

July Newsletter 2008 Vol. 1 No. 7

We all know about Ron Leal's Saturday morning computer radio show on our local station (KSVY) and that it can also be accessed on the internet at www.vom.com. As you also know, vom.com is our local ISP and hosts our SVCG website. I have been attending Southwest Computer Conferences for a few years now. At the vendor expos I met John Iasiuolo and discovered another interesting computer radio show.

John hosts a plain English radio talk show called Computer Outlook. It started December 3, 2002 and broadcasts "LIVE" Monday thru Friday from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm Pacific Time. The show can be accessed through www.computeroutlook.com and is simultaneously streamed over the internet by Tech Outlook Central Internet Radio Network (at www.techoutlookcentral.com). The show is currently being rebroadcast daily (noon eastern

time) by World Internet Radio Network -WIRN (at www.wirnonline.com).

Computer Outlook also airs ten-minute "Computer Tips" twice daily on its syndicated stations during the 8:30 am and 4:00 pm drive times. Both the live program and the "Computer Tips" segments are also available as take-anywhere, play-anytime Podcasts from The Computer Outlook Radio Talk Show's website, www.computeroutlook.com, or from the leading podcast portals: iTunes.com, Yahoo, iPodder.org, PodcastAlley.com, Podcast.net, PodScope.com, PodNova.com, Odeo.com, Podcastpickle.com and PodcastingNews.com.

John did several segments from the Southwest Computer Conference. They are archived at http://www.computeroutlook.com/specialevents.php

Check out John's show. —Beth

Computer Outlook Radio Talk Show



Host: John Iasiuolo

Your one-stop connection to **Discover in Plain English** **What's New, What's Best & What's Next™** in the computer and technology industry.

Monday – Friday 5-6 pm www.computeroutlook.com

It's a talk show about computers without speaking in computer language.



"radio talk show"

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By Andrew Savikas

June 18, 2008

From an O'Reilly email

Update: On his New York Times blog, David Pogue has noted O'Reilly's pilot in the context of the recent discussion prompted his column on ebooks and piracy (which brought insightful responses from Adam Engst and Mike Masnick, along with a follow up from David).

Ebooks are certainly nothing new for us at O'Reilly. We've offered PDFs of hundreds of our titles for some time now, and until quite recently Safari Books Online, our online-publishing joint venture with Pearson, generated more revenue than was typically associated with the entire downloadable ebook business. But it's clear that things are changing in the ebook market (though precise numbers are proving hard to come by), so we've decided to officially announce two new e-publishing programs that have been in the works for some time:

- First, through oreilly.com we will offer a select number of books as a bundle of three ebook formats (EPUB, PDF, and Kindle-compatible Mobipocket) for a single price -- at or below the book's cover price -- starting in early July. Since we began selling PDFs directly some time ago, we've given those customers free updates to the PDFs to reflect published changes in the books; the same will apply to the ebook bundle, which will replace the PDF option on those titles. That also means that although the ebooks aren't yet available, **if you buy the PDF now, you'll receive the EPUB and Mobipocket versions as a free update once they're available in early July.** These files (like all our PDFs currently for sale) will be released without any DRM, though we are exploring some custom watermarking options. With these three formats, customers should be able to read the books with most current ebook software and devices, including Adobe Digital Editions, Kindle, Blackberries, and Sony Reader (Sony announced in May that EPUB support is forthcoming in a firmware update for their Reader).
- Second, O'Reilly has agreed to sell select ebooks for the Kindle through Amazon. We hope to see those ebooks available for sale through the Kindle store in the near future.

While we would have liked to make these ebooks available sooner, we felt it was important to first contribute to building some of the tools needed for other publishers to follow our lead, such as enhancements to the open-source DocBook XSL stylesheets, which can now generate EPUB from DocBook XML source files.

We do intend to eventually offer as much of our catalog as possible as ebooks (some titles have rights restrictions; others are so old they present challenges from a format-conversion standpoint), but the July pilot program will be limited to a few dozen, including the titles listed below. **Any of these can be purchased as a PDF right away, with the full ebook bundle provided in early July as a free update:**

- iPhone: The Missing Manual
- Windows Vista: The Missing Manual
- Facebook: The Missing Manual
- Making Things Happen
- Open Sources 2.0
- The Art of Agile Development
- Information Architecture for the World Wide Web, 3rd edition

We'll announce the full list of titles when they're all available in early July.

Why just a few dozen? Besides wanting to limit this to an experimental pilot before committing resources to some not-insignificant ecommerce updates, much of our catalog relies heavily on computer code and complex tables -- two types of content that are not rendered well on most of today's ebook readers. Sure, there are some ugly hacks to make code blocks look a little better on a Kindle, but we're holding out for true monospace font support. Ditto for support of many of the special characters used in books like Unicode Explained and Fonts and Encodings. Even Adobe's Digital Editions chokes on a lot of the non-standard characters we use in many of our books (yes, it's possible to embed fonts, but many more characters should be supported out of the box). Our hope is that in the coming months, ebook readers will improve enough to make more of our titles truly usable for ebook customers. (And when there is uncertainty stemming from rendering, customers will also have the full-featured PDF in the

bundle as a reference.)

Whether the future of books (and of publishing) revolves around ebooks is certainly debatable; ebooks may be just a stepping stone toward truly digital and networked reading. Until that future is more certain, we're excited to be on the frontier, and look forward to seeing other publishers follow.

Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

Smart Computing Magazine sends these tips via e mail. They also have them archived on their website:

www.smartcomputing.com

Firefox 3 – Hot New Browser

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio and TV Show Host
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WEBSITES:

<http://www.getfirefox.com> – Free Download

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/features/> - Features

<https://addons.mozilla.org/firefox/> - Add ons

After a lengthy wait, Mozilla has released the latest and greatest release of the very popular web browser, Firefox 3. This new release, available for free download from www.getfirefox.com, has many new features, making it a very strong competitor to Microsoft's ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer.

Firefox evolved from an earlier browser, Mozilla, which in turn grew out of the Netscape browser as AOL announced the cessation of Netscape development. Since its first release several years ago, Firefox in its current and previous versions has developed a wide following, with hundreds of millions of copies downloaded. The newly released version 3 has tentatively set a Guinness world record with over 8 million copies downloaded in its first 24 hours of public release, despite overloaded servers that discouraged countless people from downloading it the first day of issue. According to published reports, the number of copies of Firefox 3 downloaded surpassed 14 million downloads in the first 72 hours. Obviously, many people are using it.

Rhetorically, so why are so many using Firefox 3 rather than Internet Explorer (IE), which is installed by default on all contemporary Windows computers? There are several other fine browsers in circulation, such as the newly released update to Opera, and Apple's Safari (for both Windows and Mac), but for Windows computers, Firefox is firmly in second place, right behind Internet Explorer. If Internet Explorer was not preinstalled on Windows computers and integrated into the

operating system, there is a good chance that Firefox 3 could surpass IE in a fair competitive market. Firefox 3 is faster rendering web pages than IE, has superior tabbed browsing, is written in tighter code taking fewer system resources, and has many advantages over IE. There is no reason why PC users should not download Firefox 3 for Windows (7.8mb download), and install it, as it runs happily on computers that already have IE installed. On a fresh installation of Firefox on a Windows computer, Firefox will nondestructively import the favorites (bookmarks), cookies, and other information from IE, without making any changes or impeding IE in any way. If Firefox 3 is installed on a computer that has an older version of Firefox installed, it will automatically install it as an upgrade, including all bookmarks, passwords, cookies, and other information. Once installed, many users, such as me, prefer to use Firefox instead of IE. In my case I would say that I use Firefox for 98% of my browsing tasks; it would be 100%, but I have IE setup to access another internet account that I have, but rarely use.

According to the Firefox 3 website at www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox, over 15,000 improvements were made to version 3 over version 2. The newly released version 3 is claimed to be faster, safer, and smarter than the previous version, and also IE! One of the new features, which I have personally verified, is the fact that web pages do indeed load faster than on IE and previous versions of Firefox. Firefox 3 also consumes less system memory and system resources, leading to improved computer performance when Firefox is loaded and running, compared to the previous version, or even IE. Firefox 3 is also more secure than previous browsers, and incorporates the latest technologies to help prevent phishing (identity theft), and other website forgeries. A neat new feature in Firefox 3 is "Instant Website ID", where clicking on the tiny website icon ("site favicon") at

the left of the URL in the menu bar will display site information and identification, which will likely indicate if the site is as intended, or a web forgery. Firefox 3 has also been engineered to work smoothly and compliment Vista's parental controls, as well as most antivirus and other security programs.

Another interesting feature unique to Firefox 3 is the "Smart Location Bar" that shows detailed information on websites recently visited, and is accessed by clicking on the right side of the menu bar. This Smart Location Bar is intelligent, in that it adapts to persona preferences to locate better website matches. Typing a "tag" or keyword in the menu bar opens a detailed list of previously visited websites containing that keyword, making it very fast and easy to locate websites that have previously been visited. Another very useful feature is the integrated spell checker, which underlines any misspelled words typed in a browser window; right clicking on the word opens a list of suggested spellings, which a mouse click will instantly replace the incorrect word with the correctly spelled word.

Malware of various types, including worms, Trojans, viruses, and spyware is a growing menace to internet users. Firefox 3 integrates a sophisticated anti-malware feature that provides some protection if the user either intentionally or erroneously accesses a website that contains attack code. If such a dangerous website is accessed, a full screen (browser window) display will appear as a warning. Firefox, working with other organizations (including Google) maintains a continuously updated list of so called "attack sites", so there is nothing for the user to update or maintain. In the event the user does happen to fall into a suspect site, such as a very freshly created phishing (identity theft) website, the forgery can be quickly reported by simply clicking on HELP – REPORT WEB FORGERY; this will connect to a Google service that collects such information on a real-time basis, verifies the forgery, and automatically adds it to the malware list, as well as forwards the information to groups like Phish Tank (www.phishtank.com) for further action.

Many of us use multiple passwords and user names on countless websites. Firefox 3 has an excellent integrated and secure password manager. When a password is first entered, Firefox 3 asks if you want it to remember that password and logon information, without any annoying pop-ups. Speaking of pop-ups, Firefox 3 incorporates a so-

phisticated and easily configurable pop-up blocker which can stop pop-ups and pop-unders, speeding and making more enjoyable the surfing experience. In some cases, pop-ups are not irritating advertisements, but instead contain important information; these can be easily allowed when desired.

Many of us choose to tweak the appearance and features of our browsers, and Firefox 3 happily obliges. Firefox has many themes and "personas" that can be selectively implemented to change the appearance of the browser to meet our individual tastes. For those of us who want additional features, Firefox offers over 5,000 free "add-ons" (addons.mozilla.org/firefox), which are easy to install devices to customize the browser to work as desired. I have installed about a dozen add-ons, including some security add-ons (PhishTank, McAfee SiteAdvisor, and others), as well as an enhanced download manager (the one integrated in Firefox 3 is very adequate for most users). I also have selected to use differently colored tabs on the top of the browser window, an add-on that can make a tab an IE window (for the rare cases when a website is intended for IE only), a PDF manager, and several other add-ons.

Firefox 3 is an outstanding and free product. It is a very worthwhile competitor to Internet Explorer, and users should try it to see if they like it. I like it, and use it almost exclusively on my desktop and notebook computers. That is the best recommendation I can give it.

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Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

Update Your Virus Definitions

Antivirus software publishers create massive databases of virus definitions that help your software identify the bugs. Because malicious users regularly create new viruses (and publishers regularly create new virus definitions to catch them), your antivirus software is out of date as soon as you install it. You'll need to download the latest definitions from the software publisher before you run your antivirus scan—otherwise, the program may miss a new virus. Many antivirus applications include a 12-month subscription to the publisher's antivirus definitions; if your subscription has expired, the software may instruct you to pay for a new subscription.

The Ultimate Searching Experience: Exalead

By David Woodford
www.worldstart.com

The last time we were together, I wrote about an awesome answer engine called BrainBoost. However, in my search for the "Ultimate Search Engine," I came across another search engine that happens to have a host of useful features that could be considered useful complements to BrainBoost!

It's called **Exalead** and it can be found at www.exalead.com. Below is what the homepage looks like.



As you can see, it is very minimalistic and uncluttered. I love it!

So, let's start with a simple search and put Exalead to the test. For this, I'll choose exactly what I did last time, which was my adopted hometown of Athlone in Ireland. Here are some of the results I received:



Now, what do you see that sets Exalead apart from many other search engines? Yes, that's right! Instead of a mass piece of text relating to each Web site, you see a thumbnail picture of the site with a brief summary of its content. Clicking on the **Preview** button will then bring up the relevant page in a new window within Exalead for you. Or, if you click on the link, it will open the site to a whole new page.

But, there's even more to it than that! Look over to the right hand side of the page and you'll notice the box I have highlighted in red below:



Exalead has intelligently given some additional links (1) to narrow down your search.

Also, notice the other area I have numbered (2).

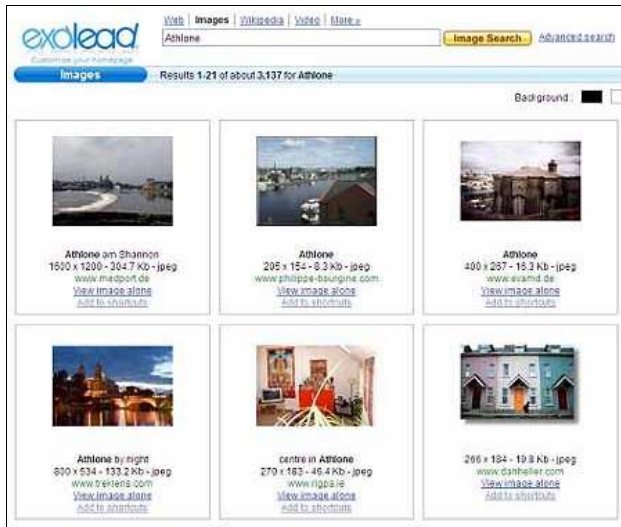
You can even narrow the search to specific types of documents. For instance, if you wanted a downloadable document, it could very well be in a PDF format. Therefore, selecting this will find Web sites for you where a PDF file is available. Neat, huh?!

Now, let's go back to the homepage and see what else Exalead can offer us!

Let's have a look at the various buttons at the top of the page:



If you select one of those before starting your search, you will be able to find images of your chosen subject, like this:



Or, even some information from Wikipedia with thumbnails:



Also, did you notice the box to the right that I have highlighted with an arrow? Those are stacks of related links to, again, narrow down your search. To that, you can also add any videos on your chosen subject:



So, if I were so inclined, I could watch a video of the local football (sorry, it's soccer to you!) teams on YouTube!

But, we haven't finished yet!

If you go back to the homepage and click on **More** (next to the Video link), you will come to this page:



Notice the two boxes in the bottom right that I have highlighted in red.

You can elect to have a search bar or a toolbar integrated into your normal browser window so that you can search directly from Exalead when looking for information. Just click on the link and follow the instructions.

Now, one final feature that I find very useful is the shortcuts to sites that I visit on a regular basis. Look at this screenshot of the homepage:

URL = www.shop.kingston.com/swug
 Password = computeroutlook

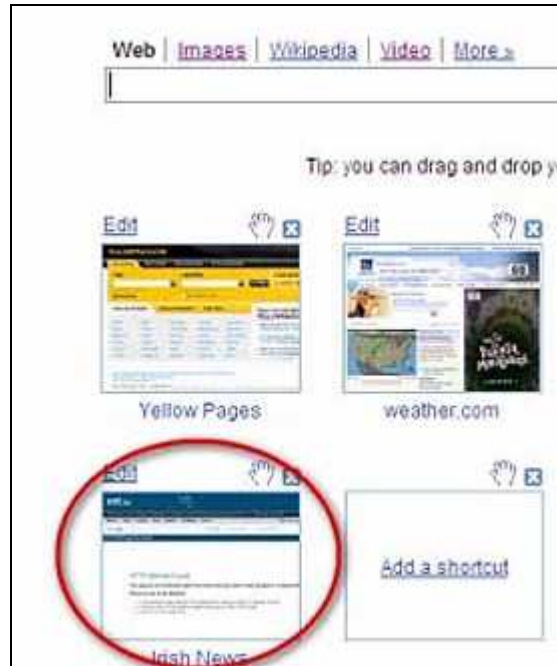
Arranged by John Iasiuolo, host of Computer Outlook Radio Talk Show and one of the major supporters of the Southwest Computer Conference. You can thank him at John@ComputerOutlookRTS.com



Notice on the top line of shortcuts that there are a number of useful sites already set up. If you would like to add your own favorites, just click the "Add a shortcut" link and then go to this form and fill in the relevant information:



Lo and behold, there it is already set up for you. It's all at your fingertips!



So, I think you will agree with me when I say that Exalead is an excellent search engine with a lot of useful features. For me, it wins the title of "The Ultimate Search Engine." What do you think?!

This article is from WorldStart.com. I have been receiving their computer tip newsletter for years. It contains such good info that I asked and received permission to reprint some of their stuff in our newsletter. They have other newsletters and some really great deals on products (most are computer related) All articles are written at a level anyone can understand with step by step instructions. They also use outside writers—paying anywhere from \$35 to \$65 with prior idea approval.

For Anybody Who Has Thought About Trying Linux

By Drew Kwashnak, Linux SIG Leader, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

For anybody who has thought about trying Linux, it has become easier than ever before with Ubuntu 8.04 LTS Hardy Heron. As with most Linux distributions, Ubuntu is available as a free download and is freely distributable. It is even available already installed on Dell computers. The most common method is downloading the ISO image from Ubuntu's website (<http://www.ubuntu.com>) and burning it onto a CD.

From the site, you can download the Desktop version or Server for 32-bit and 64-bit systems. There is even an option to download what is called an alternative ver-

sion which is just the installer and does not include the LiveCD portion, which also includes an installer. If you are like me, until a couple months ago, and living on dial-up or you do not have a CD burner handy or just don't want to put in that much effort then you can order a free CD through the corporate sponsor of Ubuntu, Canonical, ShipIt department. I have been very pleased with the speed with which their CDs arrive. Alternatively, the website contains links to vendors where you can buy the CDs from under \$5 to more, and they can handle large orders as well.

Once you have your CD in your hot little hands, trying Ubuntu is as simple as placing it in your CD-ROM

tray and rebooting your system. If system will boot from the CD and after a short moment you'll be greeted with the Ubuntu welcome screen. If you want to "try before you buy," then you can choose the default "Try Ubuntu without any changes to your computer" and your hard drive will not be touched during your session unless you choose to. You don't even need a hard drive to select this option; you just will not be able to install it from the session.



If you are more certain or just daring then you can go straight into the installer and in about 60 minutes (45 minutes if you know what you are doing) you're booting to your new Ubuntu installation.

Ubuntu will scan your hardware and load the modules and drivers necessary for your system. If you have hardware that has proprietary drivers available, Linux cannot include them in the CD for legal reasons. Ubuntu works around this by providing a Restricted Drivers tool that lists all such hardware found on your system and provides the ability to download and install the necessary drivers in a click or two, legally.

Now that you have Ubuntu up and running on your system, what can you do? Plenty! Ubuntu brings you a full featured operating system complete with:

- Firefox 3.05 beta web browser
- OpenOffice.org 2.4 full featured office suite compatible with pre-Office 2007 Word, Excel, PowerPoint and some Access files.
- Evolution personal information manager for email and calendar goodness, a Microsoft Outlook user can feel comfortable with. There is even plug-ins to allow Evolution to access existing Microsoft Exchange servers.
- Pidgin multi-protocol instant messenger including Yahoo, MSN, AIM, Jabber, IRC and more.
- Gimp (GNU Image Manipulation Program), a powerful Photoshop-like image editing program that includes filters, layers and a host of goodies.
- F-Spot image manager for categorizing and minor editing of all of your pictures as well as easily importing pictures from your digital camera.
- And much, MUCH more...

If Ubuntu doesn't come with a particular application, thousands of free applications are available from the Ubuntu online repository which are easily installed and updated from the Synaptic package manager.

When you decide to install Ubuntu onto your hard drive or virtual machine you only need to click the "Install" icon on the desktop to start the process. After seven or so easy questions the installer will copy the files over to the hard disk. Depending on your system's

speed this could take about 60 minutes, more or less. It will even detect if you have Windows installed and offer to transfer over your files and compatible settings from your Windows accounts!

Of course, if the limitations of the LiveCD, such as settings are not saved from session to session, and you are hesitant to partition and install the full operating system on your hard drive Ubuntu offers yet another alternative called Wubi. Wubi is, from the Ubuntu website: "Wubi is an officially supported Ubuntu installer for Windows users that can bring you to the Linux world with a single click. Wubi allows you to install and uninstall Ubuntu as any other Windows application, in a simple and safe way.

Are you curious about Linux and Ubuntu? Trying them out has never been easier!" Wubi can be downloaded as an .exe file directly. With Linux the installation is not the end, only the beginning! Whether you try the LiveCD, Wubi or a full installation you will find a wealth of quality applications, refreshing freedom and a community unlike any other! If you have problems, questions or want to find out more then you need look no further than the third Wednesday of every month for the DACS Linux SIG at 7:30 p.m. in the DACS Resource Center!

Drew Kwashnak: Has been losing more nights of sleep with Linux since 2002 and just can't keep from downloading and trying the latest versions! When not working with Linux he works with ASP.NET and Microsoft SQL Server for a small financial company. He is also the DACS Linux SIG leader and a father of 3.

Links:

Ubuntu: <http://www.ubuntu.com>

Get Ubuntu: <http://www.ubuntu.com/getubuntu>

ShipIt: <https://shipit.ubuntu.com/>

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Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

Battery Life

If your camera runs for only a few hours on a set of alkaline batteries, consider rechargeable replacements. Rechargeable AA and AAA batteries tend to drain more slowly than alkaline batteries when you use them in digital devices, and the most powerful rechargeable batteries sold today have power ratings of 2300mAh (milliamp hours) or longer, meaning they generally last several times as long as their alkaline counterparts.