



From the Presidents Desk

by Stuart Griggs

Hello to all...

Merry Christmas everyone. This year we had snow to go with it even though it did not last very long, if you were an early riser, you got to see it. The big flakes fell late in the evening that day and if the surface they found did not melt them, you found less than a half inch of the it later on.

As you all know, December marks the time of our Christmas meeting which is held in the large room up stairs of the Central Library as usual. If you've not signed the list of what you plan to bring, please contact Lane or Corinne so that those can be coordinated and duplicates, etc will be avoided. Please try to bring some type of finger food.

This year's gift exchange is going to be a little different. The club has bought a really nice gift that most everyone in computers will and can use as the "hot gift" to steal during the gift exchange. What's different is that this year we are asking members that come

bring a \$10-15 gift per attending person that is computer or office related. Something that you think a computer user could use or want. And please wrap the gift before arriving. If by chance a member comes empty handed, we have some gifts left over from last year for those to pick from.

Did everyone take advantage of the sales after Thanksgiving? I did but I did not camp out in front of Best Buy like I saw those the evening before on my way home. If BB was opening 7 hours after that, my question was, who's bathroom were they going to use between now and then? Ha, ha. Even Wendy's closes by midnight in most places.

The prices of GPS units have come down a whole lot since recent years and new features have been developed that early models just dreamed of. So I decided to start shopping for one. Some friends and I took a trip to Houston that Friday and Fry's Electronics was the main destination among others. I wanted something more than just a basic unit and some key features were on my list. After finding them, I took out my smart phone and checked Amazon to compare prices. The deals were better online so I explored elsewhere. The one I ordered arrived the other day...a Garmin 780 and it was only \$10 more than the clearance basic model at Fry's. But this unit is one of last year's top models. It works great so far and have already tried it out on a Beaumont trip.

Well, I've now installed both copies of the Windows 7 Pro Upgrade that was pre-ordered several weeks before release date. The installation went great except for one thing that appeared in both cases. The Product Key would not validate to active the OS. Both times I had to call MS to obtain a valid key. The first time, I was give three sets before one worked. The next time, two sets were given and I was transferred to another tear of tech support. Then my system was connected by remote to fix the "problem". I've not heard this from anyone else and several have already. After the problem was solved, the installations went fine. The only driver that Windows did not find was the chip set on my laptop. But it directed me where to get it manually. So far I am happy with the two installations and have a third on Corinne's HP laptop. It will be an upgrade install instead of "clean" install like the first two.

Well, hope to see you all at the Christmas meeting this month and don't forget to bring your gift to exchange.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR THIS MONTH

Regular Meeting
Dec 14, 2009

Q & A Forum – 6 PM - 7 PM
Meeting & Speaker – 7 PM - 9 PM
Central Library - Ernest & Claude St

This Month

“Christmas Party”

Next Staff Meeting

“TO BE ANNOUNCED”

4th Monday - NO INTERNET SIG (DEC)

7 P. M. - Internet Sig - Woody Bearden
6804 Bonne Meadow Drive
Lake Charles LA.
Ph# 479-0527

General Information

(337) 477-1937 or (337) 528-2771



Web Site: www.bmaweb.com/swlapcug

or

www.swlapcug.com

*Our web site has our monthly news letter posted
in color & remember to check out the
“Tips “
section for new ones.*

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User Friendly Computer Club

First time Visitors are always

“Welcome!”

We're - Users helping Users - bring a friend



SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA PC USERS GROUP

Summary of Meetings and Activities - November 2009

The **Regular Club Meeting** was held Monday, November 9, 2009, at the Central Library. There were 13 in attendance.

Tiny Ruisch gave a presentation on Microsoft's "Windows 7". The Task Bar was viewed and demonstrated and some of the many other features were described and demonstrated. He described what he liked and disliked about Windows 7. His opinion was generally favorable.

The **Board of Directors Meeting** was held Monday, November 16, 2009, at the Griggs' home. Those attending were Stuart Griggs, Corinne Griggs, Tiny Ruisch, Tom Spindler, Woody Bearden and Robin Richard.

Programs planned for the next three months are:

December 14 Christmas meeting. Refreshments will be brought by those attending. Anyone who has not signed the refreshment list is asked to call or email Lane Oliver 528-2771 - (southernmiss1938@suddenlink.net) and let her know what refreshment they plan to bring.

There will be our traditional "Chinese Swap" gift exchange. Each person who plans to attend is asked to bring a gift wrapped computer related gift to participate in the gift exchange (suggested value \$10 to \$15 range). If anyone does not bring a gift, they may still participate but will be limited to the gifts on hand from the club inventory (from last year's Christmas meeting).

January 11 Computer tune-up and maintenance

February 8 Making of Videos. (Alternative - Income tax program - If a presenter can be found).

In an effort to get club dues paid on time (so we know how to plan the budget for 2010) there will be a drawing for a prize for all those who will have paid their dues by the end of the Christmas meeting.

The **Internet Special Interest Group** met Monday, November 23, at the home of Woody Bearden. There were six in attendance. Woody discussed and demonstrated the program Glympse. This is a program that allows someone with a GPS enabled mobile phone to allow a contact with an Internet enabled mobile device or an email accessed computer to view and track his location turn by turn on a web-based map for a specified length of time. A competitor is "Sprint Family Locator", but it has different capabilities and limitations.

A Pain in the Whatchamacallit

By Tiny Ruisch

My wife needed someone to carry packages on Black Friday, so for the first time ever, I went out to the big sales. When we stopped at the store that was started by that fellow from Arkansas, I discovered a pallet of HP printer/scanner/copiers. Although I really wasn't shopping for anything, I was looking it over pretty closely. There was another lady there that had six of the machines loaded in her basket. I asked what she was going to do with all of those printers. She told me she didn't want the printers but was buying the ink. I ended up buying the machine for \$25. I wanted the scanner. My wife wanted the printer and the lady wanted her ink. One box had something for everybody.

The multi-function printer got me to thinking about the club's annual software disk. It has a little something for everyone. I don't know where Tom found the link for the 200 built in Windows 7 programs, but I figure that one link was worth my club dues this year. It's like having a control panel on steroids. No more searching to find that hidden function. After I opened the link, it only took about two minutes before I added the link to my start menu.

Thanks Tom for creating and burning this years club disc. It has so many programs that I ran out of fingers and toes while trying to count them. They all have my favorite price tag - Zero Dollars. That converts to zero in Euros. You don't need your VISA to use them

In this months column, I thought I'd elaborate on a few of the programs that I've used in the past and give you my opinion of them. I might even suggest an alternative or two.

Some of the links on the disk, I won't be checking at all. Avast has long been my favorite anti-virus program. I use it on all of the computers in my home network. The KM Player is another program that I use almost exclusively, although I must admit that Microsoft has almost won me back with Windows Media Player 12.

I like to test programs, so I install and uninstall lots of them on my computer. I always use

Revo Uninstaller. This program cleans up all of the junk that is left behind by the windows uninstaller.

I'm knocking on wood as I tell you that I have never had a computer infected by any bad stuff. Do you suppose that could be because I regularly use Malware Anti-Bytes, SpywareBlaster and Spybot Search & Destroy?

A few of the programs like 7-Zip I may never use. I don't use any compressing programs. I have lots of hard drives and no data that I need to archive. I also doubt if I'll have a need for Create Cover Search. I usually just listen to the music. I don't need to look at pictures of the album.

There are also a lot of programs that I'm going to try out. I'll definitely be looking through the OCR folder. Got to play with my new toy. I'm certain I'll find better software than was included with my HP.

I've heard that Firefox has greatly improved over the last few years. If you're checking out browsers, don't forget about Opera.

Another program that I'm going to check out is the Cleansoft Update Notifier. I'm happy with Secunia, the program that I use to check for updates, but you never know when you can find something better or easier.

I'm also going to check out the RonyaSoft CD/DVD Label Maker. Tom made the Club CD so attractive that it made an immediate selling point for this program. Besides, I've got to use up the ink on that new printer.

Oh, by the way, a few days later I bought a black and colored ink combo package. They cost me \$30.

Thanks again for the disk, Tom. Great job.

Free Panda Cloud Antivirus Released

By Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.cloudantivirus.com>

<http://www.cloudantivirus.com/en/threat-information/>

<http://www.cloudantivirus.com/forum/index.jspa>

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2355828,00.asp>

http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/product/290839/review/cloud_antivirus.html

In early May, 2009, I wrote about a novel idea from Panda Software, a Spanish cyber security company. At that time Panda had released an early beta (pre-release) version of its innovative antivirus program that was substantially different than the other competitive products available at that time. As a beta, it was not in a polished final form, and had some issues with some users, and some mixed reviews. In mid-November, Panda released its production version of Panda Cloud Antivirus, version 1.0, as a totally free (for personal use) antivirus program which runs smoothly on Windows XP, 2003, Vista (32 and 64), and Windows 7 (32 and 64).

What is unusual about Panda Cloud Antivirus (www.cloudantivirus.com) is that it uses a “cloud” or a series of high speed networked computers to carry out most scanning, rather than the client computer that it is running on. According to published tests, this results in a reduction of up to one-half of the processing time and load on the system, compared to the industry average of antivirus products. Since Panda Cloud does not use as much computing overhead as its competitors, many users have stated that they have experienced a significant increase in performance, as Panda Cloud does not have as much “drag” on the system, since it only consumed about 3% of the processing power of the computers on which it was tested. Another unusual feature is that there are no virus signatures to download, as the cloud of powerful networked computers that do the virus scanning are continuously updated, such that there is no periodic updating of the software on the computer. Panda calls its Cloud product, “the first antivirus without an update button”. This ensures that the Panda Cloud user will always be referencing the very latest in detection capability and digital malware signatures, a feature often lacking when users do not continuously update the conventional antivirus installed on their computers.

To download and install Panda Cloud Antivirus is a very simple process. The downloaded install file is about 22 megs in size, and downloads quickly on a broadband connection. Once downloaded the only decision that the user must make is to click on the “Accept and Install” button, and the software quickly installs. Since there are no large updated signature file to install, Panda Cloud is ready to function immediately without any further intervention of decisions to be made by the user. This has to be one of the simplest installation processes that I have ever tried. While I did not need any technical support, Panda Cloud offers free technical support via its online forums at www.cloudantivirus.com/forum/index.jspa.

Panda Cloud Antivirus requires an active internet connection as Panda calculates a digital signature for the files on the computer, and sends that signature to the cloud for instant analysis and feedback. Once a file has been determined as safe, a process that happens so fast as to be nearly undetectable, Panda knows not to resend that signature to the cloud, unless that file has been changed. My first full scan seemed a little slow taking longer than usual, as thousands of files were checked and determined to be safe, but subsequent scans were much faster because Panda Cloud did not have to recalculate and evaluate any unchanged files. According to Panda, its library of digital signature files is over a terabyte in size, a file size that would be prohibitive on a personal computer. As I type this, Panda’s “Collective Intelligence Monitor” is reporting that it has analyzed an aggregate of over 84 million distinct files, and identified which ones were malware, and which were safe. In the most recent two hour period, Panda Cloud has analyzed over 15,000 new files; the number for all of yesterday was over 166,000 new files. It should be noted that these are all unique files that had not been previously analyzed by the cloud. Panda claims that the cloud can instantly analyze over 99% of all new files it receives, but about one-half of one percent requires Panda’s staff to manually analyze the new files for threats. In the past week, Panda Cloud had detected and cleaned over 600,000 computers which were infested with just one or more of the top 10

malware threats, and does not include the computers infected with less common threats that were cleaned by Panda Cloud.

Even though Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.0 has only been available for a very short time, it has already won some accolades. PC Magazine tested Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.0 and awarded it its coveted “Editors’ Choice Award”, tying for the best detection rate during real-time scanning. Panda Cloud outscored the previous top-rated product in the detection of key loggers, the pesky malware that can steal usernames, passwords, account numbers, and enable identity theft. In its tests, Panda Cloud scored a perfect score in detecting rootkits, those often difficult to detect malware items that may hide in the registry and other hidden locations. Panda Cloud also tied for the top ranking in detecting “scumware” and “scareware”, those fraudulent pop-ups that tell the user that his computer is infected, and that for a steep fee, will clean his computer. While generally excellent in detecting malware, PC Magazine reported that Panda Cloud had some difficulties in actually removing some malware, including some rootkits. PC Magazine stated that Panda Cloud was among the best at keeping a clean system free of malware, but was less effective in cleaning an infected machine than some of the other products tested. Despite these shortcomings, Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.0 won the PC Magazine “Editors’ Choice Award”.

Another computer magazine, PC World, tested a late beta version of Panda Cloud shortly before the release of version 1.0. PC World stated, “Among all of the free antivirus software we tested for our latest roundup, Panda Cloud Antivirus was the best app at blocking known malware.” When writing about using the cloud as a detection tool rather than conventional signature files, PC World said, “The approach is intended to take advantage of the latest signatures without the need for signature-database updates—and if its excellent showing at detecting malware in AV-Test.org’s zoo of half a million samples is any indication, the approach works. Panda’s app produced an impressive 99.4 percent overall detection rate.”

If a user has an active internet connection, and needs a top-rated free antivirus product that is excellent at keeping clean systems clean, and has about the lowest drag on system performance, than Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.0 Free Edition would be a wise choice.

“Merry Christmas to All”

Don’t forget that the Christmas Meeting (Party) starts at 5:30 PM. We will need to be out of there by 8:30 PM so try and make it by 5:30 PM.



We are asking everyone to pick up a computer related gift to bring for our Chinese game we play every year. \$15.00 limit. Those that would not like to buy something are still able to participate in the game but only will be allowed to pull from the gifts left over from last year.

We hate doing this but our budget is too low to buy gifts this year. Getting together and having a good time is our main object.

Everyone is asked to bring their favorite snack or dessert. We will need cold drinks also. Eggnog will be brought by Stuart and coffee will be served.

Those of you that have paid up by the Party will be eligible for a drawing so get your dues in.....

Hope to see you there....

Lane

Facebook Invasion: Beware of New 'Smart' Worm

Hot on the heels of a reported hijacking of hundreds of Facebook groups, a new variation on an old worm is crawling its way into the social network's walls. Attackers have released an updated, more intelligent version of the notorious Koobface virus, security analysts say--and anyone could become its next victim.

The Facebook Hijack

First, the hijacking: An organization called "*Control Your Info*" apparently took control of as many as 300 Facebook groups over the past several days. Members added their own logo onto the pages, announcing they'd "*hijacked*" the groups and providing a link back to their own site.

(Facebook maintains no confidential information was ever exposed--the affected groups, representatives say, were abandoned and open for any member to take over.)

The "Control Your Info" Web site states that the organization's mission was to expose security holes in social media--a fitting segue to today's new threat.

Facebook's New Concern

The new threat has a familiar name. Koobface--which, by the way, is an anagram of the word Facebook--first popped up in mid-2008 and has been pestering users ever since.

The worm typically works by taking over your PC, then sending messages or wall postings to your friends. The messages include links to what appear to be funny videos or risqué photos of people you and your friends know. Anyone who follows the links, however, will ultimately end up infected with the malware themselves--usually by way of a bogus software update that pops up on-screen.

The updated Koobface variation, according to the virus-fighting team at Trend Micro, takes things a step further by automating the entire process. Instead of depending solely upon real accounts to spread the malicious links, the attackers have found a way to have bots do their bidding.

Here's how Trend Micro says it's happening:

Botnets are registering new Facebook accounts and confirming them via accompanying Gmail addresses, all without any human interaction. The zombie accounts are then joining Facebook groups, adding friends, and posting dangerous links onto those people's walls.

"This new component behaves like a regular Internet user that starts to connect with friends in Facebook," explains Jonell Baltazar, an advanced threats researcher with Trend Micro. "The details provided about the account are complete such as a photo, birth date, favorite music, and favorite books."

The system is even advanced enough to monitor maximum friend levels allowed by Facebook, Baltazar says, to avoid drawing any attention to the ill-intended account.

Facebook Protection

So, what can you do to keep yourself safe from this Koob-faced villain? The steps are nothing you haven't heard before: Keep your antivirus software up to date, and use some common sense.

Antivirus software will alert you if you click onto a site that's known to host malware -- and that's exactly where these Koobface links want to take you. The easiest way to stay safe, then, is just to be cautious in choosing what you click.

If you see a link that looks questionable, even if it's from someone whose name you know, don't follow it. And if you find yourself on a Web page that's asking you to download a software update, don't do it. Instead, close the window and go directly to the software vendor's own Web page to see if the update is the real deal.

Otherwise, you might end up with Koob smeared all over your face--and, suffice it to say, that's one fate you'd be better off avoiding.

Submitted by

Lane Oliver/Editor

WELCOME TO THE SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA PC USER GROUP, INC.

The "SWLAPCUG" consists of people who are interested in learning and sharing their knowledge about computers, in particular IBM compatible microcomputers. The group was originally organized in November 1984. The general meetings are held the second Monday of each month, at the Central Library, (Corner of Ernest & Claude St), Lake Charles, LA. Call any of the officers listed on the first page for the location and date of next meeting. The first SIG (Special Interest Group - a small group meeting to learn about a particular program, etc.) starts at 6:00 PM and the General Meeting at 7:00 PM. Dues are \$24.00 per year, per family. The money is used to deter operating expenses and print a monthly Newsletter.

Our Newsletter is a combined effort of members passing on their knowledge about computers. The minutes of the last general and board meeting are also published. Articles for the Newsletter can be uploaded to the Internet, (southernmiss1938@suddenlink.net) or give to Lane Oliver, our News Editor.

We are a informal and nonprofit club. If you are interested in joining or placing an ad in the News Letter, please fill out an application that will help us to get to know you better. You can get a copy of an application on our web site, www.bmaweb.com/swlapcug or www.swlapcug.com or at one of our meetings. Your dues may be given to the Treasurer or any Club Officer. You may also send in your application along with your membership dues (\$24.00), Ads (\$35.00 business card size) for a year, to SWLAPCUG, %Tom Spindler, 4010 Jande St, Lake Charles, La. 70605-3430.

"Don't ForGet"

Ira Wilsker - Monday 6 pm (1 hr Show) KLVI 560

Kim Komando - Sat. 9 AM KLVI 1400 and

Sunday 1 pm (4 hr Show) KLVI 560

(Can't call in unless you call on Saturday to be on her show)

Betty Champagne - In Lake Charles Sunday Paper



PC USER GROUP, INC.

4010 Jande St

Lake Charles, La. 70605-3430

