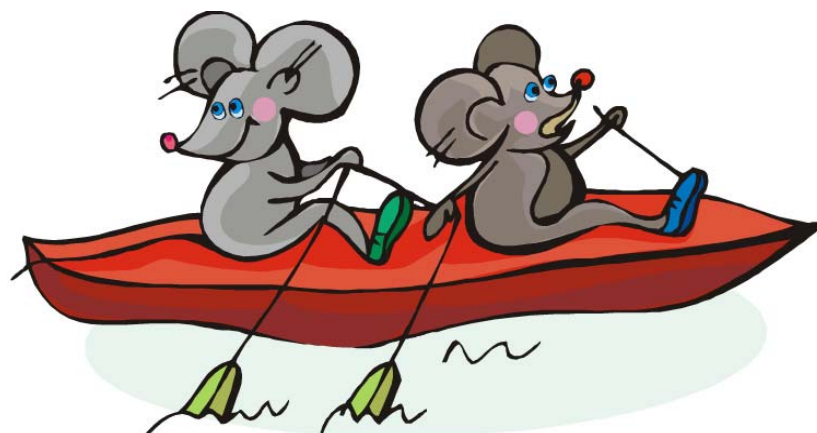
7. Bert has supplied a comparison of annual expenses for 2012 and 2013. He has offered to also come up with a budget for 2014.

Adjourned: 9:30

—Lisa Leifels

dacs.doc

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65 Legion Rd
New Milford, CT 06776



When you come to the next DACS meeting,
why not bring a friend?



Voice
for
Joanie

Help give the
gift of speech
Call Frank Ruiz
at 203 770-6203
and become a
Voice for Joanie
volunteer
www.voiceforjoanie.org

Future Events:

April

Jeff Postolowski
Android

May

John Patrick
State of the Internet

June

TBA

July

TBA