



**Newsletter of SYDTRUG INC.**  
**SYDNEY TRS-80/MS-DOS USERS' GROUP**  
 P.O. BOX 75, PANANIA 2213  
 AUSTRALIA  
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\* \* \* \* \*  
**MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Meetings will be held on  
**SECOND Saturday** afternoon each month  
 starting 1:00 P.M. at 1st Sefton Scout Hall,  
 4 Waldron Road, SEFTON  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Meetings will be held on:  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 2009 September 12th  
 2009 October 10th  
 2009 November 14th  
 2009 December 12th  
 \* \* \* \* \*

**Closing Dates for Newsletter Copy:**

<b>2009 October</b>	— 2009 September 12th
<b>2009 November</b>	— 2009 October 10th
<b>2009 December</b>	— 2009 November 14th
<b>2010 January</b>	— 2009 December 12th

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## ***SYDTRUG Inc. Information***

### ***MEMBERSHIP FEES:***

For single membership, \$45 per standard financial year (July to June) or, for family membership (which includes all family members living at the same address), \$55 per standard financial year. These fees fall due on 1st July each year. They cover the cost of the monthly newsletter, admission to Saturday meetings and access to the group library.

### ***Our NEWSLETTER ("SYDTRUG News"):***

Distributed on a regular basis, it includes group business information along with software and hardware articles and information from local and overseas sources. Contributions from members are always welcome. See below for advertisements.

**COST:** Included in your membership fee. Back issues available at \$2.00 ea plus postage (within Australia) \$0.55.

### ***Other NEWSLETTERS:***

We receive numerous exchange newsletters from similar groups, both locally and from overseas.

### ***ADVERTISEMENTS:***

Members may place "For Sale", "Exchange", or "Wanted" advertisements in "SYDTRUG News" There is no charge, but inclusion is dependent upon space being available. The editor reserves the right to edit advertisements as thought fit.

### ***DISCLAIMER:***

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## ***SYDTRUG Inc. Members' INTERNET Addresses***

as at 2009 August 8th

PLEASE NOTE: If NO Internet address is shown on your membership renewal form, then none will be shown in this listing.

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Please check your entry to confirm that there are no errors.  
For any changes to this listing, please advise the Editor.

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**Treasurer's Report for 2009 July**

by Peter Wignell — Hon. Treasurer

INCOME:	July	Year to Date
Members' Subscriptions:		
Renewals:	225-00	225-00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u><u>\$225-00</u></u>	<u><u>\$225-00</u></u>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>		
Newsletter Costs:		
Postage	11-80	11-80
Meeting Costs:		
Rent	55-00	55-00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<u><u>\$66-80</u></u>	<u><u>\$66-80</u></u>
<b>BANK BALANCE:</b>	<u>\$2,405-40</u>	

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***How Can I Keep My  
PC Clean and Tidy?***

by Gabe Goldberg — Computers and Publishing, Inc.  
tiptet (at) gabegold.com

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Like changing your car's oil or replacing your home's air conditioner filter, a little PC cleaning pays off with a faster, more reliable, and longer lasting computer.

Although nothing suggested here is either rocket science or inherently dangerous, always follow the medical adage, "First, do no harm". So don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable (perhaps have a more experienced person clean up while you watch and learn), and back up your system and data. Then reboot, to get a clean start, and don't open any programs,

Before starting, to measure what your cleanup deletes, determine how full your hard drive is. Open My Computer, Right Click your hard drive (usually labelled "Local Disk (C:)"), and click Properties. Note how much space is used and free, then close the dialogue box.

Next, use Windows' built-in disk cleaning tool. Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup, and the drive to clean, likely C. Choose what to clean; default selections are usually what you need. To be extra thorough, if your system has been running problem free, click the More Options tab and then Clean Up System Restore. Confirm your choice and click OK.

Delete Web browser temporary files. Using Internet Explorer, click Tools on the Menu Bar, Internet Options, and Delete Files under the General tab. Other browsers provide similar functions, sometimes using "cache" to refer to the collection of temporary files.

Delete unneeded personal files, items outdated and no longer used. While most Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, etc.) store their files in the My Documents folder, you may have changed this default location. And other apps likely have their own favourite places to stash files. Look around, since cluttered files make Windows work harder to get things done and waste time and resources when they're backed up. If you collect photos, music and such, delete those you no longer want or need, perhaps saving them on CD/DVD or USB drive. Sorting files by size or date helps find deletion candidates.

If you run PC-based e-mail software, it's worth periodically purging Sent and Trash folders, perhaps pitching material older than a certain date. Then look for a Compact Folders option, sometimes on the File pulldown menu, which squeezes out unused space from e-mail folders.

Weed out software no longer used or useful by uninstalling applications with Window's Control Panel Add/Remove Software tool.

The Recycle Bin, which preserves erased files for recovery until it's emptied, has likely grown during this cleanup process. To empty it, Right Click its Windows desktop icon and click Empty Recycle Bin. Note that programs such as Norton Utilities may offer other cleanup options for the Recycle Bin and other Windows components.

Finally, remember that when writing to your hard drive, Windows places bits of each file in the next available open space on the hard drive.

While Windows can reassemble them, having many files fragmented slows access to them. So, to store all files as single entities, periodically defragment the hard drive. To do this, click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter, select a drive, and click Defragment.

When finished, compare the amount of hard drive space used and free to what you saw initially. If this is the first cleanup you've done in a while, the amount of space recovered may surprise you.

Many books give much more detailed instructions for PC cleanups. Search Amazon.com for "degunking windows" and "cleaning windows" to see choices (but don't be distracted by instructions for cleaning house, office, and car windows!).

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**Linkscanner —****Free Protection  
from Web Threats**

by Ira Wilsker — APCUG Director  
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Many of us have felt secure while surfing the web, safe in the knowledge that our PC security software will protect us from all of the threats out there. Initially, in the early days of PCs, we came to understand that a good antivirus program would give us all of the protection that we needed. Later, we learned the hard way that antivirus software by itself would not protect us from the then-current threats, so we needed a firewall and antispyware software. The major publishers of security software obliged us by producing and selling us better, and more comprehensive protective software, culminating in today's typical security suites. Sadly, the miscreants that create the threats to our computing safety are often a step ahead of the security software publishers, and manage to craft new categories of threats that are explicitly designed to penetrate our protective shields, or even bypass them altogether. This makes us vulnerable to attack, even though we blissfully surf the net, oblivious to these new threats, confident in the knowledge that our security software will forever protect us. Regrettably, many of us will find that our personal computing has been compromised by malware from which our security suites provide little or no protection, leaving us open and vulnerable to attack.

According to published reports, as many as 95% of the new online threats are now coming from the websites that we visit, and are often undetected by our existing security software. This means that the blind trust that many of us have in our security software, regardless of the

brand, may be unfounded, as our computers may be substantially unprotected from this new vector of attack. According to a recent article on the subject on ZDNET, "The most dangerous page on the web may be the one you are about to click on." As many as 100,000 to 150,000 legitimate websites, often those of national brands and companies, are compromised every day, and are "poisoned" in such a way that innocent visitors to those web pages unknowingly load malware onto their computers, bypassing the antivirus and antispyware software installed on the computer to expressly protect against such malware. This malware, when loaded on the victim computer, can open the victim to identity theft or other damages to his privacy or the sanctity of his data. Traditional whitelists (directories of safe sites), and blacklists (directories of dangerous sites), while widely used by conventional protective products are ineffective, as 60% of the poisoned websites are dangerous for less than 24 hours, many of those malignant for only a few hours. This threat is real, and according to security vendor AVG, "One in eight web users will unknowingly come across a poisoned page at least once a month."

The European computer security company AVG (formerly known as Grisoft), has an excellent reputation in the industry, and currently has over 80 million registered users of its software. While the AVG Antivirus software is among the most widely used free antivirus software in the world, AVG also publishes comprehensive commercial security suites that have a loyal following in the millions. AVG has always been considered as a leader in security technology, as demonstrated by a feature included in its top commercial security suite, Linkscanner. The Linkscanner technology has given AVG a strong competitive edge when compared against many of its commercial competitors, as it provides substantial protection from the web borne malware that would possibly slip by competitive products.

Recently, AVG released a free version of its Linkscanner software which I immediately downloaded and installed on several computers.

Linkscanner installed smoothly on each computer except one, that one computer having a security suite that was incompatible with Linkscanner (Trend Micro Internet Security Suite 2009 Pro). According to the AVG webpage, this conflict was unusual, as Linkscanner was tested and found to be compatible with almost all other security suites available.

Linkscanner, available for free download at [Linkscanner.avg.com](http://Linkscanner.avg.com), scans each webpage as it is downloaded to your browser, looking for dangerous content, and blocking the loading of the webpage if malware is found. This prevents the web borne malware from being installed on the computer as it is stopped before it is effectively downloaded. Linkscanner does this so quickly, and utilises minimal system resources, such that there is no noticeable effect on the speed of websites loading and being displayed in the browser. Linkscanner works well with Internet Explorer and Firefox browsers, and will run on most current versions of Windows, including 32 and 64 bit operating systems. Except as mentioned above, Linkscanner will generally not interfere with other security software and runs in addition to it.

There are two components to Linkscanner, Search-Shield and Active Surf-Shield. Search-Shield works with the major search engines, such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN, and displays a safety rating for links displayed during a search. If a website is known as safe, and is free of malware, Search-Shield will display a green star with a checkmark adjacent to the site name. Websites known to harbour malware will be displayed with a red "X", warning the user not to go there. By knowing in advance which websites are safe to go to, or should be avoided, the user can search with a high degree of safety. While not a scientific study, I compared load times with and without Search-Shield running, and I could not notice any difference in the time to load and display Google and Yahoo search results.

The second key feature in Linkscanner is Active Surf-Shield, which scans the webpage behind any link click on, or web address typed into

the browser. If Active Surf-Shield detects that the page has been "poisoned", the continued loading of the page is stopped, and a large red warning window is displayed. Again, in my non-scientific tests, I did not notice any difference in the load times of web pages with and without Active Surf-Shield running, and it appeared that the results were displayed almost instantaneously.

#### Linkscanner

(Linkscanner.avg.com) is listed as "free forever" when used on individual personal home computers, and provides a valuable and worthwhile adjunct to the security software that we already have on our computers. Since as much as 95% of the contemporary cyber threats are web borne, and Linkscanner explicitly protects against those threats that may slip through our antivirus and antispyware software, Linkscanner should be installed and used as appropriate.

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### ***Panda Introduces***

#### ***Totally New Antivirus***

#### ***Technology — FREE***

by Ira Wilsker — APCUG Director  
Iwilsker (at) apcug.net

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#### WEBSITES:

<http://www.cloudantivirus.com>

Most antivirus software has become bloated and a drag on system performance. One major issue with most antivirus products is the time delay between the detection of a new threat, and the time it takes to push updates to users of the software. Thousands of new viruses and variants appear every day, and it is a major burden on the purveyors of antivirus software to keep their respective products up to date.

Regrettably, many users update their antivirus software daily, which is woefully inadequate, as most pub-

lishers of the antivirus software now send out updates several times a day, and in some cases, several times an hour! It often takes hours for updates to be created by the software companies and ready for users to update their software. This still leaves the users' computers unprotected from the newest threats during the lengthy time that it takes for new threats to be detected, analysed, neutralised, and distributed to the users of the software. An analogy would be reading the printed daily newspaper you may have found in your driveway this morning; it may be today's newspaper, but it is really yesterday's news. That is the same way that antivirus updates work; the updates that you download and install right now, are viruses that were first detected hours ago, leaving your computer vulnerable to those threats during those hours. You may also have no protection from new viruses and other malware that have been detected in the wild, but not yet included in the latest updates. In the past, when many new viruses spread slowly, this time lag was not serious, but with the rapidly spreading threats of today, that delay can be deadly in a cyber context. We blissfully traverse the Internet safe in the knowledge that our just updated antivirus will protect us from whatever we may come across, but this blissful ignorance may fail to consider the new threats in circulation. Philosophically, if our antivirus and anti-malware software was so good, why do millions of computers that have updated antivirus software still get infected?

Another issue with the bloated antivirus that many of us use is the large amount of system resources consumed by our antivirus software when running, and the degradation of performance that inevitably occurs. Many of us are unaware that the antivirus and anti-malware software that we may be using may be causing a significant slowdown in our computers' ability to process data, which is a frequent cause of degraded computer performance. Some of the more progressive publishers of antivirus software have addressed this predicament by releasing software that is easy on system resources, and does not signifi-

cantly degrade performance, but these companies are in the minority; most antivirus software currently in use, including several of the most popular titles, are a drag on the system.

Panda Software, a well respected Spanish publisher of excellent quality system security software, recently released a free new product that is claimed to resolve the problems mentioned above. Using the concept of "cloud computing", Panda is now distributing its new product "Cloud Antivirus". In its simplest form, cloud computing takes advantage of the combined knowledge and processing power of large sectors of the Internet, where networks synergistically and instantly work together to intelligently solve problems. Panda's Cloud Antivirus claims to capitalise on that power by using Panda's servers in the cloud, and is currently a free download at [www.cloudantivirus.com](http://www.cloudantivirus.com). By utilising the power of the cloud, Panda claims that new virus and malware signatures can be available to users of Cloud Antivirus in as little as six minutes, closing much of the window of vulnerability from new threats. What makes Panda Cloud Antivirus such an interesting product is that it is very easy on system resources, as all of the work of protecting your computer is done in the cloud, rather than by the CPU in your computer, which does not degrade system performance while providing the maximum in protection. In addition to not degrading performance, it is designed as an "install and forget" product that removes the user from the loop of updates, system configuration, and decisions about threats encountered. Simply stated, Panda Cloud Antivirus can be downloaded and installed, and no further intervention or updates are necessary in order to have comprehensive antivirus and anti-malware protection.

It should be noted that as I type this, the version of Panda Cloud Antivirus that is available for download is described by Panda as a "beta" or pre-release version, but by entering an email address when downloading the software, Panda states that it will provide a free activation key for the final version when released, and that

Cloud Antivirus will remain a free product.

Cloud Antivirus works by using a small, resource sparing dashboard on the user's desktop. This dashboard connects your computer to Panda's data center, which tracks anything that may be even slightly suspicious, with Panda's data centre stopping the threat before it can become active on the computer. By instantly combining the real-time threat "intelligence" from thousands of computers, Panda can better detect and react to threats than more traditional antivirus software. Panda's CEO Juan Santana says that Panda's cloud, "harnesses the knowledge of Panda's global community of more than 10 million users to automatically identify and classify new malware strains in real-time." In terms of the rapid growth of cyber threats, "PandaLabs detected more malware in 2008 than the previous 17 years combined, representing a major tipping point for both consumers and the antivirus industry as a whole," said Santana.

In addition to being reactive, this intelligence can also be proactive, allowing Panda to predict evolving threats, and be ready to deal with them before they become an active threat. By using the power of the cloud, rather than the power of the user's computer, there is no drag on system resources, while the computer is protected from the latest threats with minimal lag time.

Panda's Cloud Antivirus is a fascinating new technology that holds great promise. It may take a paradigm shift not to download frequent updates, and scan everything opened and run on the computer, which consumes great amounts of processing power and slows the loading and execution of programs and data. If this new technology is proven as reliable as I hope it initially appears to be, Panda may be a bigger threat to its competitors than malware will be to us.

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## *Things That You Can Do With That Flash Drive*

by Ira Wilsker — APCUG Director  
Iwilsker (at) apcug.net

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### WEBSITES:

<http://portableapps.com>

[http://u3.sandisk.com/download/  
Download\\_no.asp](http://u3.sandisk.com/download/Download_no.asp)

[http://www.microsoft.com/windows/  
windows-vista/features/readyboost  
.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-vista/features/readyboost.aspx)

With the demise of the floppy disk, and the approaching demise of the CD disc for data purposes, the USB flash drive has become the defacto method of saving and transporting files between computers. These small USB drives are known by a variety of monikers, such as flash drive, pen drive, pin drive, and thumb drive. Since their introduction a few years ago, their capacity has increased, and their prices have plunged. They are readily available in the big box stores, discount stores, club stores, and online. The most recent ones I purchased for the holidays were 8 gig size (almost the equivalent of the data stored on 2 standard DVD discs, about a dozen CD discs, or about 5700 floppy disks), and cost under \$15 each. In the after-Christmas sales, some 8 gig flash drives were advertised for \$9 each (after rebate). This amount of non-volatile storage for the price was inconceivable just a few years ago. I thought I was getting a bargain a few years ago when I bought my first flash drive, a 64mb Lexar, for \$49, and now a drive with about 64 times that capacity is about one-fourth the price! I have co-workers and students who wear their flash drives on cords around their necks, where they are referred to as "geek beads".

Most of us use the drive simply for portable storage, the ability to carry files around with us, but in reality these flash drives can do

much more than to simply be used for storage. Most of the USB flash drives on the market today comply with the USB 2.0 standard for high speed transfer, while there still are a few inexpensive, low capacity drives that are of the slower USB 1.1 speed standard, or only about 3% of the speed of the USB 2.0 drives. From a practical viewpoint, the user will not notice any significant difference in speed if small files are saved and read, but will notice a difference if large files are used.

There are some other standards for USB flash drives that many users may find beneficial, if their flash drives have the capabilities. Users of Microsoft Vista (Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, and Ultimate versions) may find it advantageous to purchase flash drives that are labelled as "ReadyBoost". According to Microsoft, "Windows Vista introduces Windows ReadyBoost, a new concept in adding memory to a system. You can use non-volatile flash memory, such as that on a universal serial bus (USB) flash drive, to improve performance without having to add additional memory "under the hood." If the drive is compatible with the ReadyBoost standard, some of the flash memory in the drive can effectively and temporarily be added to the RAM (memory) installed in the computer, with an improvement on performance. If the Vista user with a compatible flash drive right clicks on the flash drive letter displayed under "My Computer" or Windows Explorer, and then left clicks on Properties — ReadyBoost, Vista will recommend how much of the available memory on the drive can be effectively and safely utilised by Vista. Other data stored on the ReadyBoost drive is protected from damage, and will not be harmed if the drive is used as a ReadyBoost drive. Because of the higher performance requirements, ReadyBoost compatible flash drives are slightly more expensive than standard drives, but are often the least expensive way to add memory to a Vista computer.

Another useful feature often found on a USB flash drive is known as "U3". Drives that are U3 compatible are labelled as such. A U3 powered flash drive allows the user to

carry special versions of hundreds of programs on the flash drive that can be run directly from the flash drive without being installed on the computer. This is an effective way to carry the actual software the user is familiar with, and run it on other computers. When unplugged from the computer, U3 leaves no data or other information on the computer that was used. Some of the popular programs that come in U3 formats are the Firefox browser, Skype telephone, McAfee Antivirus (about \$15), RoboForm Password Manager, OpenOffice (the comprehensive suite of office software including a Microsoft compatible word processor, spreadsheet, presentation program, database, and more, free), Thunderbird email client, and dozens of games. Most U3 drives come pre-installed with password protection and a "U3 Launchpad" which is a menu driven directory of the software on the U3 drive.

For those of us who have standard non-U3 drives, there is now an alternative that provides for the same functionality. This alternative to U3 that will run on almost all contemporary flash drives is called "PortableApps", and can be found online at [portableapps.com](http://portableapps.com). According to the PortableApp website, "A portable app is a computer program that you can carry around with you on a portable device and use on any Windows computer. When your USB flash drive, portable hard drive, iPod or other portable device is plugged in, you have access to your software and personal data just as you would on your own PC. And when you unplug the device, none of your personal data is left behind." Dozens of portable apps are available, including the Firefox browser, OpenOffice office suite, antivirus software, games, password managers, and many other pieces of software. The PortableApp Suite is totally free, and does not contain any spyware or adware. In addition to the bundled suite, there are many other programs available, almost all free, which will run as portable apps. The PortableApp website keeps a running tally of new software that is available, including new releases and versions, as well as beta (pre-release) software. A simple click will install

the selected software on the flash drive.

Now that many of us are routinely carrying flash drives, it is nice to know that they may be capable of doing much more for us than just transport data.

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### ***Twitter — What You Are Doing Right Now?***

by Ira Wilsker — APCUG Director  
Iwilsker (at) apcug.net

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#### **WEBSITES:**

<http://www.twitter.com>

Several of the readers of this column asked me, "What is Twitter?" following the media reports that senators and congress people were "Twittering" during recent presidential speeches. Twitter (the Internet service and the person who does the posting) and Twittering or Tweeting (the posting of personal activities on Twitter) has become one of the most popular ways of communicating one's activities so that others can follow what is going on in the life of a Twitter. The service is self-described as, "Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" According to some of the national media quoted by Twitter.com, "The New York Times calls Twitter "one of the fastest-growing phenomena on the Internet." TIME Magazine says, "Twitter is on its way to becoming the next killer app," and Newsweek noted that "Suddenly, it seems as though all the world's a twitter." One may wonder why a Twitter user would post his daily activities as they occur; Twitter explains it this way, "Why? Because even basic updates are meaningful to family members, friends, or col-

leagues — especially when they're timely."

Just to experience the life of a Twitter, I went to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and signed up for a free account. The signup process was very fast and easy, only asking for me to create my user name, create a secure password, and entering my email address. After creating my account, I was given the opportunity to upload a photo of myself for display to anyone that views my Twitter page, and allow me to customise my page to control the way others view it. I entered my first short message that I was using Twitter, and it appeared on my now personalised webpage. Since messages and other postings are intended to appear as text messages on cell phones as well as on a webpage, individual postings are limited to 140 characters, the maximum length of a text message (SMS) allowed on most cell phone systems. As I was typing this column, I posted a Twitter (message) that I was typing this column; if anyone is following my activities at this instant, he would receive this news as a text message on his cell phone, as an RSS feed on his computer, and email, or by simply viewing my Twitter webpage. On my view of my webpage is a text box where I can type my current activity, as long as I keep it under 140 characters, as shown by the counter adjacent to the text box. Postings can be made or received by computer, cell phone text message, Blackberry, or other communications device. Postings can also be received on any newsreader that uses the RSS format news feed.

Twitter makes it very easy to find friends who also Twitter. By clicking on the "Find People" icon, a window is opened that says "Find people. Follow them". To locate friends on Twitter, I chose to allow Twitter to access my email address book to determine if any of my current correspondents are on Twitter. Twitter can access (but only with your express permission) address books on Yahoo, Gmail, AOL, Hotmail, and MSN. It will quickly scan the online address book, and match any email addresses in the address book against the millions already in the Twitter database. Twitter states

that it does not save the email addresses and passwords, and does not send out emails to those located without express permission to do so. I also used the "Find on Twitter" feature to enter my last name to see if any of my relatives are on Twitter, and add them to my friends list. Just as a lark, I entered the names of some of our elected officials, and found that several of them do have Twitter accounts. If I want to invite friends by personal email, I can enter their email addresses in the "Invite by Email" box, and Twitter will send them an invitation.

If I want to add celebrities to my friend's list, I can click on "Suggested Uses", and a list of celebrities who Twitter will be displayed. By checking the box adjacent to their names, we can exchange Twitter posts and monitor each others' activities. Some of the more interesting celebrities and online services that can be added to anyone's Twitter friends list are the Jodrell Bank observatory, the Dell Outlet Store, JetBlue Airways Customer Service (monitors Twitter 24/7), the New York Times, 10 Downing Street (the official residence of the British Prime Minister), rapper M. C. Hammer, CNN Breaking News, Al Gore, John McCain, Whole Foods Market (Fresh organic tweets from Whole Foods Market HQ in Austin), Lance Armstrong, Britney Spears (Yes! This is the real Britney Spears!), George Stephanopoulos (ABC News Chief Washington Correspondent and Host of "This Week"), Women's Wear Daily, the Nightline TV news show, Martha Stewart, comedian and magician Penn Jillette, rapper 50 cent, and many more. The business and news outlets listed post breaking news or special deals to their Twitter friends. One that I added, being the nascent bargain shopper, is Woot.com, which posts one deeply discounted bargain each day in each of its merchandise categories.

Twitter, the company, is headquartered in San Francisco, and was founded in 2006. It is a small company, with only a few dozen employees, but has millions of members. It has a marketing model to generate revenue, but the revenue model has not yet been implemented, leaving

all of the posts and web pages currently free of advertising.

I am not sure how much I will be using Twitter on a regular basis by posting my personal activities and short commentaries, but I will check my page occasionally just to see who is following my activities. The main purpose of Twitter is to answer the question, "What are you doing?" For those who want others to be able to know the answer in real time, they can do so with Twitter.

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### ***Going 100% Digital with Genealogy — or Any — Records***

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In April 2007, I offered a presentation with the same title as above to our the Lake-Sumter Computer Society's Genealogy Special Interest Group. For a handout see: <http://www.lscs.us/presentations/070412%20Theil%20Going%20100%25%20Digital%20Handout.pdf>

In my presentation — which was based on an excellent article with a similar title by Dick Eastman in his outstanding Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter Plus Edition — I extensively described the Xerox DocuMate 152 scanner that costs about \$500 with bundled software. This, of course, was the one Mr. Eastman had obtained and on which he based his fine article.

Well, for me at least and for many the roughly \$500 for the Documate

152 was a little bit on the pricey side and also it is more of a work group scanner with office document scanning as its primary design criteria.

One of the alternative scanners I found in my research for the presentation and also mentioned in my presentation was the Xerox Documate 510, flatbed scanner with an Automatic Document Feeder (ADF) rated at 10 pages per minute.

About a month ago I decided to obtain the Documate 510!

PC World has a very nice review of the Xerox 510 at the following web site; <http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,114941-page,1/article.html> — two paragraphs were extracted in the text below.

"If you need to turn a stack of paper documents into editable electronic text, using a scanner with optical character recognition software and an automatic document feeder attachment — like Xerox's new \$350 Documate 510 -- is a speedy alternative to typing."

"While the Documate 510 is a flatbed model — and therefore takes up more desk space than slimmer sheetfed scanners — its removable lid allows you to scan pages from books or other bound volumes, including oversize originals. For any business or workgroup that needs an affordable document scanner, the Documate 510 is a solid choice." End Quote

I was able to find the 510 on the Internet from a low of \$298 to a high of \$359. I paid \$312 from Buy.com; however, I found that the local Office Depot (Mount Dora, FL) has the Documate 510 for \$299, complete with bundled software.

So far I am totally pleased with my Documate 510!

Scanner assembly went effortlessly with the aid of a very well illustrated assembly schematic manual. Installation requires that the software be installed before connecting the 510 to your computer via the USB port.

The 510 came with ScanSoft PaperPort 9.0 which controls the scanner, TextBridge Pro 9.0 for Optical Character Recognition, and ArcSoft

Photo Impressions editing software all on one CD-ROM. It also came with a 58-page installation and scanning manual done quite nicely in slick paper, and a 12-month warranty.

After the software was installed, the scanner components were connected to power and then I connected it to the computer with the USB cable. When I attempted to scan a document, however, I received an error message. By entering the error code into Google I was quickly able to determine that I had failed to adequately unlock the shipping lock slider switch.

After sliding the switch, the scanner worked perfectly. The sheet feeder works very well and even handles quite thin papers although hearing those go through the feeder may give one cause to worry a bit.

The ADF handles variable length paper from about 6 inches to up to 14-inch legal length papers — all in the same stack in the ADF. And the fact that the scanner's cover may be easily removed to copy from books is also a plus for genealogists and for general home applications.

Mr. Eastman, and others, speaks at length on what these scanners and their software, collectively known as a Document Management System, will mean — reducing the number of filing cabinets, safer storage and more rapid and complete retrieval.

All of these are, of course, quite true, but you should be aware that to convert all of your existing file cabinet's contents to digital information is not something you will be able to achieve quickly! Scanning all of your existing documents, whether your genealogy documentation or your credit card, banking or utility records, will take an appreciable amount of time and effort regardless of the scanner you employ.

At present I am scanning my bank statements, utility bills, medical Medicare and supplemental insurance statements, medical reports and lab analyses, credit cards and the like.

I have not yet begun to scan my Genealogy documents, but intend to — this will be a daunting task; not

the scanning but the organising and assembling of the documents that I have to get them ready for scanning.

When you convert records to a document management system as I am doing with the 510, you need to decide what conversion scenario you will follow: scan all the documents that exist in your files or scan from the day you begin scanning forward.

I have decided to convert most of my documents starting from today forward (except of course for genealogy records). This is simply because it is easier to do this than to "empty the file cabinet first."

Unlike the Documate 152, which is a duplex scanner meaning that both the front and rear of a page are scanned simultaneously with the same pass of the paper through the scanner, the 510 is a simplex meaning that only one side is scanned at a time.

However, the PaperPort Deluxe 9 scanning software packaged with the scanner handles this situation very well. Simply load the stack of papers and scan the front side of all pages. PaperPort will then ask "scan the other side?" and if you wish to you simply turn the stack over and scan the reverse side. The software handles the pagination automatically.

The 510 is very simple to use; one of the more difficult aspects of using it is to remember to load the paper with the face up!

The PaperPort 9.0 software, originally offered by ScanSoft and now by Nuance, works very effectively. One item I would like improved is the default file name, which is "Day of week, Month, Day and Year.pdf." Other options are available but it appears that all use the current date in one form or another.

So far I have not extensively used the OCR capability as that is a slower scanning process.

Another very useful feature of the PaperPort software is that it is a printer and may be used to print any document directly to a pdf, including documents from the web.

Managing the scanned documents effectively can also be challenging. I

created a file folder structure similar to my physical filing cabinet and that seems to work very well so far.

I scan a document or set of documents and then merely drag these and drop them in the appropriate folder. I then rename the file to usually "YYMMDD Plus a Few Descriptive Words" in front of the default file name.pdf. A medical record, for example, would contain the year, month and day of the medical service, the physician's name and procedure, followed by the default scan date. I find that using YYMMDD format for my records allows me to sort or otherwise keep a logical file and folder order sequence by date; to use the standard MMDDYY format will not sort logically.

If you are going to scan older records then you should spend some time in document preparation before beginning scanning. Ensuring that documents are in proper order, staples removed, corners straightened, etc., will speed up the scanning process.

And you must verify your copy before discarding the paper document! I am discarding most of the documents I have scanned so far.

All of my scanning to date has been black and white and at 300 dots per inch resolution, which in most cases has been adequate. This will result in a pdf file of perhaps 35KB per page.

If you decide to convert your paper files to 100% digital records, then you simply must practice excellent and very frequent backup procedures. Otherwise you will lose everything! I make a copy on an external drive after every session.

The choice is yours of course, but my advice is: "Go 100% Digital, and do it now!"

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**Worth Repeating**

A family is a unit composed not only of children, but of men, women, an occasional animal and the common cold.

— Ogden Nash

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