



The Bloated

Computer

By Frank Varano

How would you like to know why your computer is dragging its butt? You added this, tried that, got rid of more, yet it is bloated and dragging. Let's do an experiment.

1. Click on "Start" then "Search," or "Find" or whatever your particular computer has. Then search for all files with the extension, "txt". (Enter "*.txt" without the quotes.) You'll be appalled at all the mere text files you have in your computer.
2. Next enter "*.hlp" and this time you'll see all the help files that are there just for you to read and study. And you paid someone \$50 to tell you what you already have in your help files?
3. Now search for "*.gif" files. Do you really need thousands of them?
4. Want more? Search for "*.bmp" files. Mamma mia! And these are pictures! Try also "*.jpg" and you'll find some of the .bmp duplicated as .jpg.
5. Let's go berserk and look for "*.wbk" which are backup files.

OK, OK, that's enough. Now when your computer is moaning and groaning when you ask it to do something, you'll understand why. Mind you, I have barely 'scratched the surface of the bloat on your computer.' I don't recommend that you delete them indiscriminately. You need some of them. The problem is that you don't have the time to open each one to see if you really need it. So you end up just suffering the slower and slower computer. And at some point you get so disgusted that you wipe the whole hard disk clean and start over. But not without first copying all that bloat on a CD and putting them back on a cleaned up hard disk. After all, you must keep your pictures.

SOFTWARE GLITCHES AND WITCHES

By Frank Varano

ZDNet.com 'topic

de jour' is the error in software. I'll make it my topic de jour also. I wrote in these pages some time ago that when I did contract work for ARCO in LA (CIRCA 1988), I was programming using SAS (Statistical Analysis System) software by SAS Institute in North Carolina. My co-worker was a very sharp programmer who ran circles around me. When we wrote programs we did a lot of testing to make sure that we don't have 'glitches and witches' in our end product.

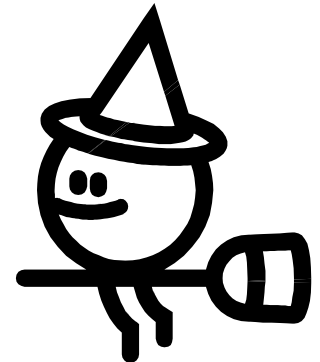
When you feed thousands and thousands of data points into the program you must have confidence that the program is doing its thing correctly. There is no way to check things by hand. To verify our program we would feed in numbers that would yield known results. Let me give you an insulting analogy. If you were making a calculator, you would make it compute 2+2. If the result came out 4.010 or 3.999 you would be led to suspect that you have a problem.

In huge programs each module is tested individually. Then they are assembled into program sections; then into the whole program. At that stage they are still not free of errors.

Did you ever notice all the caveats in the text files that accompany all software? I dare bet that you never read those text files, usually in WordPad. It is almost frightening to read.

The software interfaces with a different environment with each computer. It's a wonder

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*Take a look ,
there is a lot of
good information
on our Web Site*

Meeting

Time, Days and Place

2nd and 4th Tuesday

9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Seventh-day Adventist

Church

29885 Bradley Road,

Sun City, CA

Continued from page 1. It Doesn't Matter ...

repetitiously for the owners to pilfer your account before you got home.

Well, that is somewhat of a dramatic analogy but I think you may get the idea. I'll report more as I learn more.

Internet Libraries

By Walter Antoniotti, (creator of the [Free Internet Libraries](#), author of the free [Quick Notes Learning System](#) books series, and President of [21st Century Learning Products](#)

Upon retiring from college teaching/administration, I began developing [Free Internet Libraries](#) for students, teachers, and professionals. Of special interest to your audience are these free computer libraries although all the libraries are educational oriented and may be of interest to your members.

[Free Business Software](#)

[Free Software Tutorials](#)

[Excel Internet Library](#)

Please inform your club members about these libraries.

Wi-Fi Theft

By Frank Varano

A man in London used someone's unsecured broadband link and was jailed. It also happened in the US. In our area with FIOS and other Cable broadband a lot of routers are being used. I suspect that most users never bother to change the default settings on the router and that leads them to invitations for roving thieves to access the broadband through their routers. Perhaps many don't even know how to change it or what it implies if they don't change it.



In setting up my own router I detected several networks, two of which I could have accessed. They had good signals. Although it is silly for me or any homeowner to bother using someone else's access, if I had nefarious intentions I could take a laptop and roam the area and access the net from many places. It is like walking into someone's house and taking a nap in the master bedroom.

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**Watch for
Announcements
In this newsletter
and/or
at the start of the
new year.**



APCUG OYSH Reviews

By Frank Varano

Each month I get stuff from Judy Taylor with a summary of many interesting stuff. It is too much to put any of it in this small newsletter. Some of the articles are pretty good. I'll see if I can get Jim to make it available on the web at our website. It makes more sense for each of you to go to the web and extract what you specifically want.

However if I do see something that I know will be of general interest to most of our members I will include it in the newsletter. The last email from her had something interesting from Open Office. The unzipped version is too long to include here.

S L O O O W Computer Startup (XP Machine)

By Frank Varano

Every time you uninstall something on your computer you should uninstall the drivers too or else they will use up system resources. You will notice it particularly at start up. Even though the thing you uninstalled is long gone there will be a weighty footprint of the device still lurking in your computer. These drivers can be many, many megabytes big. They load up at boot time.

But how do you find and remove them? Do the last step carefully and I'll tell you why.

1. Press the **Windows and Break** keys to bring up **System Properties**.
2. Click on **Advanced** tab and click the **Environment Variables** button.
3. Click the **New** button below the **System Variables** panel.
4. In the **New System Variable** dialog box, type `devmgr_show_nonpresent_devices`, and type `1` in the **Variable Value** text box.
5. Click OK twice to return and get back to **System Properties**.
6. Click on the **Hardware** tab and the **Device Manager** button.
7. Go to **View | Show Hidden Devices**.
8. Click each + sign to expand the tree then look for the washed out icons. They are unused device drivers. A washed out icon will be lighter.
9. To remove an unused device driver, right-click the icon and select **Uninstall**. But *Warning!* The world will not come to an end if you uninstall all of

the washed out icons. But be aware that if an item is not being used (not plugged in, for example) it will be grayed out. So don't uninstall *willy-willy*. You may need *willy-nilly!*

Disk Imaging

By Frank Varano

I mentioned in an earlier article that you can create an image of your hard drive on another hard drive with Acronis software whose representative was at the CCMV meeting a couple years ago. I learned that Vista has a hard disk imaging utility which allows you to create an image.

You can get a copy of the (OEM) version of Acronis True Image through Seagate Seagate DiscWizard or Maxtor MaxBlast software which will do this for you. They are free. If I remember rightly, when you buy a Maxtor hard drive you also get a CD with MaxBlast on it. The tool migrates your files from an older hard disk to a new one. You can also use the tool as backup utilities. If you don't have the CD, you can download it. After you install the utility, you'll have that Vista backup utility on XP.

I remember (circa 1998) when I used MaxBlast on Windows 98SE. A drive developed only a few bad sectors at first which alerted me to the impending disk failure. Although that was the only time I *ever* saw bad sectors on a hard disk, Maxtor tried to convince me that it was 'normal'. Eventually more and more sectors were bad which led me to a panic situation. The disk was under warranty. It was replaced. I saved most of the disk.

Is there a lesson here? Perhaps. Though disks are very dependable, there is an adage that says, "Not if, but when." I would add that you should pay attention to the results of the disk scan. If there are any bad sectors, even one, pay attention and get ready to replace the drive before it is too late. It is like a melanoma.

Editor's Note to Readers

You don't have to be a good writer to get an article in the Newsletter. If you have a good topic of general interest and some typewritten or hand-printed notes, give it to me to write it up for you and have your own 'by-line.' Remember that the editor has the last word on material suitability. Writers must expect that all material submitted will be edited.



(continued from page 1 col. 2 Glitches and Witches)
that it works at all. Sometimes it doesn't. Some developers issue a 'Beta' version to get the 'bugs' out in the actual world of software testers. Even then the software ails. Then "SP2" is issued and security updates follow and then patches and then the fixes and the updates, and then a new version issued. And your purse is purged again for a new version.

So keep in mind that when you download some software, you hope that it will work OK in *your* computer after installation. You hope that the programmer didn't make any mistakes. You hope that the program will do the things it is supposed to do. You hope that it is compatible with the operating system and other programs. You hope that it does not chew up your resources. You hope and hope.

When it fails, that's when you seek updated drivers, updated versions, fixes, service packs or patches, updates, etc. All because the software has glitches and witches.

The Talent Among Us

By Frank Varano

Jonathan Hull is a former Time Magazine journalist and author of historical novels about the First and Second World Wars. He is launching a new online media website that may interest the Menifee Valley Club newsletter readers and members. Check it out at: "WereYouThere.com". I'll see if I can put the link on our website.

Everyone has some stories that deserve to be shared and remembered, not just among family members but with others as well. Jonathan, being a writer, received a lot of letters over the years from readers, many sharing fascinating personal stories. He says, "I got to thinking, where can these stories be shared and preserved? I couldn't find the right place online so I created a site. My hope is to build a rich communal archive of memories that is useful to students, researchers and historians."

The content of his website does not contain a plethora of stories. Yet. It's just getting started. But here is where you and others can

(Continued in next column)

Annual Income and Expenses

Ending Octoberr 31, 2007

Chet Hartley, Treasurer

Income (\$)

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| Contributions | 62.35 |
| Interest | 2.07 |
| Text Book Sales | 280.00 |
| Total Training Incomes | 960.00 |
| Tuition | 680.00 |

Total Income **1024.42**

Expenses (\$)

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Bookkeeping expenses | 16.46 |
| Church Usage | 200.00 |
| Newsletter expenses | 15.84 |
| Insurance | 640.00 |
| Textbook purchase | 378.50 |

Total Expenses **610.80**

Income less expenses **413.62**

Account Balance, 10/1/2007 **2610.32**

(Continued from left column)

enter the picture by helping to launch the site with stories that need not remain hidden in your memory. "As the content grows, I believe it will be an important and rewarding project," says Jonathan.

WereYouThere.com is a labor of love on his part. Should you have any questions, he'd be glad to respond to your calls or emails. He can be reached at:

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A Memo to all Members:

By Frank Varano

A meeting was held by the Board on Monday November 5 to discuss a plan of action in light of the request to vacate the Cherry Hills facilities by November 15. The Board scheduled Friday (November 15) to remove all of our equipment and place it in storage. Jim Semanek will store desks at his 'shed.'

This 'de ja vu' brought a need to plan a much more permanent arrangement and place to hold our classes. Watch for announcements.