



NANAIMO COMPUTER CLUB MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2006 Volume 6 Issue 3

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Get Yourself A Manager— Remembering Passwords Is No Longer A Burden

These days, it seems you can't go anywhere online without having to provide login information.

Usernames and passwords are everywhere: Email, banking, and user-sensitive documents are just a part of the myriad of services that require personal sign-ins. To further complicate matters, if you don't visit certain sites on a regular basis, you may not remember the login you registered years ago. Password manager applications can resolve the frustrations of dealing with so many passwords.

Password managers utilize encryption algorithms to protect your login information and are available in various forms. Most commonly, you will find password management software, although there are Web sites that offer the same service. (Agatra [www.agatra.com] and PasswordSafe [www.passwordsafe.com] are some examples.) Depending on what you're looking for in a password manager, the software and Web site routes offer different benefits.

Under Lock & Key

Password managers can help keep track of logins and other sensitive information, all while keeping things secure. Depending on which route you take, you'll gain different levels of personal security, and as a consumer, you have a wide variety of

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February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon.



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Bacteria Could Power Tiny Robots

By Michael Kanellos, CNET
News.com—Published: March 15,
2006

A strain of bacteria that releases electrons as a waste product could become the secret ingredient for developing fuel cells for spy drones and other small robots.

Researchers at Rice University and the University of Southern California have embarked on a project to harness the power of *Shewanella oneidensis*, a microorganism that essentially spits lightning. Rather than consume oxygen to turn food into energy, *Shewanella* consumes metals.

The waste product of its metabolic process comes in the form of excess electrons stripped from the metals but not recombined in subsequent chemical reactions. The bacteria lives in soil, water and other environments and can extract its necessary nutrients from a variety of materials.

In a fuel cell, the idea is that colonies of *Shewanella* will attach themselves to the anode, a component inside fuel cells and batteries that gathers electrons, and produce electrons.

"You can feed them pretty much what is available," said Andreas Luttge, an associ-



ate professor of earth sciences and chemistry at Rice. "The goal would be to feed them waste water and produce energy."

Hybrid fuel cells--where one strain of bacteria feeds off the waste product of another to produce electricity--are also possible.

Microbes could become one of the crucial ingredients in the future of the energy industry. Researchers at Stanford University have isolated a microbe that turns light into hydrogen, which could become a fuel source. Meanwhile, Craig Venter, the first person to map the human genome, has formed a company that will try to develop energy-producing microbes.

While the concept is feasible, researchers now have to figure out how to optimize the processes involved in creating a fuel cell. Kenneth Nealson, the USC Wrigley chair in environmental studies and professor of earth sciences and biological sciences, will head up the research on altering the genetic pathways of *Shewanella* for maximum electron production. Nealson is one of the pioneers of geobiology and has conducted extensive research on how microbes survive in oxygen poor environments.

Submitted By: Y. Bulger



The microwave was invented after a researcher walked by a radar tube and a chocolate bar melted in his pocket.



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password managers to choose from.

So unless you feel that a scrap of paper sitting on your desk offers the best security, look into utilizing one of these password manager options. And who knows,

after you've experienced password managers for yourself, you might just realize you've found a new best friend.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



Request for New Name for the Nanaimo Computer Club Monthly Newsletter

The Executive, would like the Club Members to participate in coming up with a more modern name for our Monthly Newsletter.

It has always been known as the "Paper Modem" and as the Newsletter is no longer produced on "Paper", and "Modems" have been become an obsolete technology we would like to move forward to a new name.

Please email your suggestions to any Executive Member

Email addresses available at the following link:
<http://www.nanaimocomputerclub.com/Contact List.htm>

What will be the Minimum System Requirements for Vista?

According to Microsoft this will not be known until summer 2006 at the earliest. However, these guidelines provide useful estimates:

- 512 megabytes (MB) or more of RAM

- A dedicated graphics card with DirectX® 9.0 support
- A modern, Intel Pentium- or AMD Athlon-based PC.

Link: <http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/new sroom/w inxp/VistaBeta1FS.mspx>

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



The cruise liner, QE2, moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel that it burns.



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Tips & Tricks

How to Remove Windows XP's Messenger

Before you work in your Registry please remember to do a backup! This way you won't be sorry if things go wrong....

Theoretically, you can get rid of it (as well as a few other things). Windows 2000 power users should already be familiar with this tweak.

Fire up the Windows Explorer and navigate your way to the %SYSTEMROOT%\INF folder. What is that "thingy" with the percentage signs? It's a variable. For most people, %SYSTEMROOT% is C:\Windows. For others, it may be E:\WinXP.

In the INF folder, open sysoc.inf (but not before

making a BACKUP copy first). Before your eyes glaze over, look for the line containing "msmsgs" in it. Near the end of that particular line, you'll notice that the word "hide" is not so hidden. Go ahead and delete "hide" (so that the flanking commas are left sitting next to one another).

Save the file and close it. Now, open the Add and Remove Programs applet in the Control Panel. Click the Add / Remove Windows Components icon. You should see "Windows Messenger" in that list. Remove the checkmark from its box, and you should be set.

NOTE: there are other hidden system components in that sysoc.inf file, too. Remove "hide" and the subsequent programs at your own risk.

Submitted by: Greg Wilson

How to Copy Files and Folders to CD

- 1 Insert a blank, writable CD into the CD recorder.
- 2 Open My Computer.
- 3 Click the files or folders you want to copy to the CD. To select more than one file, hold down the CTRL key while you click the files you want. Then, under File and Folder Tasks, click Copy this file, Copy this folder, or Copy the selected items.
- 4 If the files are located in My Pictures,

under Picture Tasks, click Copy to CD or Copy all items to CD.

5 In the Copy Items dialog box, click the CD recording drive, and then click Copy.

6 In My Computer, double-click the CD recording drive. Windows displays a temporary area where the files are held before they are copied to the CD. Verify that the files and folders that you intend to copy to the CD appear under Files Ready to be Written to the CD.

7 Under CD Writing Tasks, click Write

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The words 'racecar,' 'kayak' and 'level' are the same whether they are read left to right or right to left (palindromes).



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Gadgets & Things



Thumbprint Flashdrive

To anyone else but you with this smart 2.0 USB memory drive with 256MB that uses fingerprint

recognition technology to keep your files secure and private. Supports up to 5 different fingerprints. System requirements: Windows 98SE or higher.

Available at: <http://www.computergear.com>



4-Port Hub/ Mouse Pad Combo

Reduce desktop clutter with this combination 4-Port USB hub, mouse pad and 8-digit calculator on your desktop.

Just plug in the included USB cable to your computer and then plug in your USB devices such as printer, scanner, PDA, mouse, camera or storage device to work more efficiently.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger

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these files to CD. Windows displays the CD Writing Wizard. Follow the instructions in the wizard.

Notes:

A) Do not copy more files to the CD than it will hold. Standard CDs hold up to 650 megabytes (MB). High-capacity CDs hold up to 850 MB.

B) Be sure that you have enough disk space on your hard disk to store the temporary files that are created during the CD writing process. For a standard CD, Windows reserves up to 700 MB of the available free space. For a high-capacity CD,

Windows reserves up to 1 gigabyte (GB) of the available free space.

C) After you copy files or folders to the CD, it is useful to view the CD to confirm that the files are copied. For more information, click Related Topics.

To stop the CD recorder from automatically ejecting the CD

D) Open My Computer.

E) Right-click the CD recording drive, and then click Properties.

F) On the Recording tab, clear the Automatically eject the CD after writing check box.

Submitted by: Greg Wilson



"Stewardesses" is the longest word typed with only the left hand and "lollipop" with your right.



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McAfee® Anti-Virus Software Runs Amok, Deleting Wrong Files

*Tuesday, March 14, 2006 By Ryan Naraine – Fox-
New.com*

Anti-virus vendor McAfee scrambled earlier this month to contain the damage from a faulty definition update that incorrectly flagged hundreds of legitimate software programs as W95/CTX, a low-risk Windows 95 virus that was first detected in 2004.

The erroneous .DAT file (4715) was shipped late on March 10 with definitions for a wide range of new malware threats, but when the update was installed, it quarantined or deleted several widely deployed applications, including Microsoft Excel,

Macromedia Flash Player, Adobe Update Manager and the Google Toolbar Installer.

Santa Clara, Calif.-based McAfee acknowledged the gaffe and quickly shipped a new virus pattern file (4716), but for some users the damage was already done.

In a notice posted online, McAfee said the 4715 DAT files caused problems for customers running its VirusScan Enterprise, Managed VirusScan, VirusScan Online, LinuxShield and VirusScan (consumer) products.

The incorrect detections did not occur with McAfee's OAS (On Access Scanner), nor with gateway or e-mail scanners.

Submitted By: Gord Bulger



Fix in for 'critical' Flash player flaws—*Submitted Tuesday,*

March 14, 2006—News.com.com

Adobe Systems has issued a patch for critical security flaws in its Macromedia Flash Player that could allow malicious attackers to take control of systems.

The vulnerabilities in the application affect Flash Player versions 8.0.22 or earlier, as well as Breeze Meeting add-in version 5.0 or earlier, according to an advisory from the software maker. The player software enables people to view Flash movies or

animations on Web sites, while Macromedia's Breeze Meeting is a Web conferencing tool that uses Flash Player.

People who inadvertently load a malicious file format (SWF) into their Flash Player could enable an intruder to execute arbitrary code on their systems via a Web browser, e-mail client or other applications. Adobe describes the security update as "critical" and is urging people to download the patch from its Web site.

http://www.macromedia.com/shockwave/download/download.cgi?P1_Prod_Version=ShockwaveFlash

Submitted By: Y. Bulger



The average person's left hand does 56% of the typing.



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7 Ways to Protect your Laptop on the Road—

Microsoft Corporation

The newest laptops are powerful, light, and thin enough to fit easily into the slenderest of carry-on baggage. This makes them a great accessory for flying or any other mode of travel, but also easier to lose. Here are our top seven security tips to help you secure your laptop.

Protect your information

If you keep a lot of personal or financial



information on your computer consider investing in an operating system that includes file protection. Windows XP Professional has the tools to protect your information through a process called encryption. To learn more, see *Encrypt Your Data to*

Keep It Safe.

Disguise your laptop

Carrying your laptop in an expensive laptop bag may be asking for trouble. Instead,

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Mac Runs Both Windows XP, Mac OS X

By Gregg Keizer - Mar 16, 2006

<http://www.informationweek.com>

A pair of Californians figured out a way to dual-boot an Intel Mac with both Mac OS X and Windows XP, winning a \$14,000 prize. But the technique isn't for beginners.

The Texas man who jumped-started the effort to get Windows XP to dual-boot on Intel-based Macs posted the winning solution on his site Thursday, and said the contest's cash prize of nearly \$14,000 had been won by a pair of Californians.

In January, Colin Nederkoorn of Houston began taking donations for a prize to be awarded to the first developer who came up with a way to boot an Intel Mac into either Mac OS X or Windows XP. Within days, he had raised thousands.

Nederkoorn had a selfish reason for the contest: He wanted to downsize from two machines -- a PowerPC-based Mac and a PC running Windows -- that he was using at work to just one, an Intel MacBook Pro he'd ordered as soon as Apple debuted the new systems.

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Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing.



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"I'm overwhelmed that a solution was found within the time limit," said Nederkoorn. "It's really been an emotional roller coaster. At one point I had no clue if anyone was even working on it, but then two weeks ago things started moving."

Nederkoorn had set a March 23 deadline -- later extended to March 30 -- for a dual-boot solution, and had promised that if no one came up with an answer, he would donate the money to the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF).

Seems that the EFF will be out \$13,854, the prize total Nederkoorn's site showed as of Thursday.

Two men collaborated to come up with the solution, said Nederkoorn. Although he said they lived in California, he wouldn't disclose their names, saying that they wanted to remain anonymous for now.

Nederkoorn has also posted a ZIP file to his site and several mirror sites; the file contains a how-to document as well as numerous files needed for the custom boot-loader.

"I'd say it's probably best left to advanced users at this stage," he said. "There's no hardware change to the computer, but some people tend not to follow instructions."

To produce a dual-boot Mac, users must customize a Windows XP installation CD by burning a new disc that includes the custom bootloader files. The Mac must also be partitioned -- a disk partitioning utility is included with the machine -- so that Mac OS X and Windows XP can co-exist on the same drive.



Submitted By: Y. Bulger



Goodbye Jeeves! - Ask Says Bye to Butler

By Susan Kuchinskas -
<http://www.internetnews.com>

Ask Jeeves was one of the earliest Internet brands with its online-butler-at-your-

service metaphor. But now the company says its technology advances merit a re-branding to better help users understand its features and benefits.

On Monday, Ask Jeeves officially changed its name to Ask.com, giving itself a sleeker look to match the abbreviated moniker.

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Tigers have striped skin, not just striped fur.



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The new front page has been stripped down, with the search query box prominently featured. A Toolbox column along the right-hand side offers shortcuts to specialized searches, such as shopping, weather, dictionary and local. The Toolbox can be customized by users to add or eliminate a total of 20 items; items can be reordered, as well.

"Ten years ago, they branded with Jeeves the Butler and ... his ability to answer questions using natural language processing," said Brian Massey, senior product manager Ask.com. "Over the last five years, Jeeves has moved on."

The company found that the emphasis on natural language queries -- wherein someone would type, "What is the capital of Italy?" -- caused people to visit the site only occasionally. In an effort to grow its popularity, Ask.com made the decision to focus on keyword search technology, purchasing Teoma in 2001.

Teoma's technology not only ranks search results on general popularity, but also on the number of subject-specific sites that reference it. It also identifies and displays clusters of related sub topics.

Ask Jeeves continually trumpeted its ad-

vances, such as Zoom and Web Answers, introduced in May 2005, but it had trouble getting its message heard above the noise from Google (Quote, Chart), Yahoo (Quote, Chart) and MSN.

"Jeeves [the butler] represents, that old product and old messaging around question and answering" Massey said. "The product really has changed, and people aren't seeing that as much as we would like them to."

Ask.com was acquired by IAC Search & Media, a wholly-owned business of IAC/InterActiveCorp, for \$1.85 billion.



Links:

<http://www.askforkids.com>

<http://www.ask.com>

<http://blog.ask.com/>

Site Submit:

<http://www.ineedhits.com/paid-inclusion/ask-jeeves-search-engine.aspx>

Submitted By Y. Bulger



It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.



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Big Bang Theory Adjustment!

By DENNIS O'BRIEN—*Baltimore Sun*

Oldest light shows universe
grew fast, researchers say
.... First stars arose 400
million years after big bang,

not 200 million years, as once thought!

Scientists examining the oldest light in the universe say they've found clear evidence that matter expanded at an almost inconceivable rate after the big bang, creating conditions that led to the formation of the first stars.

Light from the big bang's afterglow shows that the universe grew from the size of a marble to an astronomical size in just a trillionth of a second after its birth 13.7 billion years ago, researchers from Johns Hopkins and Princeton universities said.

Readings from a NASA probe also show that the earliest stars formed about 400 million years after the big bang — not 200 million years afterward, as the research team once thought.

"With this new data, theories about the early universe have just taken their first exam, and they passed with flying colors," said David Spergel, a Princeton astrophysicist and co-author of the findings published Thursday.

The results are based on readings from the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe, a robotic instrument with two telescopes that sweeps the sky every six months in an orbit a million miles from Earth.

Light from the probe also has confirmed a theory that the universe is made up mostly of dark energy, a mysterious force that continues to cause the universe's expansion, said Johns Hopkins astrophysicist Charles Bennett, the probe's principal investigator.

"This light is just invaluable. It's really the only fossil we have from that time," Bennett said.

Inflationary theorists argue that at the time of the big bang, the universe was at first microscopic. But three events changed things: fluctuations in temperature, bursts that transformed energy into matter and a rapid expansion of the universe that ultimately enabled stars and galaxies to form.

By polarizing and filtering out light from the earliest stars, the researchers were able to uncover evidence of those inflationary moments — fluctuations in brightness of the light scattered around the big bang's afterglow. "It amazes me that we can say anything about the first trillionth of a second of the universe, but we can," Bennett said.

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Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated.



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The researchers say the findings also confirm that only 4 percent of the universe is composed of the familiar atoms that make up what we see around us.

Another 22 percent is dark matter — a gravitational force made up of cold particles — and 74 percent is dark energy, a

force that appears to be causing the universe to expand. Experts say the findings will help scientists for years as they try to unravel mysteries about the early universe.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



Norton Does It Again!

According to a CNET report, an update issued by Symantec for its products, Norton AntiVirus and Norton Internet Security, affected AOL customers. The AOL users using recent editions of those two products were unable to sign into America Online for several hours.

The culprit was an update to intrusion prevention software that is part of the security software, the company said. "This update incorrectly detected traffic patterns used as part of the AOL connection as a potential risk," Sy-

mantec said in the statement, quoted by CNET.

Symantec removed the faulty update from the site after seven hours and posted a corrected version. The company also recommends to users that are affected by this issue to disable their Symantec products and immediately connect to Internet to download the correct version.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



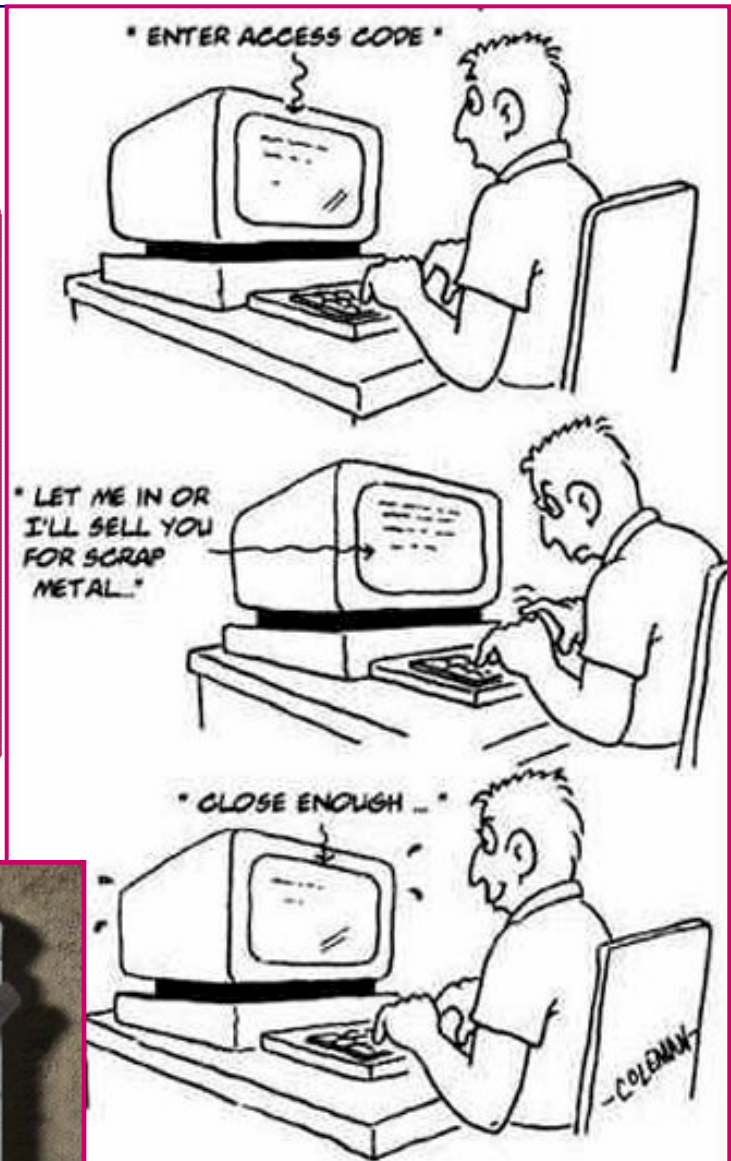
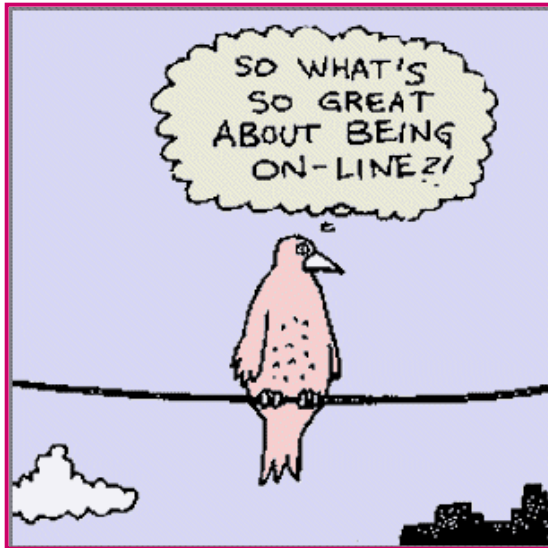
Al Capone's business card said he was a used furniture dealer.



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Just for Laughs



Now you know everything! - well almost



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conceal your computer in a laptop backpack or another inconspicuous case that doesn't appear to be storing a laptop.

Be vigilant at the security checkpoint Every one knows that security checkpoints at airports are a necessary hassle these days. Laptop thieves will take advantage if you are flustered by the commotion or in a hurry to catch your flight. When you go through security, keep an eye on your laptop as it travels through the scanner. Thousands of laptops are stolen at airports each year, and even more are simply left behind.

Store it under the seat in front of you

Because we're in an enclosed space, we tend to be lax about securing our belongings on airplanes. Don't be. When you're not using your laptop on a plane, store it underneath the seat in front of you, instead of the overhead bin where strangers will have easier access to it.

Watch for over-the-shoulder snoops

There's so much in today's news about how hackers can digitally sneak into your

personal files, we sometimes forget about the old fashioned method of snooping. When you're using your laptop in a public place, be on the look out for thieves attempting to look over your shoulder as you enter sensitive information, such as a password.

Protect your laptop with a strong password

If you travel with your laptop frequently, you should secure it with a strong password. Check your computer's Help and Support service to learn how to add or change your system password. To find out how to create passwords that are tough for hackers to crack, but easy for you to remember, see Creating stronger passwords.

Back up before you go

Always back up your information before you take your laptop on a trip. You can't always avoid the financial loss of your equipment, but you can avoid losing all your information in the process.

Submitted by: Y. Bulger



That's a Wrap! ...