



The Cursor



Monthly Newsletter of the
Washington Area Computer User Group

Meeting Location:
Fairfax County
Government Center



Next Meeting:
December 16, 2006

Presidential Bits

December 2006 Meeting

By Paul Howard



WACUG's Annual Meeting of the corporation will take place on January 20th. Election of officers will be held at this time. If you wish to stand for office, or serve as a member of the Board of Directors, please advise an officer / member of the board immediately. Announcements of candidates, and ballots will be sent via email to members prior to the January meeting, to allow voting participation even if you are unable to attend the meeting.

November's meeting was our best attended this year, and featured our membership chair, Geof Goodrum, helping us avoid the problems associated with email. Geof showed us specific web sites for assistance with a variety of issues – see the “recent meetings” page of the web site for details. <http://www.wacug.org/rec-mtgs.html>

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday, December 16th, at the Fairfax County Government Center, Room 4/5. December's meeting will feature our PC Clinic, where we try to help our members with their particular hardware and software problems. We'll start this

meeting off with a short program on protecting your computer, particularly from some of the perils on the internet.

At our clinic, WAC experts can help with virus and spyware removal, hardware and software installations, including operating systems. **You must contact us in advance** to discuss your computer's symptoms, or advise what hardware or software you'd like help installing or troubleshooting. In most cases, you must bring your complete system: CPU, monitor, keyboard, mouse. Please refer to the clinic ground rules, linked from the meetings page of the web site which provide an email address for contacting us in advance of the meeting so we can arrange the necessary expertise or special tools to help us help you with your system.

Membership Bonus Offer Continues!

Get a head start on 2007 - if you pay your dues at the December meeting, you'll receive a bonus “golden oldie” five pack of back issue software CDs. These are in addition to the certificates you'll receive for current and future CD offerings. This offer expires when the CDs run out. Don't miss this chance to unearth

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Lloyd's Web Sites for December, 2006

by Lloyd Johnson, WACUG Member

<http://www.wacug.org/> is the URL for the Washington Area Computer User Group. Visit it for past issues of Web Sites with hyperlinks.

1. Need to put-up people? Get a Gift Certificate for \$25 Or more at 3200 Bed and Breakfast places in US.– <http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/>
2. How to get your name deleted from on-line phone directories and other personal information Web sites – <http://www.privacyrights.org/ar/infobrokers.htm>
3. Microsoft s Intuitive way to create compelling slide shows from digital images – www.microsoft.com/photostory
4. Duct Tape uses and info – <http://www.ducktapeguys.com>
5. Create a backyard retreat. Get advice from the pros and view a slide show – <http://www.kiplinger.com/links/backyard>
6. Track down elusive business phone numbers. This site lists customer-service, billing and other hotlines for a number of companies – <http://www.hardtofind800numbers.com>
7. Want to see what items are in the Daily Wall Street Journal? Visit – <http://www.WSJ.com/OnlineToday>
Be sure and click on Washwire (<http://www.washwire.com>) for weekday updates of news, analysis and buzz.
8. National Registry of Historical Places – <http://www.cr.nps.gov/Nr/travel/wash>
9. Eye test. Be sure to complete test – <http://www.myschool.com/SWF/ColorBlind21.swf>
10. Holidays in US – <http://www.holidays.net>



NCTCUG

Visit our “sister” user group. The National Capital Technology and Computer User’s Group meets the first and fourth Wednesday of the month. They meet in Carlin Hall in Arlington at 5711 South 4th Street. Visit their web site for more information, a map and directions:

<http://www.nctcug.org/>

Meetings start at 7:00 PM

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the treasures of past issues of WAC’s great software collections.

Annual dues - \$25 (includes 12 issues of the Cursor via email; certificates for 3 periodic software CDs.)

Printed Cursor Surcharge - \$12 for 12 monthly issues, mailed to your home.



Changing Hard Drives

By Richard Kennon, Newsletter Editor
Amador Computer Users Group,
California
drtrdguy(at)volcano.net

The time came when the bearings in my hard drive began to sing a little after running all day. So, being the wise person I am, I decided to replace it as a preventative measure. It turns out a job like that requires planning. I am not a planning person. I don’t do planning. I am more spontaneous. That is a euphemism for “lazy.” My grandmother used to tell me, “Lazy people work the hardest.” Oh, how true.

First, I thought I was covered because I had a backup by Acronis True Image 8.0 – wrong! I had one main hard drive with one partition, “C:” and I had never dreamed of running with more than one partition. So, I bought a second hard drive to use for the backups. After the new main hard drive was installed by a professional, I brought it home and tried to restore the backup. It was then I learned you can’t restore an Acronis backup to the active parti-

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GNU/Linux SIG

By Geof Goodrum

Fedora Core 6 Released

The Fedora Project officially released the Fedora Core 6 (FC6) GNU/Linux distribution on October 24th. The new release has editions for 32 and 64 bit x86 processor PC systems (including the new “MacIntel” Apple PCs) and PowerPC processor PC systems.

Features of this release include kernel 2.6.18, Gnome 2.16 and KDE 3.5.4 desktop environments on X.org 7.1, compiz compositing window manager with support for AIGLX desktop effects (e.g., menu fades, 3D workspaces, “wobbly” windows), better filesystem and dynamic linked executable performance, a graphical system virtualization manager, a more flexible software repository manager, DejaVu default system font for better readability, and DNA theme artwork. More details are available at <http://fedoraproject.org/wiki/FC6ReleaseSummary>.

Fedora Core 6, like its predecessors, is a freely downloadable, community supported distribution. As with previous releases, FC6 can be installed directly over a network (including from Internet mirror sites) or from five CD ISO images or a single DVD ISO image downloaded via Torrent service or from web/ftp

sites. Discs can also be purchased at low cost from GNU/Linux CD services and may be requested through WAC (see GNU/Linux CD of the Month, below).

Firefox 2.0

The Mozilla Corporation released the latest version of its free, Open Source web browser, Firefox 2.0, on October 24th. The new browser improves upon earlier versions with new built-in identify theft protection features to warn when displaying suspected fraudulent web sites. This release also adds close buttons on browser window tabs, can auto open new links on tabbed windows (instead of opening a new browser window), “glow” icons (icon highlights when the mouse pointer is over it), and autofill suggestions for the integrated Internet search box.

More details are provided in the press release at <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/press/mozilla-2006-10-24.html>.

Oracle Challenges Red Hat

Oracle Corporation announced on October 25th that it will provide enterprise support services under the name “Unbreakable Linux” for a new GNU/Linux distribution based upon Red Hat Enterprise Linux (RHEL) during the Oracle Open-World 2006 conference. Oracle’s version of RHEL, called Enterprise Linux, can be downloaded for free from the web site at <http://www.oracle.com/technologies/linux/index.html>.

This move is widely viewed as an attack on Red Hat, Inc.’s primary business (RHEL support services) following Red Hat’s acquisition of the Open Source JBoss middleware software development group (<http://www.jboss.com/>) before Oracle

could do the same. Oracle’s support rates, starting at \$99 per system per year, significantly undercut Red Hat’s. Some wonder whether the much smaller Red Hat can survive the competition.

An early review comparing Oracle’s Unbreakable Linux with RHEL was not complimentary (<http://ultramookie.com/wayback/2006/10/26/uncompatible-linux/>). Security experts have long criticized Oracle for lagging on critical security patches to its flagship database and application suite products, so it will have to prove itself capable of providing timely patches through Unbreakable Linux services.

Press Release: Sun Open Sources Java Platform and Releases Source Code Under GPL License Via NetBeans and Java.net

Communities Builds on Success of NetBeans and OpenSolaris to Establish New Communities For Open Source Development of Java Technology

SANTA CLARA, CALIF. November 13, 2006 Sun Microsystems, Inc. (NASDAQ: SUNW), the creator and leading advocate of Java technology, today announced it is releasing its implementations of Java technology as free software under the GNU General Public License version two (GPLv2). Available today are the first pieces of source code for Sun’s implementation of Java Platform Standard Edition (Java SE) and a buildable implementation of Java Platform Micro Edition (Java ME). Details are available at: <http://www.sun.com/opensource/java>. In addition, Sun is adding the GPLv2 license to Java Platform Enterprise Edition (Java EE), which has been

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available for over a year under the Common Development and Distribution License (CDDL) through Project GlassFish at <http://glassfish.dev.java.net>.

This announcement represents one of the largest source code contributions under the GPL license (under which the GNU/Linux operating system is also distributed) and the open sourcing of one of the industry's most significant and pervasive software platforms. With more than 3.8 billion Java technology enabled devices, Java technology is showing explosive growth, appearing in volume everywhere. From mobile phones and smart cards to enterprise applications and supercomputers, Java technology provides a unifying platform for software innovation. By open sourcing Java software, while offering commercial products with indemnity for our customers, Sun expects Java technology to become even more pervasive.

“By open sourcing Sun's implementation of Java technology, we will inspire a new phase of developer collaboration and innovation using the NetBeans Integrated Development Environment (IDE) and expect the Java platform to be the foundation infrastructure for next generation Internet, desktop, mobile and enterprise applications,” said Rich Green, executive vice president of Software at Sun. “With the Java Development Kit (JDK) released as free software under the GPL, Sun will be working closely with distributors of the GNU/Linux operating system, who will soon be able to include the JDK as part of the open source repositories that are commonly included with GNU/Linux distributions.”

“Everyone has been expecting that one day Sun would open source Java

technology, but no one expected just how far they'd go – GPL. A bold move, and a great opportunity both for Sun and for free and open source software,” said Tim O'Reilly, founder and CEO of O'Reilly Media (the complete press release is online at <http://www.sun.com/smi/Press/sunflash/2006-11/sunflash.20061113.1.xml>)

Microsoft and Novell Pact

On November 2nd, Novell and Microsoft announced an agreement that included licenses for Microsoft to redistribute SUSE Linux Enterprise and protection of each other's customers from lawsuits over patent infringement for respective intellectual property.

The Open Source community views the agreement with skepticism and resents Novell for implying that Linux code might infringe upon Microsoft's patents.

The Software Freedom Law Center, founded by attorney Eben Moglen

of the Free Software Foundation, published an open letter (<http://www.softwarefreedom.org/news/20061109a.html>) that points out serious deficiencies in Microsoft's terms in the patent agreement.

Novell countered the criticism with an open letter of their own (http://www.novell.com/linux/microsoft/community_open_letter.html), clarifying the purpose of the agreement, affirming their support for Open Source and opposition of loose standards for software patents. In this light, the agreement appears to be more about Novell's patents than anything within Linux itself.

GNU/Linux for Playstation 3

Retailers began selling the Sony Playstation® 3 (PS3) system in the United States on November 17th, though the initial number of units available was limited to 400,000 units nationwide. Sony is positioning the PS3 as a home media cen-

See *GNU/Linux* page 5



*Oracle's new Unbreakable
Linux offering challenges Red
Hat*

ter (featuring a high definition Blu-ray Disc™ player) more than a game console. While GNU/Linux does not appear to be pre-installed on the PS3 as originally reported, PS3 owners have installed PowerPC (PPC) based distributions themselves. Here are websites with information about obtaining and installing various distributions on the PS3:

Sony “OtherOS”: <http://www.playstation.com/ps3-openplatform/index.html>.

Fedora Core: <http://ps3.qj.net/PS3-Linux-The-void-has-been-filled-Full-install-instructions-for-Fedora-Core-5-/pg/49/aid/73144>

Yellow Dog Linux: <http://www.terrasoftsolutions.com/products/ydl/delivery.shtml>

Gentoo: <http://whitesanjuero.googlepages.com/> or http://overlays.gentoo.org/dev/lu_zero/wiki/PlaystationNotes

Linux CD of the Month

In addition to the monthly CD described below, WAC can provide CD-R and DVD±R media for any downloadable GNU/Linux operating system distribution (e.g. Fedora Core, Mandriva, Ubuntu, Debian, Knoppix). Please note that download versions of commercial distributions do not include official technical support or printed documentation.

Discs are available only by pre-order. Contact Geof Goodrum by phone (703-370-7649) or e-mail ([ggoodrum\(at\)bigfoot.com](mailto:ggoodrum(at)bigfoot.com)) at least 48 hours before meeting day to order or for more information. Single CD-R discs are available with a \$3 donation; GNU/Linux distributions on multiple CD-Rs or single

DVD±R are available with a \$6 donation.

December 2006

Firefox – v2.0. Free Mozilla Public License source code and executable by the Mozilla community project. Firefox 2 is a highly customizable, standards compliant web browser with built-in protection from fraudulent web sites. Features include tabbed browsing windows, integrated Internet search, spell checking, web site password manager, RSS web feed support, configurable themes and downloadable extensions for additional functionality. Minimum systems requirements are 233 Mhz processor, 64 MB of RAM, 50 MB of free disk space, and Linux kernel 2.2.14 (with glibc 2.3.2, XFree86-3.3.6, gtk+2.0, fontconfig/xft and libstdc++5).

FreeCol – v0.5.2. Free GNU General Public License platform-independent executable Java code by The FreeCol Team. FreeCol is an Open Source implementation of Microprose Colonization. The objective of the game is to colonize the New World. You start the game in 1492 with a vessel and some colonists. The goal is to build many colonies (with the help of Europe) so that you can live off the land. Once the majority of the people are behind you, you can declare your independence. The King will then send over his forces from Europe and try to gain control over your colonies. If you survive the attack, you’ve won the game. Requires Java Virtual Machine (JVM) 1.4 or above.

jGnash – v1.10.7. Free GNU General Public License executable Java code by Craig Cavanaugh. jGnash is a personal finance application written in Java. jGnash supports several account types, including investment accounts. jGnash has support for

split transactions, nested accounts, scheduled transactions, commodities, and currencies. jGnash can import QIF files, excluding investment accounts and transactions. Data is stored in an XML format so it is easy to manipulate and read the data external to the program. jGnash also has scripting support to add custom reports and functionality. Requires JVM 1.4 or above.

GNU/Linux Distribution

Updates - Security and bug fix monthly updates for Fedora Core 6.

Kernel Source - The latest versions of 2.4 and 2.6 kernel source code for all platforms.



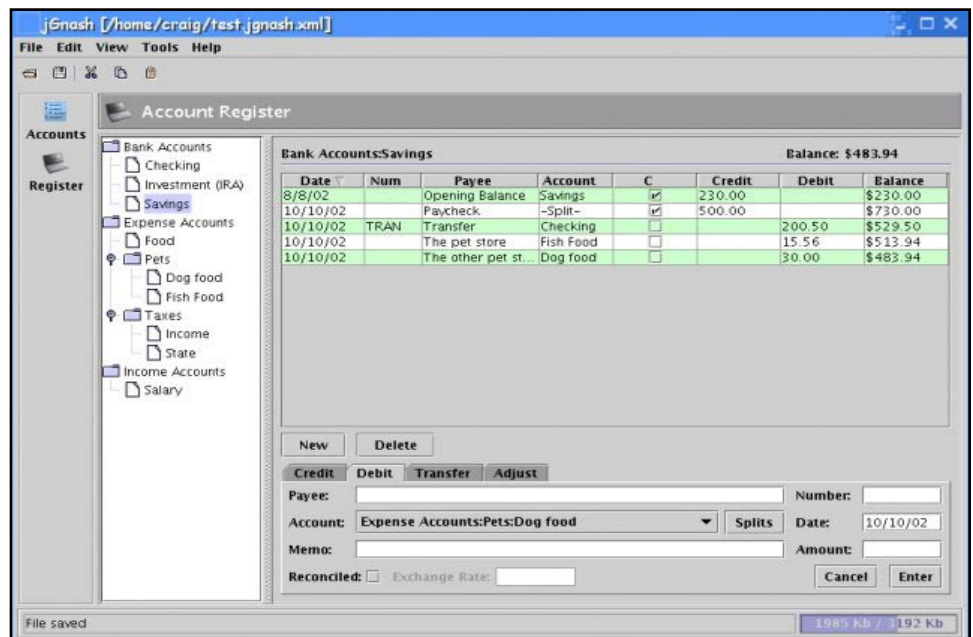


Screen Shot of FreeCol. An Open Source implementation of the Microprose game, *Colonization*.

Firefox 2.0 displaying a suspected fraudulent web site



Screen shot of *jGnash*, a personal finance application written in Java. *jGnash* can import QIF files, excluding investment accounts and transactions. Data is stored in an XML format.



NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WASHINGTON AREA COMPUTER USER GROUP

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Washington Area Computer User Group (WACUG) general membership will be held at 1:00 PM on Saturday, January 20, 2007 at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035, for the purpose of electing by ballot the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer to the WACUG Board of Directors and other such business of the Corporation as may properly come before them.

All members are invited to review the WACUG Articles and Bylaws before the Annual Meeting. Digital copies are available online at URL <http://www.wacug.org/articles.txt> and <http://www.wacug.org/bylaws.txt>. Hardcopy will be available for review at the January meeting.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Submitted by Geof Goodrum,
Nominating Committee Chair

In accordance with Article VI, Section 1.a. of the WACUG Bylaws, the Nominating Committee presents the names of individuals who have stated their intention to run for election to the 2007 WACUG Board of Directors in the designated roles.

Candidates for President:

Paul Howard

Candidates for Vice President:

James Brueggeman

Candidates for Secretary:

OPEN

Candidates for Treasurer:

Robert Rott

The Nominating Committee will open the floor for additional nominations from the membership at the Annual Meeting. If only four nominees are received, the membership may sponsor a motion to elect the nominees to the Board by acclamation. Otherwise, ballots will be distributed to the membership to elect four members to the Board of Directors.

The new Board may elect up to ten additional Board members at the January Board Meeting. If you are interested in serving on the Board but do not wish to enter the election, notify one of the elected Officers after the Annual Meeting.

If you have not joined WACUG or renewed your WACUG membership for 2007, you are not eligible to vote at the 2007 Annual Meeting or run for the Board. However, memberships will be available between 12:30 PM and 1:00 PM on meeting day.



To Dual-Core or not to Dual-Core?

By Jim Sanders, Editor, North
Orange County Computer Club,
California
editor(at)noccc.org

If you have been in that should I or shouldn't I mode for a while, now is a pretty good time to make the plunge. The prices of dual-core processors has come way down in the last year, at the same time the performance has moved

several rungs up the ladder. In May, AMD introduced several new high-end Athlon processors. In July, Intel unveiled it's long anticipated Core 2 Duo (AKA code name Conroe) chips. These are Intel's long awaited response to being out-gunned by AMD. They have the new Core micro-architecture that reportedly out-performs similar models of AMD chips

The introduction Core 2 Duo chips by Intel started a price war between AMD and Intel. One sage speculated that this was a strategic move by AMD to make it difficult for Intel to dump a huge inventory of older technology chips without taking a loss on them and lower the profit margin on the new chips. What ever the case, the end users win. The latest and greatest chips from both vendors are a lot less expensive than they were just a short while ago and the older chips are available at bargain basement prices.

The technology that is in the new chips from both AMD and Intel has been significantly improved in the last two years. Intel has upgraded it's NetBurst architecture with the Core and Core 2 Duo technology. AMD has introduced the new AM2 processor socket which, compared to the older 939/940 socket, effectively doubles the processor-to-memory bandwidth with it's support of DDR2 RAM.

There are a lot of individual engineering pieces or basic building blocks that make up all X86 processors. For years Intel rode the marketing bandwagon that basically touted the "My processor clock is faster than yours, so I am better than you are" concept and that was, more often than not, true. AMD tried to compensate for the fact

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that their high speed chip technology lagged behind Intel by building more efficient CPUs. There are lots of ways to do that, and doing more things in parallel (at the same time) is one of the ways to build a more efficient CPU. So if the CPU is doing twice as many things at the same time, the processor clock can be half the speed. To pick a number, lets say the AMD chip actually has a clock of 500MHz but it is marketed as a 1000+ and the fine print explains that it "Performs as well as other CPUs that really do have a 1000MHz clock." A number of people feel that back a few years, AMD was overly optimistic with their "Performs as well as" ratings. The concept however remains true. Over the years, AMD improved the efficiency of their CPUs as well as the clock speeds and the "Performs as well as" ratings more closely matched reality. Once Intel started making chips in the over 3000MHz clock range, they started tripping over the difficulty of making chips run that fast at all, complicated by the huge amount of heat it created. Acknowledging the writing on the wall, Intel decided they had to start making more efficient chips as well.

The irony of Intel running into the wall that those irrefutable facts of Physics represent is that Intel had to borrow a page from the AMD marketing manual. They had to convince their followers that these new Intel CPUs with the slow clock speeds were getting just as much or more work done as the older chips with the impressive clock speeds. Both companies had to deal with the problems created by CPUs that generated as much heat as a 100 watt light bulb. Along with other

problems, the size of the heatsink/fan assembly was getting obscene. The demand for ever increasing compute horsepower, however, was relentless. In addition to improving the efficiencies of their processor cores, both companies decided the next logical step was to build two complete CPUs inside one chip and really approach doing twice as many things in the same amount of time. Because Intel still leads AMD in the ability to build chips with tinier features (65nano meter vs. 90nano meter), they can afford to put twice as much cache in their chips and run a higher clock speed and still have a good power consumption rating. By moving the memory controller inside the CPU, AMD has a better multi-core memory scheme. And the technical details, and the debates about them, go on and on.

I am going to try and give you enough of an over-all picture of who is offering what in today's processor world that you can at least determine if you want to try and play in the major leagues or the minor leagues. That is really a daunting task and I hope I come somewhere close to success. One master list of currently offered X86 chips (all of those chips that trace their ancestry back to the original Intel 8086) had nearly 400 different models listed. Most of those are no longer made and ranged in price from \$7.00 for a 600MHz Celeron to \$954 for a Pentium Core 2 Extreme 3.2GHz and from \$17.00 for a 700MHz Athlon Slot-A to \$769.00 for a dual core Athlon FX-62 socket AM2, 2.8GHz processor.

There are a lot of very fast single core CPUs available at very good prices. If you are not an enthusiast user (mostly that means gamer) or heavy into video editing, you may

not need one of the dual core units. Some of the single core units are the best values (read cheapest) available and any of them that are rated as being in the 3.0GHz or more category should even run the Vista operating system when it is released. Visit the MS Vista hardware requirement site at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/windowsvista/evaluate/hardware/vistarpc.mspx> and get the official, albeit optimistic, definition of the minimum hardware you will need to run Vista. Based on my experience with the September RC1 release of Vista running on an AMD 2800+ with 1Gig of RAM, I would not be happy with a slower machine.

If you are an enthusiastic gamer or hard core videophile, and live next door to Bob Jones, plan on spending close to a thousand dollars for your CPU. Not to mention the dual \$500 video cards and 4Gig of RAM. The first of the three categories of processors that we are going to list is the one that you enthusiasts are interested in.

Those categories are; the Enthusiast Dual Core Processors, Main Stream Dual Cores, and Single Core Processors. There is some overlap in both the performance and price of the high end single core and the low end of the dual core processors. One thing to keep in mind, all of the Dual Core chips are 64 Bit processors and most of the single core processors are not 64 Bit.

Enthusiast Dual Core Processors

For the AMD processors you have: Athlon 64 FX-62, Athlon X2 5000+.

For the Intel processors you have: Core 2 Extreme X6800, Core 2 Duo E6700, E6600.

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Because Intel and AMD are constantly jostling each other to claim title to King Of The Hill, it changes hands. For many months, through June of 2006, it was AMD. Then, in July 2006, Intel reclaimed the title. For almost anyone except the well heeled enthusiast with a social need to be on the Bleeding Edge, any of these processors would make a great system. As has been the case for years, the price curve for the last three to four speed ranges is geometric in nature. The 2.4GHz E6600 is about 40% of the price of X6800 and provides about 60% of the performance. The same is true for the AMD pricing.

Main Stream Dual Cores

For AMD – Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4600, 4200, 4000, 3800, Athlon 64 X2 S939 4800, 4600, 4400, 4200, 3800

For Intel – Core 2 Duo E6400, Pentium Extreme Edition 965 & 955, Pentium D 960, 950, 945, 930, 915, 840, 830, 820, 805

On the AMD line you can easily see just one of the many things that can be confusing about the different designations for AMD's dual core processors. There is an Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4600 and an Athlon 64 X2 S939 4600. The only visible difference is that one says AM2 and the other says S939. As explained above, the AM2 designation is for the new DDR2 RAM CPUs. AMD uses two different speeds of DDR2 RAM. The DDR2-800 is used with the Enthusiast CPUs and the DDR2-667 is used with the Main Stream CPUs. Faster memory will, in general, improve throughput and is most noticeable on memory intensive applications. Another consideration when trying to de-

cide between the new AM2 socket and the older S939, is the supply and cost of memory. Production of DDR RAM is being reduced while production of DDR2 RAM is being RAMped up. That means that the price of DDR is going up and the price of DDR2 is going down. You may have noticed the price of the older PC100/133 RAM is almost double the price of PC2700 DDR RAM and I have seen a price for a 1GB DDR2 that was less than the price for the PC3200 1 GB DDR Ram.

Strangely, at the price top of the Intel Main Stream Dual Core line category are the older technology Dual Core models:

D 965 DC Extreme Edition
(3.73GHz/775pin PLGA
/1066FSB /2X2MB L2 Cache
Dual Core) \$1075

D 955 DC Extreme Edition
(3.46GHz/775pin PLGA
/1066FSB /2X2MB L2 Cache
Dual Core) \$995

D 960 DC Standard Edition
(3.6GHz/775pin PLGA /800FSB
/2X2MB L2 Cache Dual Core)
\$349.

The E6400 Core 2 Duo Processor (2.13GHz/775pin LGA 1066FSB 2X1MB L2 Cache) at \$245 is the better buy. This is a good example of the seemingly weird pricing that occurs with bleeding edge CPUs. The D955 is \$646 more than the D960 which has a faster clock but a slower FSB (Front Side Bus). Even stranger is that the price for the older technology D 955 is more than the fastest Core 2 Duo chip. The oldest technology dual core chips from Intel are the D800 series.

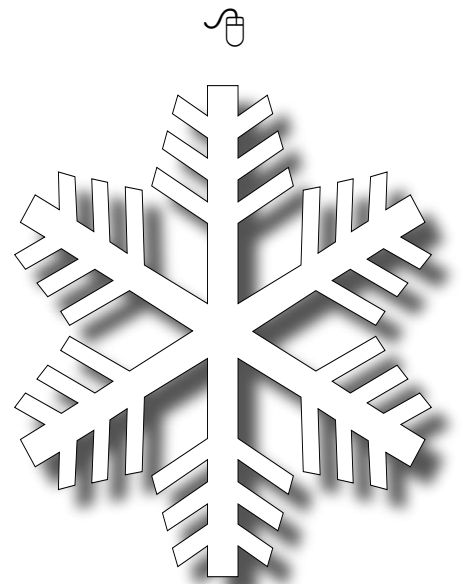
Single Core Processors

After looking at the long list of single core processors that are clocked

at 3GHz or greater, I changed my mind about listing them. Instead, I will just repeat the advice about computing needs and price. If you are not into gaming or a videophile, they can make a fine system. I am still using an Intel 3.1GHz P4 with 512Meg of expensive Rambus RAM to produce the Orange Bytes and it works fine most of the time.

The future of computing is going to be 64 Bits for a long time even though it is just now starting to gain traction. Since that is true, if you are going to upgrade at all, going with a dual core 64 Bit CPU is the only thing that make sense if you take a long term perspective. Same thing is true for DDR2 RAM, PCI-Express video, and SATA2 hard disks. So the sweet spot today is a system based on a Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4200, or an Intel Core 2 Duo E6400 and a good 256Meg PCI Express video card, everything else, your choice.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



tion. When I tried, it wiped out everything. Back to the Pro for a new XP reload with two partitions on the new hard drive. It has gigabytes to spare. The two partitions were named "C:" and "F:" for whatever reason. The spare hard drive was renamed "D:" and the CD drive was renamed "E:". Go figure. I was able to restore my old C: drive contents to the new F: drive. So now I have everything on the new F: drive but my machine boots up on the new C: drive and I can't figure out how to utilize the new F: drive. Of course, real men don't ask directions, so I decided to slug it out on my own. I thought I saw a bright side to this as the old C: drive was cluttered with years' accumulation of garbage. I would start afresh!

The first thing to do is get back on the air, the Internet. So, I went to Outlook Express. First I had to call the ISP to find out how to reconnect. A nice lady walked me through the process, no sweat. Then I discovered I had no address book. Of course, it is on the F: drive. How to find it? After some searching on the web, I found out the address book is in files named, *.wab. Cinch! Just search the F: drive for *.wab files. Not there. Then I noticed the fine print that says it does not find hidden files. A click on "Advanced" led me to a box that allows finding hidden files. It turns out the hidden files are in a hidden folder so it was doubly challenging. It was relatively easy to copy these files and paste them in the same hidden folder in the new C: drive. Whaddayou know? It worked. The message files are empty but I can't think of a good reason to try to repopulate them.

Now, if I am on the air, it seems

the next urgent step is to reestablish some protection. But, first, I downloaded SP-2 and a host of other Microsoft updates. I think I saw a note flash across the screen that said they sent 60 updates. Then came Microsoft Windows Defender (beta). However, apparently all it does is look for spyware. I am not clear on this so, since I subscribe to McAfee firewall and virus protection, I went to their site and downloaded all that. Now, I feel better.

I did do one bit of smart planning Ta-Da! I had simply copied all my Documents and Settings files and sub folders to the backup drive. Copying all this back to the new C: drive was a cinch and it saved all my valuable writings and pictures. Now if I could just find that great picture of Aunt Edith from two Christmases ago. If you ever transfer to a new computer or hard drive, do lots of this copying. Disk space is cheap and copying it back is so easy.

Finding the original software disks that were loaded years ago was not so easy. They were tucked here and there in many different convenient places. That is, convenient until you want to find them. I was mostly lucky and had to purchase a newer version of only one program. You see, I am neither a planner nor an organizer. You wonder how I have survived these many years? I am very lucky.

One other aspect of "afresh" I decided to try was going to Open Office instead of Microsoft Office. This is another ungood idea. Doctors warn against experiencing dual traumas like retiring and immediately moving to a retirement community. Adding this stress to the disk change stress was probably not a good idea. Besides, Outlook Express won't use the Open Office

dictionary. I did find the old MS Office disk but I decided to try this as an experiment. So far so good but there are a number of features I don't like because I am used to the other features. I will keep with it for a while

In conclusion (this is what our pastor says ten minutes before the end of his sermon), you will be faced with changing computers and/or hard drives. As the weatherman and some politicians are fond of saying, "It is not if but when." I do not recommend my approach. I have spent many hours on it. Plan, plan, plan. Talk to some knowledgeable people and perhaps even search the Internet for help. Good luck.

PS. I sent a copy of this to Gene Barlow who sold me the Acronis program and this is his reply:

"Acronis True Image has a cloning function that will copy your entire hard drive to the replacement hard drive in one easy step. When you are done, you simply place the new drive in the place of your old c: drive and it becomes your new c: drive. This feature of True Image would have had your old hard drive replaced in just a few minutes and with one easy step. Next time you need to do something with hard drives, send me a note and I'll try to help you do it quickly and with the least work possible."

Maybe the next time I will ask before! But, that would have transferred all the garbage, as well.

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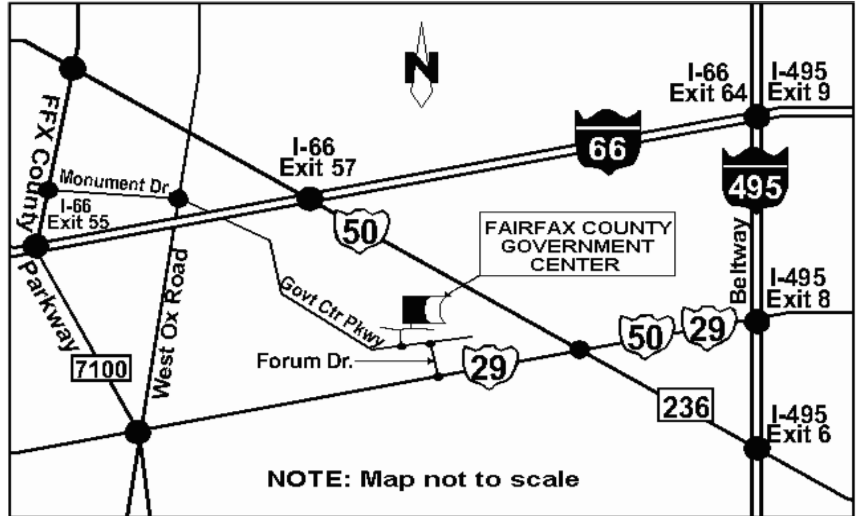
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